



HONEYBEE CAPITAL

June 2013

HONEYBEE #27 – TED GLOBAL MINI-ISSUE

SUMMARY:

Earlier this month I was fortunate to attend the TED Global conference in Edinburgh, where the theme was Think Again. Here are a few highlights in mini-publication form – quotes, notes, and links.

We're also putting the finishing touches on our second early-summer Honeybee issue, Commencement, which will feature some thoughts on growth and development of all sorts, some highlights from the "nature" sessions of TED, and a kick-off-to-summer reading list.

QUOTES FROM TED GLOBAL:

Here's a map of innovation - see all those places with electricity? That's where it isn't.

- Toby Shapshak

It's not about protecting nature, it's about protecting our own prosperity.

- Johan Rockstrom

Hunger is humiliation.

- Joseph Kim

For more and more of us, home has less to do with a piece of soil, then with a piece of soul.

- Pico Iyer

Give me liberty or give me death is well & good - if you can afford it.

- Dambisa Moyo

Democracy is becoming a perpetual cycle of elections and regret.

- Eric Li

It's time for mayors to rule the world.

- Benjamin Barber

We've moved from HAVING a market economy to BEING a market society, where everything is for sale.

- Michael Sandel

Citizenship is a creative act.

- Teddy Cruz

These days, objects cross borders with more rights and protections than people.

- Tania Bruguera

Doubt is essential to faith - abolish all doubt and what's left is not faith, but heartless conviction.

- Lesley Hazelton

When will change happen? When we stop asking 'when' & take action.

- Manal al Sharif

An ounce of hope is worth a ton of despair.

- George Monbiot

Sleep is God - go worship.

- Russell Foster, neuroscientist

HONEYBEE'S TOP SPEAKER PICKS:

DIDIER SORNETTE – DRAGON KINGS

- I first saw Didier Sornette in Iceland last year, at the PopTech Resilience conference – his work is still not as well-known amongst investors as it should be!
- Sornette's central concept is DRAGON KINGS – these are outlier events, but NOT random. Dragon Kings are generated by specific mechanisms – predictable, and therefore, perhaps, controllable. This is way different from black swans, which are neither predictable nor controllable.
- Importantly, dragon kings also carry an important moral implication – if disruptions are predictable, then we have an obligation to try to aim for a different outcome (unlike random events).
- Market crashes show the same patterns as seen in ruptures of physical structures – rocket fuel tanks, epileptic seizures, childbirth...
- Why believe him? Tons of EX-ANTE studies last 15 years – “we have come down from our ivory tower”. Have locked up encrypted reports, published with 6 month lag, etc. In short, good evidence to support his concepts.
- Can you slay the dragon kings? “Gouverner, c'est prévoir”. Most systems have pockets of predictability. Advanced diagnosis is possible.
- http://www.ted.com/talks/didier_sornette_how_we_can_predict_the_next_financial_crisis.html
- <http://amzn.to/1aeGnem>

KELLY MCGONIGAL – “BIOLOGY OF COURAGE”

- I worked with a great speaking coach last year who taught us how to take all of that “nervous energy” of public speaking and translate it into POWER. To think that the audience was just beaming energy your way, and that your job as speaker is to ground that energy and return it to them.
- McGonigal's work has some similar themes – re-defining stress (at least some stress) as motivating energy, rather than risk and threat. Interestingly, there is some evidence that this is not only psychologically beneficial, but biologically as well.
- Her full talk is not up yet, but here is a blog post that gives more detail, as well as a link to her twin sister Jane's fantastic talk on gaming from last year (no joke! TED sisters!):
- <http://blog.ted.com/2013/06/11/the-upside-of-stress-kelly-mcgonigal-at-tedglobal-2013/>
- http://www.ted.com/talks/jane_mcgonigal_the_game_that_can_give_you_10_extra_years_of_life.html

DAMBISA MOYO

- Dambisa Moyo is best known for her book “Dead Aid”, the critique of conventional aid policies and programs in Africa. Her more recent book, Winner Take All, focuses on China’s resource accumulation around the world.
- Her TED talk raised provocative questions, such as whether democracy is really a prerequisite for economic growth, as is often assumed in current global policy.
- Best read/seen in combination with Eric Li’s talk (below).
- <http://blog.ted.com/2013/06/13/a-widening-schism-dambisa-moyo-at-tedglobal-2013/>
- <http://amzn.to/14a8Ahx>
- <http://amzn.to/17gdYkg>

ERIC X. LI

- Li’s talk asked the audience to consider a system that prioritizes economic development over political democracy – specifically, China’s system, which has more adaptability, meritocracy, and legitimacy than many Western observers believe.
- Li is a Berkeley educated, Shanghai-based VC, and it shows – the talk is clear, coherent, and bolstered by solid analysis.
- Importantly, Li does not conclude that any one system is best, but rather that multiple systems can be effective (and multiple systems can have awful shortcomings too).
- Best read/seen in combination with Dambisa Moyo’s talk (above).
- With Li and Moyo’s talks, I fear that we have traded a discussion of implementation for a discussion of fundamental principles – both sets of discussions are needed (see notes from Michael Sandel below).
- <http://blog.ted.com/2013/06/13/a-tale-of-two-systems-eric-x-li-at-tedglobal-2013/>

MICHAEL SANDEL

- A fantastic discussion of the role of civic debate versus the role of markets – NOT anti-market, but rather calling for a more deliberate and thoughtful use of markets.
- Also a refreshing contrast with Michael Porter, whose talk was sadly disappointing. (For one thing, you should never refer to the audience as “you people” ...)
- <http://blog.ted.com/2013/06/14/the-real-price-of-market-values-michael-sandel-at-tedglobal-2013/>
- <http://amzn.to/17Cu2k7>

LESLEY HAZELTON

- Lesley calls herself an “accidental theologian”, but her insights are entirely not accidents – purposeful and powerful.
- If you think that the point of faith is that it’s certain – think again.
- http://www.ted.com/talks/lesley_hazleton_the_doubt_essential_to_faith.html

MANAL AL-SHARIF

- “Some battle oppressive governments; others battle oppressive societies. Which battle do you think is harder?”
- Manal is “the woman who dared to drive” in Saudi Arabia – where it is not illegal for women to drive, but it is forbidden.
- Despite a flood of personal threats after her driving video was posted on YouTube, Manal notes the power of social media to decrease fear.... along with many other insights.
- http://www.ted.com/talks/manal_al_sharif_a_saudi_woman_who_dared_to_drive.html

JOSEPH KIM

- I don’t even know how to describe this talk, but it is full of poignant and profound reflections on home, family, identity, and the ripples that echo in our lives from the most unexpected actions.
- “That chicken wing, it changed my life.”
- Just watch it.
- http://www.ted.com/talks/joseph_kim_the_family_i_lost_in_north_korea_and_the_family_i_gained.html

CLOSING:

As we enter a season of (hopefully) a bit more relaxation, a bit more time with friends and family, a bit more connection to the outdoors... here is a guide to grateful living from Brother David Steindl-Rast, the final TED Global presenter:

*"It is not happiness that makes you grateful;
it is gratefulness that makes you happy.*

*The idea is not to be grateful for every thing,
but rather to be grateful in every moment."*

How?

Stop.

Look.

Go.