

Our Top 10 Talks

Entertaining this summer? Try this simple crowd-pleasing conversation-starter. With Big Ideas on in the background of your next neighbourly backyard soiree, find out the true meaning of the term "barbeque stopper"!

But, which talks to choose from the 200 we've presented this year? Let us help. If there were only ten ideas in which to explain the current state of the world, you could do worse than check out these, in no particular order:

Wade Davis has possibly the world's best job. The Canadian anthropologist roams the farthest flung corners of the planet taking photos and collecting wondrous nuggets of human endeavour and cultural curiosities. Our favourite: the hysterically funny (and possibly apocryphal) story of one Inuit man's survival by making a knife via his own frozen faeces. Hear him implore [why ancient wisdom matters](#).

David Suzuki has some hints for how we might all survive the coming age of global warming. [Suzuki lights up the lectern](#) with his humour, warmth and passion, railing against free market madness and urging us to strive for a sustainable future where nature is always at the core of our thinking.

UK sustainability guru Tim Jackson makes some wildly practical additions to this message with his argument for [prosperity without growth](#). How is it, he asks, that we are regularly persuaded to spend money we don't have...on things we don't need...to create impressions that won't last...on people we don't care about? Will our addiction to novelty be the death of us?

Rachel Botsman is convinced there is a way to kick the habit..."collaborative consumption". It's the organised sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting and gifting already happening all over the internet. Her [compelling TEDx Sydney talk](#) tracks the shift away from the Culture of Me to the Culture of We.

International celebrity historian Niall Ferguson wowed us with his forensic analysis of the [coming crash of the American empire](#), while his new beau Ayaan Hirsi Ali, insists that many in the West [underestimate the threat of radical Islam](#). New Muslim migrants, she says, should be compelled to a kind of "pledge of allegiance" to agreed values.

If the suicide bombers don't get us first, catastrophic climate change will. [Clive Hamilton had his Byron Bay audience hushed into sombre submission](#) as he outlined his "Requiem for a Species", where humankind attends its own funeral and the best we can do is Despair, Accept, then Act.

After that, you'll need some cheering up. Perhaps with [some good ol' fashioned yarns of Aussie cross-dressing!](#) Like how Miss Ellen Tremaye became Mr Edward de Lacy Evans, took a wife and lived on the Bendigo goldfields for more than 20 years before being found out.

Lists are hard to do. And I always have a crisis of confidence around #9. [Jonah Lehrer celebrates this everyday failure](#). The author of "How We Decide" is young enough and smart enough to make brain science sexy for a whole new generation.

Last but not least, [Christian Lander's explanation of the success of his mega-famous list "Stuff White People Like"](#) should have you smirking to yourself, perhaps uncomfortably, then wondering

why Ted Talks made his list, and not Big Ideas.

By ingesting just one of these talks per week, you'll be guaranteed match-fit by the time the Big Ideas team returns in the new year* to regularly fill your screens and speakers again with the thinkers who think the thoughts that matter.

***Big Ideas returns to ABC1, ABC News 24 and this site in February 2011.**

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Big Ideas