

Riddled with questions as TEDxCapeTown approaches

 By [Jillian Reilly](#)

18 Jul 2013

Jillian Reilly is one of 20 speakers who will be sharing an 'idea worth spreading' on the TEDxCapeTown stage on Saturday 20 July as part of TEDxCapeTown's 2013 'Amazing People, Crazy Places' event.

So it's only a couple of days to go until [TEDxCapeTown](#) 2013. About the time the questions - the ones you had from the outset - start to raise their voices and demand more attention.

Being memorable

Why did you sign up for this?! (that one's the loud-mouth.) And the others: Do you really think you're going to be memorable to anyone? Do you really want to be memorable to anyone? And anyway, what does it take to be memorable in today's world?

That's the question that's really taunting me - whispering in my ear as I try to fall asleep, poking me in the eyes the minute they open.

Hey, you, it says, what do you think it takes to be memorable in a world full of published wisdom and polarised opinions? Where a surfeit of online blogging and on-air punditry turns anyone with an opinion into an expert. Where 'over-sharing' lands you a literary agent not a therapist.

Certainty & authority

I tell myself that I'm taking the TEDx stage in order to challenge assumptions about international aid work, but that whispering-shouty voice questions whether I'm just another pseudo intellect grasping at my five minutes of nano-fame? Did you not get enough attention as a child, it wants to know.

The questions don't stop there. As I tweak my speech I wonder if it should be more provocative and opinionated. Surely that's what people want in our troubled times - certainty and authority. It's fundamentalism that's filling the gaps these days, right?

Then I wonder if maybe I should be snappier, even shorter. Exploring the failings of international aid in a text message!

Taking the stage

Oh, the questions! I lament and curse. And then, in a moment, a realisation: ohhhh, the questions! Soon enough I remember it's that same questioning voice that brought me to the [TEDxCapeTown](#) stage in the first place - the one that questioned why and how we aim to support the so-called developing world.

And I will walk onto that stage on Saturday, 20 July 2013, carrying those questions and all those I have asked this week. I will share my questions, not shout them, to those listening and hope they might remember them. I don't have answers; I'm not looking for accolades.

Maybe all I want to do in my 15 TEDx minutes is make someone else ask questions too.

It's no surprise I'm riddled with questions as the big day approaches. Maybe that's what this big day is all about. Maybe certainty - in either yourself or your ideas - is the most dangerous place of all.

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ABOUT JILLIAN REILLY

Jillian Reilly (@changingview) is a writer, speaker and consultant with over twenty years experience working across the developing world. Her book, Shame: Confessions of an avid worker in Africa, was published last year. She will be speaking about the failings and frustrations of international aid at TEDxCapeTown 2013. For more info, go to www.jillianreilly.com

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