

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL 2018

Where Do Ideas Come From? Aspen Ideas Festival Opening
Event

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2018
GREENWALD PAVILION, ASPEN MEADOWS CAMPUS
ASPEN, COLORADO

SPEAKERS:
Jeffrey Goldberg
David G. Bradley
Fred Dust
Jennifer Pahlka
Dan Porterfield
Brittney Cooper
Hank Willis Thomas
John Haugen
Allan Monga

Damian Woetzel: Welcome, welcome. Good afternoon, Ideas Festival. I'm Damian Woetzel, I'm the director of Aspen Institutes Arts Programs, and we thought we'd start today with a little story and an idea. Less than a year ago, a young man named Allan Monga, left his parents and four sisters in Zambia, moved to the United States and petitioned for asylum. He settled in Portland, Maine and enrolled in Deering High School, where he has just recently finished his junior year. So at Deering, Allan discovered his love for, and talent for, poetry. In January of this year, he decided to compete. He enrolled in Poetry Out Loud Competition for recitation. And he won. He went on, Poetry Out Loud Southern Maine. He won. He went on, competing against 10,000 other students in Maine, and he won. That's placed him in the national finals to take place in Washington DC.

A few weeks into his preparations, Allan was informed he would not be allowed to compete, because the rules stipulated only US citizens and green card holders would be allowed. So, joining in a great American tradition, and with the full support of his school district, Allan sued to compete in the poetry competition. Competition is scheduled for Monday, April 23rd. Friday, April 20th at 4:30 p.m., federal judge rules Allan Mongo will compete. So off he went to Washington DC. He had said before that "I don't mean to cause any trouble, I just want to compete like any other kid." And when he got to Washington he said, and I quote, "Just being here and experiencing this is like heaven to me. I'm not the only kid who's an immigrant. The Portland Public Schools have a huge body of kids from all over the world who are in my situation. So I just want to a way to open the door for everyone else." No that's an idea for an Ideas Festival.

Please welcome Allan Monga.

Allan Monga: [POEM]

Kitty Boone: That wasn't fair. Allan, you're amazing, and I think one of the things that we've found in the last few months is the youth of this country are amazing.

So, welcome everyone. I wish I could quite as eloquent, but my job tonight is to welcome you and I am, and I'm really thrilled to be here. We just ended three days of a remarkable conference, Spotlight Health, which brought individuals in medicine and healthcare delivery and NGOs from all over the world in the most passionate display of commitment. I hope you will have the opportunity to attend if you haven't in the past, but one of the things about that part of our program is it's totally energized us to get tonight and the rest of the week going. I can't tell you the energy and the feeling of being propelled into this moment by what just happened with Atul Gawande this morning and Cory Booker, who's eloquent as always, and Ava DuVernay, giving unbelievable talks and discussion.

As you've probably surmised, we don't have a theme at Ideas Festival. How many of you have been here before? I should know. Okay. How many of you is this your first time? Okay. I'm gonna speak over here, no over there first. We

don't have one overriding theme as Spotlight Health did. Instead, we work to create a tapestry of ideas and issues, that when all is said and done across the week, actually do weave together into compelling narratives for your consideration. This year, for all the obvious reasons, we're gonna grapple with issues as broad as trust in the media, and the now ubiquitous social media platforms that deliver information. We're gonna examine the ways that design, can address challenges of climate change and sea level rise. We will discuss some important questions, the challenges, the way we think about boys and girls in society, as well as men and women.

What is feminism? Why are people talking about toxic masculinity? Are the brains of boys and girls actually different? How do we build parity across gender? Across the sexes? Across the whole week, we're gonna address the imperfections that define American ideas today, and the ongoing challenges we have faced as a nation since our founding. What will it take to build bridges and cross divides? In this era of hyperpolarization, how does our union become more perfect? We'll also debate the issues posed by globalization, both politically and economically, and learn from the experts about the rise of populism in some quarters and the quest for peace and democracy in others across the globe.

Importantly, our hope for the Festival, and your experience here, is the discussions on and off the dais will give us all the momentum to consider what is at the core of our own value system. What we really need when it comes to leadership, at home, in business, in government, in community. Yes, we have a strand of discussions about leadership every single day, with the amazing leaders in industry, finance, government, NGOs, but we'll also ask each of you, because you're all leaders, to apply your own brand of leadership across discussions of deep import. What is democracy? What does it really mean to be civically engaged? How do we have better arguments? And we'll discuss a range of issues through the lens of artistic endeavor.

Tonight one of the events that leads off the Festival is a Town Hall. It will engage us in considering our American Values through the lens of art, which I hope many, many of you will come to. Later in the week, we will discuss American society through the prism of theater in a new way. We've crafted an afternoon of conversation on the stage at the music tent. We hope you will engage openly and eagerly in all these dialogues that will take place here in the next several days.

Now, one of our other jobs tonight, is to give you some detail for your time here, and as you know, we've produced the festival with our colleagues at "The Atlantic", so for a slight change of pace, instead of me for those of you who know me, and for those of you who don't, I usually give the logistics handout, I'm gonna invite my good colleague, friend and collaboratee, Jeffery Goldberg, the irrepressible editor-in-chief of "The Atlantic", to offer some logistical details that you'll want to pay attention to.

And one thing I do need you to pay attention to now, is do not throw this away, you're gonna need it tonight. Okay, Jeff?

Jeff Goldberg:

So, I'm here to read the shuttle schedule to Snow Mass for everyone. We start early, 5 a.m.

I'm not actually here to give logistics, I know that's surprising to you. Kitty asked me to come and talk, especially to people who haven't been here before, people who are fairly new to this. Some tips and guidelines and observations about how to get the most out of the Aspen Ideas Festival. One thing that we've talked about a lot and I've mentioned this in the past is that there's a huge buffet of things to do here and it's very useful to pick programs, pick discussions that you're not familiar with. The topics are unfamiliar to you, you'll probably learn more. If you go to a panel discussion and you really enjoy it, it's customary to tip the moderator. Just like \$20 bucks, or \$40 bucks if they're from "The Atlantic".

I want to point out, there are some new things here this year, as there are every year. You're gonna see a new face on campus. A new person. Very pleasant, middle-aged white male, in a blue blazer and possibly dockers. I give that description to narrow it down to several hundred people. This person, you're gonna meet him formally in a few minutes. His name is Dan Porterfield, he's the new president and CEO of the Aspen Institute. If you see him and he looks lost and confused, do not help him. This is a very dog eat dog festival, and he's gonna have to find his way through this himself.

I want to make a quick point to some of the scholars and younger speakers. This is a big Aspen idea. The big Aspen idea is never pay for food. Okay? You're number one goal is to get out of here without ever paying for food, and if that means you have to live on pomegranate juice and hot dogs, so be it. By the way the pomegranate juice is very delicious.

I also want to talk a minute about the environment in which we find ourselves, you know, we're way up high in the mountains. Vast forests around us. And we share this habitat with various different species, some of you might not be familiar with. So, you could be walking or hiking along one of the paths in the woods here into town, you could be in town, you could even be on this campus and there's a chance that you will come face to face with a billionaire. There are rules governing these encounters, issued by the state of Colorado, that I want to articulate for you. The first is do not run. The second is make yourself look as big as possible. Or, if you can't do that, make yourself look as famous as possible in this encounter. And the third rule is do not, on this first encounter, ask the billionaire to fund your documentary on climate change. You have to wait until the second encounter before you do that.

So, let me, a couple of more points. I want to say a word about marijuana. Not a word on behalf of marijuana, marijuana speaks for itself in this state, quite obviously. This is an important thing to know, for those who have not been here before. The marijuana sold in Aspen is very high quality, high THC-level

marijuana. I'm not speaking this from experience, I haven't used marijuana since the Reagan administration personally. Although I'm thinking of taking it up in the new administration. And I'm just offering this as the combination of the altitude and the high strength of the Aspen quality marijuana can really be noticeable, especially for speakers. We'll look out in the audience and I can always tell immediately who has been partaking. For instance, right now, I can see that David Brooks is stoned out of his gourd. You can see it in the eyes. It's all in the eyes. So, I just want people to be careful.

Finally, you're gonna hear and experience many amazing things over the week. This is a huge gathering of very smart people with a lot of great things to tell you, great points to discuss, but I do want to note. I want to manage expectations. You will walk out of a session from time to time and say, "What the hell was that about?", and this is fine, this is fine. Because there's a reason that this is called the Aspen Ideas Festival and not the Aspen Good Ideas Festival. So, with that, as long as you understand that and deal with that, you're gonna be great, and with that I'm gonna turn it back to a woman who is not currently high, but I think would like to be high at this moment. Thank you very much. It's Kitty Boone.

Kitty Boone:

Okay. Wear your pass. I am going to do logistics because clearly that wasn't the job that he delivered.

If David Brooks, on his first day here gets stopped by three security people, which is a fact, and he should be fairly well known around here now, so will you. If you don't have this, you don't get in. We actually take security very seriously, so please wear it.

You don't need any other tickets, so your pass gets you in to everything. Morning, night, day, town, here. Some thank yous. "The Atlantic". David, your incredible team. Jeff, you're okay, but the rest of you are really, really fantastic, and we couldn't pull this off without them. Thank you.

We also couldn't pull this off without our underwriters and I hope they are being published on our screen because they really help make this festival move and smart and they have incredible exhibits and I hope you will attend all of them.

Our patrons, who are wearing yellow lanyards, have a special form of pass that's very, very important to us. A portion of their pass allows us to bring 300 scholars to Aspen for over the 10 days, and these scholars come from all over the world, as I mentioned. We had a number from Africa at Spotlight Health. We have more from all over the United States, from Europe, from Asia, etc. and so forth. Thanks to them to the Arthur Davis Foundation, the Raikes Foundation, and the Penner Family Foundation who's allowing us to bring a number of KIPP Accelerator Fellows. It's an amazing amount of generosity you've given to help us do this, because it's the fellows and this diversity that's gonna make our experience all the more rich, so thank you so much for that.

Last year, we started something in honor of our dear friend Gwen Ifill and we will continue that every year at Ideas Festival. For the first half, we have three Ifill scholars, I don't know, maybe they could raise their hands in the audience. These are young inspiring journalists at a time when we need to trust people who are reporting the truth.

And my final thanks tonight, as always, goes to the Bezos Family Foundation, whose support and commitment to the next generation of leaders has brought to the Ideas Festival the most amazing students and teachers for the last 14 years. Today we have 12 high school students from around the United States with their teachers, and they're going to be here for a week of leadership development and training. We also have, I believe five students from the African Leadership Academy in Johannesburg, South Africa, thanks to the Bezos Foundation.

I think, quickly, one of the things that we don't talk about here is what they do when they go home. They produce Ideas Festivals in all of their communities, and just quickly, The NorCal Science Fest, after starting in 2015, now have 4,000 people learning about STEM. The South Texas Ideas Festival, which was founded by Michael Morales on the border of Texas and Mexico, has been going for two years and has branched out to bring universities and high schools together, now boasts a podcast, build seminars around civic engagement and their big focus this year is food and security in that valley.

The Florida League of Young Immigrants, or FLYiFest, was founded in 2016 by scholar Deborah Gonzales. A Cuban-American, Deborah wanted to create opportunity for immigrants to have access to have resources such as degree validation, information about free ESL classes and legal clinics. And a safe place to discuss their rights. She was 17 when she started that as a Bezos scholar. Two years later, FLYiFest has grown to include the Haitian community as well as creating a peer/mentor program for recently emigrated students.

And in 2018, the South African Ideas Festival celebrated it's sixth year at the African Leadership Academy and welcomed 56 passionate, young change makers from South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania for a weekend long workshop focusing on entrepreneurship, professionalism and financial literacy. Now I would say those are idea that go to action, and to Jackie and Mike Bezos, thank you so much for your investment in these kids.

Are our Bezos scholars this year right here? And can you stand up for everybody please? And if experience holds, they're gonna ask the best questions in the room so you'd better be careful. I'm gonna close now with introductory comments of mine, and it's my great pleasure to introduce two leaders tonight for the first part of our formal program. David Bradley has been two decades leading "The Atlantic" Media Company, and Dan Porterfield, has been two weeks leading the Aspen Institute, and I welcome them to the stage for conversation. Thank you so much.

David Bradley: Good afternoon. If you'll indulge me, I just want to start by saying that on behalf of "The Atlantic", congratulations to Dan Porterfield, the 13th president and CEO of the Aspen Institute. Welcome here.

Dan Porterfield: Thank you David.

David Bradley: Welcome to your wife, Karen Herrling, who's here in the front row.

You may not enjoy all of us, but we're gonna try so hard. So, if I may, I want to do a quick primer for Dan as we get going. These are the best friends of the Ideas Festival. These Board chairs, the members of the Boards, spouses, high donors, people who have been with us for a long, long period of time, and this is the group you will get to know over the years. I hope the audience will forgive me here, you know the ... this is the primer part ... there are two sessions of the idea festival. This is the first session. The second one starts on Wednesday. You know the axiom that you're supposed to love all of your children equally. At the Ideas Festival, not so much. These are our favorites right here. Every year during the winter, we will choose from all the registrations the people that we really love and we bring them here to the first session. It's not entirely fair to the second session because we love them too, it's just that they think in a more measured way. So one of the speakers commented last year, it's a penny for your thoughts, and you get back change.

Now, if I may, I want to address a few words to the audience. You can't imagine how much rigor of process was put against the selection that yielded Dan Porterfield. The search committee looked at 200 names, and what I thought I could do is pull back the curtain just a little bit for you-

Dan Porterfield: Uh-oh.

David Bradley: On the process.

Dan Porterfield: Do you have to?

David Bradley: I have to. This is the process by which, for a long time, the new CEOs have been chosen. It's a little bit like a college application. There's the written part, and then there's the interview that follows. I didn't have access to the written part of the current round of applicants, for example, I didn't have Dan's applications. I just went back through old files and grabbed randomly one of the applications and what I'm gonna do is give a few lines of the short answer and the essay so you get a sense of what was submitted here.

I'll just call this Candidate X, to respect confidentiality. So these are the short answer questions. Please explain your interest in leading the Aspen Institute. Here's the answer. "As a Rhodes Scholar from New Orleans, I've always hated jazz. That's it, I'll do almost anything to get out of this city." Question, can you detail your academic background? Did you graduate from one of the more

selective universities, such as Yale or Princeton, Stanford or MIT, Georgetown? "No." Please detail any relevant extracurricular activities, such as school newspaper, or debate. Answer, "For five years I was the managing editor of Time Magazine." Let me just jump in, I looked up Time Magazine. It is apparently a regional magazine published by the Meredith Corporation in Des Moines, Iowa.

And then this is the essay question, the one that matters. If you could go back through all time and meet just one figure from history, who would it be and why? Please write your answer in the space below or on a separate attachment, and here's the answer. I have selected Benjamin Franklin as my historical figure and hereby submit an 800 page, 320,000 word profile of Ben Franklin for your consideration. With my remaining time this weekend, I also sketched out profiles of Albert Einstein, Kissinger, and Leonardo DiVinci.

Candidate X struck me as a sweet man, so I just checked in and, oh, these dozen years later, he's still in New Orleans.

So, shifting gears to a more earnest, straight voice, Katherine and I have known Dan Porterfield for 20 years, he is an incomparably talented man. That's exactly the finding of the search committee, and what I want to do is a few minutes of interview, get him talking about himself, the kind of thing you would see in an interview, so that you might walk away with some measure of the admiration that we have for him.

So I'm gonna save you the resume process. You don't have to read it. Dan was born in 1961, that makes him 56 years old. Turns 57 this summer. Graduated Georgetown University. Rhodes scholar from Oxford. I don't want you to be too impressed with that. Here at the Aspen Institute that's kind of like getting a driver's license. It's kind of the least that Dan could do I think. He has a PhD from CUNY. A four-year stint with Donna Shalala at HHS. Thirteen years on the faculty at Georgetown University and in the administration. And then, in 2011, at the age of 49 years old, he was selected as the president a Franklin & Marshall College, which is a liberal arts college in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Dan Porterfield: It's the greatest liberal arts college in America.

David Bradley: And the greatest liberal arts college in America.

Dan Porterfield: Founded by Benjamin Franklin.

David Bradley: It was going to be so much easier dealing with Walter. Okay, so just as we get going, I have questions, but is there anything you want to lead off with that [crosstalk 00:28:54].

Dan Porterfield: Absolutely. I have a million thank yous to issue. It's going to be like the Academy Awards, the music is going to start playing. So first, to Kitty Boone for putting this all together. Thank you so much.

To you, Jeff, "The Atlantic", to the sponsors. Then to our Board, our Board chair, Jim Crown, who's here, thank you, Jim, so much. Jim and Bob Steele led the search process and did all the investigative background. Talked to my high school girlfriends, which you tried to do no way, not this year. So thank you both for the process that you led. Thank you to Franklin & Marshall College, which graciously supported my aspiration to take what we were doing there to the next level a social impact. Thank you to all of youth for supporting me Aspen Institute in all the different ways that makes a difference all around the world. Thank you to Karen Herrling and my family, my three daughters, Lizzy, Caroline and Sarah, are somewhere around here. All this is great, but the important thing in my life is my family. Thank you for being here.

David Bradley: So, Dan, take me way back. Take me back to your childhood. In fact, tell me about, tell me about your mother. Born in 1938, do the story.

Dan Porterfield: Yeah, so, really to know me, you do have to know my mom, who was born Ann Maroni, in Weston, Massachusetts, with a mom who was a very serious alcoholic. And so, my mom grew up in foster care, and lived for 14 years in Weston, Massachusetts, with a big family of foster kids in a kind of old fashioned approach to foster care. And she was raised very well there by a caring woman, who I only met once, whose name was Mummafield. And, when my mom was about 14, her mother reclaimed her, and asked her to move to Baltimore, Maryland. And she joined then, her mother who's name was Jean Posey. My grandmother, a very strong woman, she had stopped drinking, to later become a real leader in Alcoholics Anonymous and took me to a lot of meetings when I was young, but at that point she was in a circus, and she was married to a magician. And she was not really, yet, a competent parent when she claimed my mom.

So, a couple years passed. My mom had a lot of odd jobs, including being cut in half every weekend by the magician. She graduated the very top of her class. Won something called the White Blazer at Notre Dame Prep for the top student in the school. Went off to college, and in her first year of college, the magician said, she did not like that man that she was dating. He said, you break up with him or you get out of the house. My grandmother wasn't strong enough to push back, my mom moved out. Luckily, that was my dad. She married my dad at a very young age, they had me at a very young age, probably sooner than they should have. My mom then had me and my sister while being at home. My dad worked and seven years later, they realized they were not meant to be. And so, when they broke up, my mom was a single woman, with no money, two kids, and about half a year of college education.

David Bradley: She married at 16, so she's now 23 years old, with two children.

Dan Porterfield: A little older. She was 30 years old with two children, she married around age 20, I think. So, with half a year of college, and two kids, and no money, she got a job teaching at a high school on the one hand, and put herself in Towson College on the other. And when I was doing my homework at the kitchen table in 4th grade and 5th grade, she was doing her home work. When I graduated from elementary school in 6th grade, she walked across the stage at Towson College, got her college degree. And like many women who go back to college, one degree wasn't enough for her. And so when I was in middle school, she was working the day, getting her Masters degree at night. When I was in college, there because of her, she got her PhD. And she has actually written about Aspen, Colorado 'cause she became a foremost historian of women in the American West, writing her first book about prostitutes across the West, and how the gold rush involved bringing out the women to work with the workers.

Through all that, I was left with one major, massive message, which is, that when we invest in affordable education, and the support to allow working people to continue to study and learn whether that means skills or college degrees or graduate programs, when we invest in education, we make our country better and stronger and help the next generation, those they're raising, have opportunities they could never imagine.

David Bradley: Your father's an interesting character. He drove a taxi. Take it from there.

Dan Porterfield: My dad, who's still alive, about 78, 79 years old. Drove a taxi in the day, writing plays at night, and he had his own little theater in Baltimore theater, called Corner Theater, where, throughout the 60s, he put on plays that were all about the need social change. Every now and then he'd let me go to one. Once I think I was on stage with Batman, I was Robin chasing a bad rat off the stage. You can figure it out later. He instilled in me a love of literature, of writing, of creativity, as did my mom. I think I got exposed to adult thoughts early, partly because, as a child of a divorced family, you develop the coping skills of working with both parents, and even negotiating among them, and partly because my parents exposed me to social realities, some very painful, at an early age.

David Bradley: This is inner city Baltimore, is this hard scrabble, or describe the neighborhoods.

Dan Porterfield: I lived in two neighborhoods that I remember early. The first was an entirely African-American neighborhood on Winston Avenue in Baltimore. We were just about the only white family there and it was great. It was a normal neighborhood and we had a good upbringing and things were fine. 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated, Bobby Kennedy was assassinated, and my dad's mother passed away, and those three factors ended up precipitating my parents separation and divorce. We moved across town, maybe a mile, to an entirely all-white neighborhood into the house that my grandmother had lived in before she passed away. In that neighborhood, everybody around us was working for Bethlehem Steel, or Sparrows Point, or McCormick Spices, and that was a good neighborhood to and I grew up for a couple years in this segregated all white neighborhood.

I didn't know it was segregated until the first black family moved in 1972 or one, I think. It was a doctor from Kenya, with his wife and two little girls, and there were some in that neighborhood that threw stones at their windows, and wrote epithets and their sidewalks, and threw tomatoes at their house and made other threatening gestures. My mom, conversely, went up and met with them and brought them casseroles and talk to them and try to make them feel welcome and introduced my sister and me to the idea that were all citizens together.

People started moving fast. Within 6 months half of the block had moved out and everybody who came in or African-American. And then it stabilized. And this street, Sadtler Road in Baltimore today is an integrated neighborhood. It's a great place to live. People are welcoming to one another, living together shared lives. And that experience taught me from my mom, that we all have to decide what kind of person we're going to be. We have to make that choice. Try to make that choice the right way every step forward from that experience-

David Bradley: Pull that out a little bit more, what kind of-

Dan Porterfield: Well, you know, I really think, I really think that those of us that have the privilege to be born in America white, we have to make an active choice. What kind of a white person am I going to be? And you make that choice in 1972. You make it differently in 1982. You make it differently in 1992. But we still have to make that choice as a society. Those of us born with privilege, we have to be able to try to adopt a perspective where we see the world through other's eyes and empty ourselves of some of the assumptions that make us think that the advantages we have are shared by all.

David Bradley: You see the candidacies of other applicants drifting away right now. I so wanted the job.

Dan Porterfield: Team effort. Team effort.

David Bradley: This story goes more to personal character than to, well, you'll see. Tell the story about, you're admitted middle school to St. Paul's and your mom takes you shopping.

Dan Porterfield: So it was a crazy and important, disruptive experience that I had when I was young, and I've described a couple, so I won't make you sit through too many more, was when the Baltimore City Public Schools sent my single mom a note after 6th grade saying "Good news for you", this is August, "Good news for you, your middle school son is going to go to school in shifts. And he can go from 8 to 12 or 12 to 4. Which works better for you, working mom?"

Now think about that. A complete lack of any accountability of the public school system for people that rely on that school system to help to raise their kid. And so my mom scrambled around Baltimore and went to all these different private

schools and said "Does anybody have an opening and who will take my child, and by the way, pay for him?" And so, St. Paul's School for Boys did that, they took me. But on my first day I showed up wearing what you would wear in Baltimore City. Platform shoes like this high in the front and the back, checked pants, a white belt, a white bow tie, a red shirt, and they honestly looked at me as the brother from another planet.

But you know, sometimes you think of these stories and you think these are hard stories, and you asked it that way. Everybody has challenges in life. Everybody has to face difficulties and work through things that didn't turn out exactly the way they want. That's how we get our strength and our perspective. All those Bezos Scholars out there, and here I said I didn't do this to you when I saw you again. So all those Bezos Scholars, they're all these kids that are here. Yes, they've faced challenges too in their lives, but they're not sitting around, crying themselves to sleep at night, thinking "Well, I guess I can't do anything." They are taking the risk of growth by coming out here to mix it up with us. Talk about big ideas.

I got that sort of respect for that from my mom, who didn't lie down when she had to take care of two kids on her own. Didn't just work but said "I'm going to get ahead in life and bring these kids with me." So, thank you for asking that question, but now we've got to move on a little bit to like life after Baltimore or these people are all going to get up and walk out.

David Bradley: Okay, so we'll do a breathtakingly respectful of the clock, let's leap over Georgetown University, your work there and go to Franklin and Marshall. That story has to be part of how you got selected. So you're 49 years old, it's the year 2011, tell us the state of the union, of the campus when you arrived.

Dan Porterfield: Well, thank you. So I worked for Donna Shalala for four years at Health and Human Services and then for Leo O'Donovan and Jack DeGioia, the two presidents of Georgetown for 13, 14 years, and those three were really great examples for me about change making in institutions. The respect I have for institutions, which is very deep, came even before that from Father Tim Healy, legendary president of Georgetown, who actually made Georgetown into a national institution. And Tim taught me and many others, we were in school with him, that it mattered that we, if we chose to, translate our empathy for helping others into action and leadership that would affect systems and structures. This is a Jesuit priest, who was above all called to minister the needs of individual people, but he believed bet America what is a country that was built around the organization of the institution. Whether that was the corporation, the government, the free press, universities, churches and religious communities, he deeply valued institutions.

And his students, if we would start to go off a little bit too much and talk about all the great things we were going to do alone as individuals, he'd say "Forget it. In America it's a democratic country with this incredible merger of private-sector and public-sector, you need to understand how institutions work and try

to influence them and help them bend towards changing times." So, I was formed by that belief, and then when I went to Franklin and Marshall College, and I really so, very much, wanted to be the college President to have a chance to lead an institution.

Supported by, again, my wife Karen and our family, who had to uproot themselves to move to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, which is a great place, change their lives. And I don't take that for granted. It wasn't me alone. It was our family choosing to do it together. I found a campus that was extremely well known for academic excellence and rigor, that has catapulted all kinds of people that you know in two major positions in American Life. Wanda Austin, Bronx born, first gen kid, became the president & CEO of The Aerospace Corporation responsible for all of America's space defense. She got a great education at F&M. Richard Plepler, who leads HBO and is responsible for that masterpiece, Game of Thrones. He went to Franklin and Marshall College. Mary Shapiro, the first woman to regulate Wall Street. Patty Harris, who's going to give away 50 billion dollars from Michael Bloomberg to serve the larger human good. All went to this great school.

When I hit the ground there, I was just in awe of all they had accomplished and built. But I also went on a big, deep listening tour, and I heard two things. One was that the faculty we're saying we wish we could get a deeper, deeper student body. Many a great student. We wish it was universal. That every class, all these seminars, all these labs. People with highly driven kids. On the other hand, they were also extremely concerned about the fact, that the diversity of the world was much greater than the diversity of the campus. And in fact only about five or six percent of the students coming into the school were eligible for federal Pell Grants.

So that was what we found. Great school, but it wanted to move in the direction of where society was. And the invitation that came to me as the leader was to help frame the work. And I think that's the key part of leadership, is to frame the questions, inclusively with everybody, but in a way that activates us towards solutions.

So, at F&M, our approach to dealing with these two questions, and uneven student body and a lack of diversity, was to say BINGO. Let's go out and find talent all around this country. Let's triple our need-based financial aid budget. Let's build partnerships with all these great schools and programs, and scholarship programs around the country, that are getting the job done for low-income kids. Let's show up ready to learn and listen, but also offering scholarships, and let's bring to the campus as many top kids as we can recruit from under-represented communities.

We went from five to six percent Pell Grant to 20% sustainable Pell Grant over the course about four years. More important than that change, and the fact also that we have tripled our domestic students of color, more important we tripled are rural student. We tripled art immigrant students. More important than all

that, the Pell Grant students have the same grades, the same graduation rates, and are actually over-represented in Summa and Magna Cum Laude winning National fellowships, thus deepening the student experience for all the student body. And that can happen ...thank you. And that can happen when people of goodwill, as Dr. King said put our body and soul in motion for change but then organize ourselves by framing the question properly, and marshaling the whole talents of an entire community to design the solutions, and then get after it.

David Bradley: Almost more for the Aspen Staff, than for all the guests, let me just tighten your insight on something. What would have been the wrong frame for doing what you did?

Dan Porterfield: I think almost any other frame would have been the wrong frame. For example, I think calling that change social justice would have been the wrong frame. Who's justice? We could debate that for decades. I think that the frame of mixing the student payer mix in the pursuit of a balanced financial strategy would have been the wrong frame. Would have made it look like the kids were some elements of some other thing about the financial performance. I think diversity, ironically, would have been the wrong frame. And I am deeply committed to diversity.

But the bottom line, is that if you are 17 years old, like Marquiera Jones, who came to my school a couple years ago, and now is getting a Ph.D. Or like Alejandra Zavala, an immigrant from Mexico who came to my school and just won a big prize for the Arts he's doing. Or Akbar Hossain, who came to my school a few years ago, having left Saudi Arabia with his family, started life over here as Muslim Americans. You don't want to think that the reason you're walking around the grounds of Franklin & Marshall College is because somebody else said we need more people of your color here, so the other people can have diversity. You need to believe that you were there because you have talent. You have gifts, and resources, and strengths, and attributes that will enhance the lives of your family, community, the whole school and society. I truly believe that's the most empowering message you can get.

And by the way, when you're working with even a great faculty, if they stare out at a classroom that's changing dramatically demographically, they don't want to hurt kids, they want to help kids. And if they wonder how do I teach this very differently composed student body? If the answer is, well the reason they're differently composed is because you're serving a different agenda than those kids need, it's not going to work. But on the other hand, when a faculty member believes and knows that that's a more deeply and uniformly talented classroom, then the job is theirs to change their teaching strategies in order to respond to those kids talents. Which is exactly what happened. Our faculty embraced this effort and we're so happy that they had deeply, deeply committed students there really to create, for themselves, a great college education.

David Bradley: So, we'll do one more question. If we went back and did the parts of the story, Dan, we skipped over, you'd see that he was coaching and mentoring young

people when he was in high school. He set up two coaching mentoring programs which he was at Georgetown that still exists. He went into undergraduate education, both teaching and president of an undergraduate school. You have devoted your entire life to youth. I don't know if you've looked at us, Dan, but for some of us, the last time we were in school was the Coolidge administration. What were you thinking?

Dan Porterfield:

I'm gonna offer two thoughts. The first, I think I'd like to channel my mentor again, Father Tim Healy, who had this beautiful line that I carry around and quote a little differently each time I say it, but he said "The young dream, and the old teach. And in that mystery, comes a tomorrow, that we who are older, will not see, but will have helped to shape through the lives and work of our students." And I believe all of us are called to be educators and mentors to the young. Every single one of us, always, until we say goodnight. Our human calling is to invest in the young.

Second point. I think that the Aspen Institute is this great global force for good that Walter Isaacson and all of you helped to build into this incredible resource that our best days, in terms of social impact and change making and improving the quality of life for the one and the many are still ahead of us. And what I'm hoping to do with you, together ... go ahead.

What I'm hoping to do with you, in partnership with you, together is to identify what we can do, what can we do, building on this incredible tradition that we have here, to promote human flourishing. In all the ways that has to happen. Intellectual, personal, social. As citizens, as members of the human family, together. All called by the example of those who have come before us, including Walter Isaacson. Especially Walter, to make this Institute as change making and important and difference making and results oriented as it can be. Not just for us, of course, but for the entire country and the entire world. And we are today, at a moment, when it feels like some of the centrifugal forces are pulling us apart, but the truth of the matter is, it's the centripetal calling that we call feel to be one, that this Institute can enact in still more dramatic ways by focusing on framing problems and solving problems in a way that helps all.

And thank you so much for your support and being part of it. Thank you.

Speaker 7: What indeed, is the big idea?

Speaker 8: We need to be willing to do the genuine experiments that will learn the answers to the question of what works and what doesn't.

Speaker 7: Resolve to make sure today's young minds are nourished completely and that their spirits are encouraged to fly. Now, that's a big idea.

Speaker 9: If science is communicated by showing the big ideas, if science is communicated by showing the exhilaration of discovery, wow, it comes to life.

- Speaker 10: I was told that at Aspen, big ideas are best delivered wearing flip flops.
- Speaker 11: If we get rid of our inhibition, I think that we need to start competing. We cannot bomb ideas out of people's heads.
- Speaker 12: So, my idea, not so big, but just, you know, big enough to you is this. Let's start treating museums as the R&D Departments of society.
- Speaker 13: Every year I come and I watch everybody give their ideas, I was so excited to get up here and present my own.
- Speaker 14: In sports, my big idea is that players own the game.
- Speaker 15: If we're going to tame the world's wicked problems, we needs to be much more ambitious, much more disruptive, much more democratic, in the way we innovate, and I think that is the lesson I take away. The future is not preordained.
- Speaker 16: As I look to my left, I look to my right, I look at the people around me, and I think, they may be right about their beliefs and ideas. Maybe I should listen to them. Maybe I should find common ground.
- Speaker 17: You know, I think it's a real responsibility, I think, on all of us to be open to learning new things, because you can't really decide these cases in an intelligent way unless you make a commitment to figure out all the things you don't know about.
- Speaker 18: My big idea is that we face a crisis in empathy, and that we can cure it with conversation.
- Speaker 19: Nobody's telling you what to play, you just gettin' up there and you create. And if you can take that into other areas of your life, I think you life a healthier life.
- Speaker 20: Everyone here has hundreds of great ideas. Everyone needs a context in which those big ideas can come out, but people don't need training to create big ideas. They have big ideas all the time. You are self filtering your big ideas.
- Speaker 21: If you believe in yourself, and you have a dream, anything can happen.
- Speaker 22: Democracy is a contact sport. Everyone gets bruises. Even the winners. And the kind of bickering we see today is not only unproductive, it's cowardly. If you don't have the guts to focus on ideas and stop tearing down individuals, you belong in the stands, not on the field.
- Kitty Boone: Okay. So, what you just saw were snippets of big ideas that are presented from the stage on this evening over the last 13 years, but in our 14th year, we're gonna do something different. We're gonna ask you to give big ideas, and we're

gonna ask select people to tell where ideas come from. And to that point, I'm going to introduce to you a wonderful partner to the Aspen Institute, Fred Dust, a principle at IDEO, and incredible design thinking firm, to lead us in conversation with select presenters here, and then with you. So, Fred, will you come to the stage?

Fred Dust:

I'm right here. Thanks, Kitty. Everybody, if you could look on your seat, there's this little pink slip. Can you find it? Perfect, you got it. I'm gonna just show you how we're gonna be using these during the next 20 minutes or so. So, I'm gonna ask you a quick question, which is, who in the room has really experienced what we would consider the eureka moment? This unbelievably powerful immediate lightning bolt around like an idea, where you just know you just had a brilliant idea. If you have, can you raise your pink slip? All right, you guys are being a little humble, but it's like, not so much over there. But a lot ... of course, the Bezos scholars have all the ideas. Groovy. Thanks. I appreciate that. Fantastic.

And then, in those people that raised their hands, I'm curious, who felt like that idea actually changed their life. If you felt like that changed your life, raise this up. Okay. Slightly fewer, but actually, everybody up here, too. And lastly, who actually felt like that idea might have changed the world. Raise your hand if you feel like that's right.

Okay, so that's the premise of what I want to talk about a little bit this afternoon, is that we're IDEO. We're a company that actually specialized in big ideas. People come to us all the time for that. At the same time, one of the reasons I'm so happy to be here with Kitty is that I've been coming here for years to find big ideas. And one of the things that I've realized over the years spending time here and spending time in my other life is recognizing that big ideas just don't happen. They just don't come. They just don't arrive and show up. In fact, ideas, big ideas, are actually nurtured, they're fostered, they're engaged with, they're raised. And they're raised by communities. And I think that one of the things, for those of you who are new here, will begin to realize, this is a community that supports and sponsors and builds ideas. And so the important thing is not necessarily having big ideas, but being able to find the big ideas where they are.

And that's what we want to talk about today. So what I'm gonna do, and what we decided to do, is we're gonna bring up four, there were five, but unfortunately Brittney, who is an amazing scholar at Rutgers, is on a plane, as happens, so she's not gonna be here, but I'm gonna bring four different people up, one at a time, and I'm gonna ask them one, well, two questions, really. One question is, tell us about a time that a big idea may have changed you, changed your life, changed your path. And the second is, how did you know it was a big idea? And then, I'm gonna ask them to give you a challenge they're facing, and hopefully get ideas from you, in the audience.

So with that, I'm gonna bring Jeff, which I think, it sounds like you're custodial here, is that right? Yeah, come on up. It sounds like you run the campus, is that

right. Come on up and sit here. Not really. Editor-in-chief at "The Atlantic". Yeah, exactly.

Jeff Goldberg: Also.

Fred Dust: Also, and take care of other things. Jeff, I'd just love to start with that question. So it's as you've been thinking about it, and we talked a little bit, what's the big idea that has either shifted you, or shifted you in the space of journalism, or elsewhere.

Jeff Goldberg: And this is a good question, because it only came out when we were speaking the other day. And the big idea, the big shift in my life came about two years ago when I moved from 25 or 30 years of writing to begin the editor of "The Atlantic", and I realized, this is gonna get a little meta, but "The Atlantic" itself is the idea. And Stu being one of the people, and most of the stewards of "The Atlantic" are in this room, starting with David Bradley, being the steward of a magazine that was founded to being a magazine of ideas, again this is gonna get meta, is the transformation.

But when I realized that the job is to create a space where people in America and beyond, can actually debate with each other that's an enormous responsibility, especially at a moment of national fracturing. We talked about this for a minute. You know, the magazine was founded 161 years ago by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Longfellow, and a pantheon, right?

And it was founded, and embedded the opening manifesto of "The Atlantic" is a contradiction and a mystery. The contradiction is that they demand "The Atlantic" be the exponent of the American idea, but they don't define what the American idea is. They leave that, I think, for all of the journalists who came after to figure out what that means. The contradiction is that they want debate. They want to have arguments in "The Atlantic", but this group is also a group of ardent abolitionists, right. And so there was some ideas, slavery, that was never gonna find it's advocates in the pages of "The Atlantic", so the difficulty of this ... once I began to grasp, and I worked at "The Atlantic". I was at "The Atlantic" for 10 years before that. Once I really started to think about what that is, I thought about what a unique mission this is, and especially at a time like this. It's not 1857, obviously, it's not the greatest year in American history.

Fred Dust: Yeah, I'm sure when that realization came, how did that change the way you engaged? What there something else, or what it just a new way of thinking about what your mission is?

Jeff Goldberg: You know, it makes life easier, in a way, when you have the clarity of that. Look, our mission has gone way beyond just being the exponent of the American idea. We have a global reach now in ways that we didn't have in years past, but it's a

wonderful organizing principle, and again, it's a team of people who are really mission driven, and the mission right now is incredibly urgent.

Fred Dust: And so, 161 years, is that that what you said? Is that right? How do you know it's a big idea? So like, one of the questions that I want to think about for this group is, so what sort of proves to you that that's a big idea?

Jeff Goldberg: It's alive.

Fred Dust: Which is no small thing, right?

Jeff Goldberg: It's alive, It lives, not only is it alive, it's stronger than it's ever been. It has more readers, tens of millions of readers thanks to the internet. I very rarely thank the internet, but thanks to the internet, we have tens of millions of readers in the way that we've never had. It's not alive on it's own. I mean I have to, you know, credit where credit is due. David Bradley and Kathryn Bradley spent the last two years making sure that, last two decades making sure that "The Atlantic" would survive to this day, and we're very appreciate of that, but the fact is that they, once you figured out the key, once they unlocked that, it did survive because there was value to having a place where, let's use just the American side, where American's can talk to each other, passed the boundaries of tribe. In a period of retribalization, the big idea is that we are a country organized around a creed, right, not around an ethic or religious, or a racial tribe, and of course we are right now in the middle of that struggle and therefore, the urgency of that central idea invented in the heads of people like Ralph Waldo Emerson, that lives.

Fred Dust: This is going to get us to what I think is the challenge that you're gonna put out to this audience, and so I just want to say, that as I was talking to you the other day, one of the things I realize, and I think this is one of the things to keep in mind, as we're thinking about what are big ideas and we're out there looking for, so this is the one thing I've learned for you, which is that big ideas can be old. I don't mean that as if it were an insult, but it's like the reality is, big ideas don't have to be new. That in fact, some of the best ideas we have are old institutions.

Jeff Goldberg: If an, let's not call it an old institution, let's just call it a venerable institution, if the people who are stewarding it don't listen to the DNA, don't understand, you know, you don't want to be a museum of journalism, right, but you want to be informed by the past in order to guide you to the future. It's a huge competitive advantage, by the way, worse, if you actually had Frederick Douglas writing in your pages. It kind of gives you a hint about what you should be doing.

Fred Dust: Totally. So with that, can I ask you to put the challenge out to the audience, and what I'm gonna ask you do to, Jeff is gonna put a challenge out to you, and again, I want you to do the same thing. If you feel like you want to help. If you feel like you believe you can actually engage. If you feel like you have something

to give. If you feel like you have an idea, then we're gonna have you hold up the slip, and by the way, we're gonna be recording this. So, put the challenge out, and then watch the crowd.

Jeff Goldberg: A question that I get, I think David gets, Bob Cohen gets, the people who run this thing currently, we get a lot, is how do you reach, as a member of good standing of the dreaded MSM, the main stream media, which by the way, I'm very pro-MSM. How do you reach the 30 to 40 percent of Americans that for various reasons no longer the trust the establishment press to tell them the truth. It's a question I don't have the answer for that.

I tell our staff, we double down on the commitment of the enlightenment value, there is such a thing as empirical truth, and we try to be as careful as possible when we put it out there. We acknowledge our mistake when we make them, but it is a mystery, and I don't think ... look, it's journalism. Journalism is the core of this, but the mission is to recognize that there is a single American idea governing all the other ideas. How do we get the 30 to 40 percent of American who have given up on this idea of the main stream media. How do we get them to pay attention to us and understand that, though flawed, we are trying to do something good for democracy and good for the country that we all love?

Fred Dust: So, can I put that out to you? So, everybody, how do we actually think about engaging the part of America that's not engaged into the [crosstalk 01:04:07], and specifically-

Jeff Goldberg: Not only engaged, but also hostile to some of the values that we stand for.

Fred Dust: Right. So, if there are people who have ideas about this in the audience or actually have passion around this, let's go revival on this, I don't want you to just hold this up, I want you to stand up. Let's actually just see you guys. Like c'mon. If you have an, one, two, one two three, four. We have four ideas, oh, and then there are a whole bunch who are standing. Jeff, do you want to call on someone, do you want to ask?

Jeff Goldberg: Sure, well she was dancing enthusiastically.

Fred Dust: You jumped up.

Jeff Goldberg: Yeah, I want the enthusiastic first.

Fred Dust: I'd it's not here, I can pass you mine.

Speaker 24: Hey everybody. So, for a skeptical part of America, they'll probably likely the cliché term, I'll believe it when I see it, right? So, you show them a picture. I'm a millennial, I'm on Instagram, I'm on Facebook, but that's kind of older, but still, and I notice that if I post a photo of someone, especially, it gets far more likes and attention than photos of words and of any other thing, so one, photos,

engaging photos. We all are shocked at the beauty, aesthetics, and anything that is like symmetrical. Secondly, ask questions, so they can kind of explore their own mind, instead of trying to push ideas on them first, make them interrogate and investigate within themselves, and dig deep there. Thank you.

Fred Dust: You got it? So you got photos, you actually have to get a little more stylish and beautiful, and you might actually have her post photos.

Jeff Goldberg: I think we're pretty stylish and beautiful, by the way.

Fred Dust: I'm not actually, I'm not sure if you should actually post the photos. Alright, I'm gonna let you go down now, and I'm gonna bring up the next person.

Jeff Goldberg: All right, great.

Fred Dust: Thanks so much, Jeff. Alright, Jen Pahlka, can you come up. All right, Jen Pahlka, for you that don't know, she's the founder of Code for America. She actually runs Code for America and is the, was the deputy CTO of America, and at what White House was that Jen, just so I know.

Jen Pahlka: Thanks for asking, Fred. I worked for President Obama.

Fred Dust: Okay, so Jen Pahlka. And so, Jen, same questions, we're looking for big ideas that may have changed the path of things that you might have done, in the world of technology, government. I'm really curious. What was the big idea?

Jen Pahlka: Yeah, so I thought we had a big idea, and I don't think it was a small idea, but then we've been working on it and it kind of led us to a bigger idea. So the original big idea was, hey we're living in a digital age, and yet government is, what, four, five decades behind. If we help government update their technology, maybe they can serve people better. So, in doing that, we really learned a lot, and it's probably easiest to explain how we learned it by telling you how I came to it.

I was away in DC after our third year, and we basically were doing these programs that were limited to one year, and we would work with city, county, and state governments in these projects that were just radically different from how government normally approaches problems. So, the framework was, and I don't need to tell you this at IDEO, but user-centered, iterative, and data driven. And so when you do projects that way, it goes much faster. It's actually much cheaper, and you end up with these services that people can use that are kind of delightful to use, instead of a big groan.

So we were limited to a year, but I came back from being at the White House for a year, and one of the team had decided that their project would not be limited to a year. They were actually still working, unpaid, on food stamps and delivery of food stamps in California. And what I found out was that they had discovered

that it's very hard to apply online. The application form online that the government had built with contractors took over an hour to use and it didn't work on a mobile phone. So people really couldn't apply.

And they had made this very quick, simple, mobile first application, it takes about seven minutes to apply, but they decided to check and make sure that actually helped solve the problem, so they started text messaging all of their clients, and they found out that that didn't necessarily help, because people had all these other problems. You would have to get an interview, you would miss the call, you would start over at the beginning of the process, people would lose your documents. And they realized what they had was data that could help these counties understand the policies and operations problems that they were-

Fred Dust: So talk about that, 'cause it sounds to me like one of the things that has happened is that you kind of, there's been an evolution in the idea. The way the idea's changed now, and the way it lives is different. Talk about that.

Jen Pahlka: Yeah, so we thought this was really about fixing government technology, but what we realized is it was actually about fixing government itself. And what you have to do is start embracing all of the ways that we can understand policy dramatically differently, and not just the policies that we want to change but actually the process of making policy, from the view of the user on up, instead of from the top down. And it's actually working. So having this data, like in the case of food stamps, we've enrolled hundreds of thousands of people that weren't able to enroll before, but we're working on all this policy and operations level with government at a much, much deeper way than we ever had before.

Fred Dust: And do you think that's gonna make policy move faster? Is that the idea?

Jen Pahlka: It's absolutely making policy move faster, but more importantly it's sort of closing this implementation gap. You have all of these policies, you know it started for us in food assistance, but then moved on into the criminal justice world, where you have the policy, but the implementation it's so far from it that you don't actually get the outcomes that you intend.

Fred Dust: So, with that, I think actually what I'd love to do is kind of throw your challenge out to the audience, because I think it's actually really related, so if you wouldn't mind, kind of, going out to them and see if you can get ideas from these guys, if that's cool.

Jen Pahlka: So I think the real challenge is that we've seen, really, the ways that you can make policy-making work better, policy and operations of government, really sort of the whole service. The people, and this is much like what Jeff said, they don't believe it. People have given up on government. And we really need a new narrative, a narrative that understands how ... government is definitely, and I don't like to use the word fixable, but it's certainly improvable and we shouldn't be walking away from it, because it's huge. Dan talked about institutions, it's so

important. These institutions actually outweigh ... they're so much acting at such a higher scale, greater scale, than the social enterprises, that we have to fix government. I mean all of charity on safety net issues is about \$42 billion in this country. Government is at least 11 times that in spending on those issues. So if we could make government just 10% more effective, we could double the impact of all philanthropy, but how do we get people to believe that it's fixable and invest in making government work in a digital age?

Fred Dust: So, Jen, I'm gonna throw this out there because I want to make sure that it's clear. So I think the request here is like, it is sort of similar to what Jeff was saying, which is that, what would allow us to kind of imagine a narrative that makes us believe that government is fixable at this point? The US government, I think you're talking about.

Jen Pahlka: I'm talking about the US, but I think we have tons of partners around the world, and I think that that narrative is gonna have to come from people with widely different political views, coming together and saying we might not agree on everything, but we can agree on this.

Fred Dust: Okay, so I'd like to go back to the audience again. Who has an idea or thought about how we might actually fix the narrative around the way government might fix itself basically, or kind of cure itself. Are there ideas? There's one. Who else there, there, over there. Stand up, I'd love to see it. There in the back, please stand up. Are there others? One over there. You got, please, back there, stand up. I just want to see, could you stand up as well? So we've got about five or six. Jen is there someone that you'd like to call on? How about the woman who just stood up, if that's okay? Yeah, what's your idea?

Speaker 26: This is actually an idea that I had awhile ago that seemed like a major pipe dream but, we heard earlier today about how important it was to rural communities ... and I originally grew up in a rural community in Appalachia, so let me just say that ... that when a policy make actually came, that they were more supportive because they felt heard. And I thought in a digital age, why is Congress always meeting in DC? Stage legislatures only meet part of the year. Could there, one year out of each of the four years of a term, could Congress meet in a different part of the country, and be closer to the constituents, instead of the funding machine and the lobbying machine in DC?

Fred Dust: I love that. Thank you so much. I will say, what you're saying is kind of core to what we think about which is like putting the stuff back into the human center of this country, right, and then having those conversations there. I mean that's a pretty good start. Are you happy with that?

Jen Pahlka: Yeah, I think its a, I would agree, it's all about proximity. You gotta get close, and that's how you solve the problems.

Fred Dust: So you guys, give those efforts, thanks Jen. Two more. John Haugen. Yes, so, John Haugen actually is a VP and GM of 301, which is the venture arm of General Mills, right? And so, same thing, so, we just heard from journalism, we just talked to really technology in government. Business. So how does business think about this? Like, what was a big idea for you that kind of came down the path that changed the way you might have thought about business?

John Haugen: Yeah, so a number of years ago I was tasked with finding the next round of big ideas for General Mills. And General Mills has been around for 150 years, which is a long time. I guess, relative to "The Atlantic", I guess we're just a young pup. I had a team that was dedicated to leverage the best consumer insights, the best technology, the best routes to market, sales expertise, supply chains, etc. And the story behind that isn't so much about what went well, it's really where we struggle. And what we found as we really got into it, and we really sought to understand what makes big ideas, what makes great ideas. What we found was that big ideas start small. Big ideas take a lot longer to develop than what we had modeled as a company.

And I came to learn what I call the five to seven year overnight success story. Anybody who started a business, I think can resonate with that. But more than anything, there was a secret muscle, a special muscle, that we found with entrepreneurs is very, very difficult to replicate in large companies. And it was that intuition, that passion, and that energy, and that vision that entrepreneurs have. And so I personally became obsessed with really understanding what makes these entrepreneurs tick and why is it so difficult to replicate that in a big company setting.

And so what we did is, instead of going and hiring consultants, and doing more strategic planning, we did something I think kind of old school. We actually went out and spent a bunch of time talking to entrepreneurs. And we asked a really simple question, "how can we help?" And we wanted to learn about what makes them successful, but really where are they lacking. And I think, I'm not a big tennis player, there's probably a lot of tennis players in this audience, but I know that when I play tennis, I know I'm a lot better on my forehand than on my backhand. And what I came to realize-

Fred Dust: Totally lost on my, by the way, I don't play anything, but yeah, good.

John Haugen: What I came to realize was, is anybody tracking with me?

What I came to realize is that new business creation is not a forehand strategy of big companies who are built on scale and processes and systems, but if we come up at it the right way, we can take their passion and their energy and their vision and help them scale that to help more people.

Fred Dust: So then, what did you do with that?

John Haugen: So I went back to our management and what happened next was either gonna be a big idea or a career limiting move, because I said "We've got a group of people focused on new business development here, and I think instead of us going out and trying to create the best ideas, I think what we really need to do is work on saying 'How do we let the best ideas in?'" And that became transformative for our group because we then really let those entrepreneur play up their strengths and then bring the resources and capabilities and investment to be able to help them flourish and accelerate.

Fred Dust: You know, it's funny 'cause what I took from your story, John, was really the notion that sometimes the best idea's not to have your own idea but to help somebody else's idea. There's kinda a nature of a generosity, and a trait in that, which I think is really valuable.

John Haugen: Yeah, and I think that's something, frankly, that a lot of people. So we went and essentially flipped the model. Instead of creating these businesses and ideas ourselves, we went into the marketplace, now we partner with early stage entrepreneurs and combine that investment capital along with those capabilities. But I will say that many were skeptical when we did that, and so, I think that's where we really had to spend a lot of time and not, frankly, asking for a lot in advance in exchange with [crosstalk 01:17:33].

Fred Dust: And get them kind of giving. So, I think you have a challenge that you'd like to put out to the audience, is that right? And I'd love you to throw it out, if you would please.

John Haugen: Yeah, let's go. I think what I've learned over the course of the last several years in building the work that we're doing within 301 Inc., is really the focus on business being relational instead of transactional. And I think that, as we went to really build authentic relationships, not everything is a give/get, and frankly, we've tried to give more than we receive, and we've mentored a lot of locally ... I live in Minnesota, so we've helped mentor a lot of local entrepreneurs and we sponsor a lot of new business development competitions. We're doing things with schools as well, and I think for us, as we think about what the future, the future is going to need to be collaborative, and where we play to our strengths, and where we can work with early stage entrepreneurs to help them grow their business.

And so, in Minnesota, we've got a tradition, it's called the pot luck and whatever you get invited to a pot luck, what's the one question you ask? What should I bring? I've learned over the last couple of years, what we need to bring to the party, and I would just ask in exchange to the audience here, what can you bring to help the collaboration and the partnership in terms of helping these new businesses grow?

Fred Dust: So, really what I'm hearing is basically a question which is how might you interact better, and engage better with smaller businesses or smaller communities, is that right?

John Haugen: That's right. That's right.

Fred Dust: So does anybody have any thoughts around that? Like, quickly, I'd love to see, like people, one, over there, can you stand? Someone else, anyone else? There's one behind the camera. Anyone over there? Bezos scholars, anyone have thoughts about how, okay. I think we're gonna go with you.

Brook Van Rooke: There's gotta be more business ideas around here, so. Hi, I'm Brook Van Roekel with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and our big idea is to embed health into ESG measures, so environmental, social, and governance measures. These are things that companies report on and things that investors pay attention to, and given the high cost of healthcare and also that being a potential risk factor for companies, we think we need to start measuring it. So embed health into ESG measures.

John Haugen: Thank you.

Fred Dust: Yeah, it sounds like you actually should talk, definitely. There's a reception just for you guys to have a conversation. There's one more that I want to bring. Thank you so much, John, I'll take that. Hank Willis Thomas is a conceptual artist, and so happy to have him.

Hank Thomas: Thanks Mom.

Fred Dust: Hank, I'll ask the same question. Talk about an idea that influenced you.

Hank Thomas: First of all, thanks for making me last.

Fred Dust: Yeah, dude.

Hank Thomas: I realize that you should probably call this Aspen Ideas Fest. First of all, my mind has been blown so many times that I have to bring up my phone, which I always have anyway, but it came to me just a second ago. Literally get high, blow their minds, and then ask difficult questions.

Fred Dust: Sorry, Kitty, the secret's out.

Hank Thomas: How am I supposed to start? Thank you, and thank you all. I have, I can never answer any question simply, so, first I'd say us is them and they are us. Then love overrules. And then, most importantly that I am who I think I am. Who's the greatest? Hello. Who's the greatest? Who's the greatest?

And what's amazing to me, is what happens after someone says "I am the greatest", Muhammad Ali, still, three years after his death, is the greatest. And I am who I think I am, so I might be a superhero, if I am in my own eyes. I realized one day, I used to say I'm an artist, then I'd say I'm a person, and maybe I

realized that as an artist, we live an anachronistic lives. We live in the future. And without art, there is no culture. And without culture there is no humanity. And so, essentially, art and humanity is indivisible. Great art allows us to imagine the unimaginable, and if we don't apply creative ideas to our most complicated problems, we actually will be, wind up repeating some of the-

Fred Dust: And something that you said to me, I think yesterday when we were talking, was the note, that basically the idea that it's art let's us practice the future. And I think I'd be really curious to have you talk about that a little bit.

Hank Thomas: Well, there's an artist from South Africa, who's name is Nicholas Lobo, he said "We have to live in tomorrow before we get there, that way we won't be surprised when we get there." He said in South Africa, post apartheid, the problem was that people weren't living in the future they wanted, so when freedom came, they didn't know what to do with it. I was here at Aspen Ideas in 2015, and that's the year my really big idea came is that, the key to the survival of our species, actually is here in this room, because between art, commerce, policy and education, we can solve these major problems. We were able to put a person on the moon in less time than we've been able to figure out how to solve battling fossil fuels. And what if we took the same collaborative approach to solving our society's problems as we did to landing someone on the moon, so my friend Eric Gottesman and I started this organization called For Freedoms and our goal is to put critical discourse into political discourse through fine art thinking. If legislators thought of themselves as artists and creative people, and creative people saw themselves as civic leaders, I think we might actually find new approaches to solving our society's-

Fred Dust: So I think you're here this week to explore a specific problem, if I'm right, so I was hoping that you would actually throw the challenge out to the audience. What are you thinking about?

Hank Thomas: Well, it's funny. It changes from moment to moment.

Fred Dust: That's what happens when you're high up, yeah.

Hank Thomas: For some reason last year I decided to read 1984 again, I can't remember why. And there was a line in it that haunted me, it said, who controls the past, controls the present. Who controls the future, who controls the present, controls the future. And, that means really, the storytellers are the ones who allow us, you know, we are who we think we are. Someone tells me I'm this, and I believe them, that is the reality I'm living in. My friend Paula Crown, here has a new piece she put up outside of the gondola at the base of the mountain, and it's called Solo Together, and it is a call to action. It's a call to action to each and every one of us. It's a call to action that defines what For Freedoms is about, and I'm just gonna jump into my questions, if you don't mind.

Fred Dust: Yeah, go for it.

Hank Thomas: Because, who here, might define themselves in some way, shape, or form as an artist, raise your hand? Raise your hand, keep your hands up. Who here, in one way, shape, or form considers themselves a scholar or educator? Keep your hands up. Who here in one way, shape, or form considers themselves a businessperson. Okay, who here in one way, shape, or form, considers themselves a policy maker? Wait, is everyone keeping there hands up? I cannot tell.

Well, For Freedoms is actually in the midst of trying to do the largest creative collaboration in the history of America, where we want to do exhibitions, town halls, billboards, in all 50 states, plus DC and Puerto Rico, in the hopes of being visionary and not reactionary, turning art spaces into civic spaces, and I think, with all of you guys here, with your ideas and your help, we can make this possible. So, I notice that you gave everybody a piece of paper and a pen, so if you can take just five seconds to write down how you think I/we can help you, and/or how you/your community thinks it can help us make America great again, I believe in the spirit of what Paula's piece says, which is really about how we are our biggest problem when we use single use plastic, we leave an impression on the earth that we hope someone else will clean up. And we also want to be able to use this, so Solo Together, we can solve this problem, and please write it down, leave it in your seat, I'll pick it up myself, or come right here.

Fred Dust: So, please, can we see, people who think they can help Hank on this journey. I'd love to see it. You just all had your hands up, can we see pink? Is there anybody who has an idea that they want to bring to him?

Hank Thomas: Wait, I'm not calling on anybody. I'm asking everyone, I'm serious.

Fred Dust: Oh, you want everyone.

Hank Thomas: I want people to help me, or let me help you.

Fred Dust: All right.

Hank Thomas: I'm not gonna, 'cause, I'm don't believe there's one ... I want to hear all your ideas. I heard one idea and I got greedy, I'm like, I want to hear your ... because you said "That's a good idea." To her idea in response to your idea, and I wanted to hear his idea and her idea, and your idea. So please, just write it down and, if people want to know whether there's gonna be a panel coming up at 8 o'clock?

Fred Dust: 8 o'clock.

Hank Thomas: For For Freedoms, and it's about art and creative expression, I'll share with you what I found. I'm taking pictures of it all, and there's more collaboration to come.

Fred Dust: So, this is how I want to just end this quickly, stay up here for a moment. So, this is the point which is that the whole rest of this Festival, we want you to be out there finding ideas where you can actually be helpful. Whether it's because you actually write an idea on a card and actually give it to somebody, or whether you actually just grab Hank at some moment at a reception and have that conversation, we want you to be doing that. So, please, keep kind of gathering all the way through and be looking for the best ideas that you can, and we actually have a reception that's all about just getting to have these conversations right now. They're not all yours, sorry Hank, they belong to all of us.

Hank Thomas: No, I thought we can look at them together, though.

Fred Dust: We definitely can. So, we'll be gathering them, we'll be putting them up. With that, we want you to go forward and look for ideas in the world, and really, I'd love Kitty to go from here.

Hank Thomas: So much better. Less work for me and better for everyone. Thank you so much.

Kitty Boone: In the Paepcke Building and in the Doerr-Hosier Building we have boards with colorful clips. Clip your ideas through the week. We really want to hear from you. We are gonna do a lot with the ideas that we collect because we are gonna put them on social media and amplify them. And with that, my best idea, first, I have to thank more than me, this Festival doesn't happen without a lot of people working on it. So Killeen Brettmann, our managing director, Brett and all our content team, our incredible logistics team under Deborah, thank you all so much. It's really wonderful, and we invite you to a reception in the Doerr-Hosier Building. There are three events tonight. You heard about For Freedoms, stay there, go to a movie, go to hear selected shorts in town, and welcome to Aspen Ideas Festival.