

Are you listening?

 By [Beverley Klein](#)

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Just like the adrenalin and anticipation you feel before going on a rollercoaster, so were the TEDxCapeTown speakers waiting to present their talks to an excited audience on 15 October at Ratanga Junction.

The theme this year was Hear/Here to Listen, and one by one the speakers gave their interpretation of the theme and how it ties into their lives. The theme is an interesting concept of how important it is in this day and age of technology and communication, to stop and listen – whether it's to people, music or even nature.

Gabriella Geffen started proceedings by really getting into the audience's minds and making them think about hearing people. She says it interests her that we so often say what we don't mean, and what the consequences are in our own relationships and the world around us.

She spoke about Machiavellian Intelligence – which posits that we become more intelligent by learning how to manipulate others. But with our changing environment Geffen asks: "Can we still say that the ability to manipulate is a measure of intelligence today?"

“ [#TEDxCT @gabigeffen #HereToListen pic.twitter.com/haSDaLaHIB](#)— TEDxCapeTown (@tedxcapetown) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

With this mind, Anne Thistleton, spoke about social experiments used in the US where a famous violinist played in a subway. No one really paid any attention to him, and yet he was world-renowned playing on a 300-year-old violin. The point Thistleton makes is that we don't hear with our ears, we listen – we hear with all of our senses which are constantly collecting information.

She mentioned marketing and communication and that it's all about having your idea really remembered, after all, memory is the most important factor in brand communication and advertising.

Listen to nature

We then had two talks revolving around nature. 14-year-old Tom Foster took to the stage to talk about his passion: sharks. But not just Great Whites, all sharks - big and small. As we know, sharks play a pivotal role in today's oceans, they are apex predators and at the top of their ecosystem, but, as Foster asks, "What if the thing you fear is the thing that could save the planet?"

A profound question especially when we get 60% of the world's oxygen from the oceans. Foster says that as the custodians of this planet, we have the duty to protect it. Strong words from a young man with a bright future!

Staying with the environment, Wilmot Arendse spoke to the audience about littering. It's a massive problem in Cape Town and the world today, and Arendse is working hard to educate communities to pick up and throw away litter. Change is possible if every person picks up a littler litter every day.

“ *Wilmot Arendse is an award-winning sustainable community developer & project facilitator of the “No Messing in Bonteheuwel” project* [#TEDxCT pic.twitter.com/aEgPliBrnC](#)— Accenture SA (@AccentureSA) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

Listen to language

Hanelle Fourie spoke to the audience about language, but not just any language – she focused on sign language. She states that the challenges faced in the deaf community are linguistic and not everyone communicates in the same language around the world.

She found that the dictionaries of today for the deaf community were out of date and didn't teach properly. So what did she do? She created a new dictionary, of course – one that simplified the teaching and is helping kids in South Africa learn in a fun way.

“ *Phenomenal [#TEDxCT](#) presentation by Hanelle on creation of a children's dictionary for the deaf; a linguistic minority... [#IdeasWorthSharing pic.twitter.com/31Xck7JyDU](#)— Andrea Morgan (@AndreaMorganZA) [October 15, 2016](#) ”*

Christopher Venter wowed the audience with his strength and humour. He lost his sight a few years ago after contracting a rare illness in Africa during a motorcycle drive from Cape Town to Dublin. He says that he tells people he went blind, because he got bored of the sighted world and needed a new challenge.

Venter surprised the audience by saying there are 40 million completely blind people in the world, and less than 1% of them are employed. The challenges faced by the community are real and difficult, but Venter says they can be overcome. Even though he is blind he still writes, does all his own social media and publishes blogs through an app called Screen Reader – it allows the blind to still use technology effectively today.

Accessible technology has given Venter and the blind community a new lease on life, one where they are not isolated but part of the digital world. This is why he is challenging developers, app builders and the retail business to create websites that are suitable and easy to navigate for the visually impaired.

“ *Wow! I'm inspired by Christopher! A man who didn't feel sorry for himself but pursued his dreams and lives a full life!* [#BlindManCan #TEDxCT pic.twitter.com/kNJvYGdrop](#)— Nomsa Radebe (@NomsaRadebe) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

The rest of the day was filled with inspiring talks, from learning about diverse relationships between black and white, getting a lesson on finance and learning about the education system in South Africa.

All in all it was a day of Ideas Worth Spreading.

“ *“AI can improve our lives depending on how we use it” Using [#GDP](#) data & [#AI](#) to predict refugee crises [#africa](#)* [@babusinyoni #TEDxCT pic.twitter.com/lGq1D1iAbc](#)— Adriana Marais (@adrianamarais) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

“ *How far will using Apartheid reasoning to solve problems of today get us? Find your diversity partner, make yourself vulnerable, grow* [#TEDxCT pic.twitter.com/vi8iA7rULX](#)— Adriana Marais (@adrianamarais) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

“ [#TEDxCT](#) Shift your money consciousness from scarcity to abundance [#HereToListen](#) [#HearToListen](#)
[pic.twitter.com/MSWiEmvN6C](#)— Natalie Ann Milne (@MinxMilne) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

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[https://t.co/BeWJ7BgmqC](#)— Alethea Hagemann (@AletheaHagemann) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

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- [@PennyTainton](#) [#TEDxCT](#) [pic.twitter.com/qOuZdjA8yL](#)— Andrea Morgan (@AndreaMorganZA) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

“ Music and mathematics. Who knew the 2 could work together? Thanks Tatenda Mhunduru for teaching us something
new [#TEDxCT](#) [#HereToListen](#) [pic.twitter.com/IOmKd7wikd](#)— Jamey Du Plessis (@Miss_Jay_D) [October 15, 2016](#) ”

TEDxCapeTown 2016: Tech-enabled to go green and enhance audience experience

For the first time since 2011, TEDxCapeTown is committed to a more tech-enabled team and delivery of the event. Audience members can expect to experience a web-enabled application, implemented by Accenture South Africa, allowing them to view the programme of the day, listed speakers and their bios and directly engage via the TEDxCapeTown social channels in-app.

For the second consecutive year, Accenture South Africa has decided to partner with the largest TEDx event on the African continent, to demonstrate and share contributions to innovation. Accenture strongly identifies with the ethos of TEDx which exists to discuss ideas worth spreading.

“Accenture and TEDx believe passionately in the power of innovation to change attitudes, perceptions and behaviours. In South Africa, Accenture remains committed to playing a strategic role in supporting our clients and helping to drive sustainable economic growth,” says Suren Govender, managing director of Accenture Analytics, part of Accenture Digital. “Our focus at TEDx this year really is to listen to the ideas local TEDx folks have and assist by translating these ideas – from strategy to outcome – into meaningful and actionable results that could contribute to job creation and growing the economy.”

ABOUT BEVERLEY KLEIN

Beverley Klein is the editor of the Marketing Media South Africa section on Bizcommunity.com. With a background in journalism and historical studies, she's dived into the world of industry news, curating content, writing and interviewing thought leaders. She's often spotted in a forest on the weekend and rarely seen without a camera. Follow [@BevCPT](#).

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