



success

WWW.PRAGERU.COM

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- In the video, Mr. Shillue states that, “Professional success is about making a living, pursuing excellence, and finding meaning in what you do. When I first started doing standup, I was a nobody. It took more than a decade of playing in front of tuned out crowds before it started paying the bills. Ten years is a long time to tell jokes for no money to people who aren’t laughing.” Why do you think that Mr. Shillue never gave up and continued to pursue a career in comedy? What do you think Mr. Shillue means by stating that a part of finding professional success is ‘finding meaning in what you do?’
- Later, Mr. Shillue shares with us, “...one of life’s little truths - everyone is a package deal. You can’t view one element of someone else’s life in isolation... You can’t say, ‘I want Louis C.K.’s money and fame, Jay Leno’s car collection and Tom Shillue’s wife and kids,’” and that, “If you don’t factor in everything, about whoever you’re comparing yourself to, you’re playing a sort of mix-and-match game that doesn’t exist in the real world.” Why do you think that it is so easy to focus on such a narrow aspect of a person when one compares oneself to that person? Why is it impossible to actually measure up to anyone you might compare yourself to?
- Mr. Shillue then points out that, “Everyone has pain in their lives. Think of anybody who you know really well. You know the awful stuff they’ve had to deal with - the demons they battle. How many dead rock stars, movie stars and, yes, comedians does it take to convince us all that everyone’s life is hard?” Do you agree with Mr. Shillue’s presumption that life is hard for everyone? Why or why not? Why do you think that people tend to ignore the negatives associated with the person that they are comparing themselves to?
- Towards the end of the video, Mr. Shillue explains that, “You really don’t want somebody else’s life. You want your own life – only better. But that’s the thing. You can make your life better by not doing something – comparing yourself to other people,” partly because, “Comparing yourself to others creates a totally unrealistic measure for what constitutes success.” Do you ever compare yourself to others? Why or why not? What would a realistic measure of success for you be? Explain.
- At the end of the video, Mr. Shillue sums up his own story and says, “I guess when I compare myself now to myself then, I’m doing okay. You should try it.” Do you think that people are better off comparing themselves in their current position relative to what the realistic potential that they could achieve in the future is (rather than comparing themselves to others)? Why or why not? Why do you think that people feel compelled to compare themselves to others in the first place?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Robin Williams

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Robin Williams’ widow: ‘It was not depression’ that killed him,” then answer the questions that follow.

- Who was Robin Williams? What happened to him? What is DLB?
- Although Mr. Williams clearly had pain in his life and was a widely known public figure, not many people knew about the suffering he was going through. What type of pain and troubles do you think that a public figure you have compared yourself to might be going through in private? Explain.
- Do you think that Mr. Shillue and other comedians compared themselves to Robin Williams as a whole, or just to his talent and success? Explain. If others knew what Mr. Williams was actually going through, do you think that they would still want his life? Why or why not? Has this video and article made you reevaluate any comparisons that you have made between yourself and others? Why or why not?



QUIZ

VIDEO
TITLE

1. What does Tom Shillue attribute to his happiness?
 - a. His wealth.
 - b. Not comparing himself to others.
 - c. His fame.
 - d. The success of his television show.

2. Comparing yourself to others creates _____.
 - a. a habit of goal-setting
 - b. a realistic expectation of life
 - c. a healthy inner competition to better yourself
 - d. a totally unrealistic measure for what constitutes success

3. Professional success is about _____.
 - a. making a living
 - b. pursuing excellence
 - c. finding meaning in what you do
 - d. All of the above.

4. If Tom Shillue was #10 on the Forbes 400 list of richest people in America, _____.
 - a. he would be mad there were 9 other people richer than him
 - b. he would be happy
 - c. he would buy Jay Leno's car collection
 - d. he would give most of his money away to charity

5. It's possible to view one element of someone else's life in isolation.
 - a. True
 - b. False



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

VIDEO TITLE

1. What does Tom Shillue attribute to his happiness?
 - a. His wealth.
 - b. Not comparing himself to others.
 - c. His fame.
 - d. The success of his television show.

2. Comparing yourself to others creates _____.
 - a. a habit of goal-setting
 - b. a realistic expectation of life
 - c. a healthy inner competition to better yourself
 - d. a totally unrealistic measure for what constitutes success

3. Professional success is about _____.
 - a. making a living
 - b. pursuing excellence
 - c. finding meaning in what you do
 - d. All of the above.

4. If Tom Shillue was #10 on the Forbes 400 list of richest people in America, _____.
 - a. he would be mad there were 9 other people richer than him
 - b. he would be happy
 - c. he would buy Jay Leno's car collection
 - d. he would give most of his money away to charity

5. It's possible to view one element of someone else's life in isolation.
 - a. True
 - b. False

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/nov/03/robin-williams-disintegrating-before-suicide-widow-says>

Robin Williams' widow: 'It was not depression' that killed him

Susan Williams gives first interview since her husband's death last year and reveals the actor had a debilitating brain disease called Lewy body dementia



Robin Williams in 2007. The beloved actor was aware he was losing his mind and although he was keeping it together 'in the last month he could not'. Photograph: Reed Saxon/AP

[By] Nigel M Smith in Los Angeles, Tuesday 3 November 2015 14.45 EST First published on Tuesday 3 November 2015 11.17 EST

When comedian Robin Williams hanged himself in his California home in August 2014, the news of his death was met with incomprehension around the world.

The factors behind his suicide have been speculated upon endlessly as colleagues and friends of Williams came forward to allege that depression contributed to his severe mental state. But on Tuesday, his widow Susan set the record straight.

"It was not depression that killed Robin," Susan told People magazine in one of her first interviews since losing her husband. "Depression was one of let's call it 50 symptoms, and it was a small one."

Instead, she argued that it was a debilitating brain disease called diffuse Lewy body dementia or dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) that took hold of Williams, and probably led him to suicide.

Frequently misdiagnosed, DLB is the second most common neurodegenerative dementia after Alzheimer's and causes fluctuations in mental status, hallucinations and impairment of motor function.

Susan told People that the disease started to take hold of the actor in the last year before his death, with the symptoms worsening in the months before he took his own life.

In her first television interview, she told how the Oscar-winning actor was “just disintegrating” physically and mentally in the months before his death.

Williams, 63, had been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease three months before he died and had been showing symptoms including stiffness, slumping gait and confusion, she told ABC’s Good Morning America.

But the progressive decline in his mental abilities had begun to affect him profoundly, his widow said. In one incident, a “miscalculation” with a door left him with a self-inflicted head wound, she said.

During the interview with Good Morning America, her first on-camera appearance since his death, Susan said Williams was well aware he was losing his mind, and tried to keep it together until he hit a breaking point in his last month. “It was like the dam broke,” she recalled.

“If Robin was lucky, he would’ve had maybe three years left,” Susan added. “And they would’ve been hard years.”

It wasn’t until after his death that an autopsy confirmed he had the disease. Williams had been planning to undergo neurological testing the week before he killed himself.

The actor had also struggled with addiction during his life, but Susan told Amy Robach of ABC News that the actor had been “completely clean and sober” in the eight years before his death. She noted that his chronic depression had returned along with paranoia.

“I’ve spent this last year trying to find out what killed Robin, to understand... what we were in the trenches fighting and one of the doctors said: ‘Robin was very aware that he was losing his mind and there was nothing he could do about it’.”

Last month, Susan reached a settlement with Williams’ three children from previous relationships, ending a bitter dispute over his estate and the dividing up of his personal belongings.

Susan told Good Morning America that at no point during their time together did he talk about killing himself. Of her bond with her late husband, Susan tearfully said: “It’s the best love I ever dreamed of.”

• *In the US, the National Suicide Prevention Hotline is 1-800-273-8255. In the UK, the Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123. In Australia, the crisis support service Lifeline is on 13 11 14. Hotlines in other countries can be found [here](#).*