



Every Three Seconds Discussion Guide

Director: Daniel G. Karlake

Year: 2014

Time: 99 min

You might know this director from:

For The Bible Tells Me So (2007)

FILM SUMMARY

Roughly 1.2 billion people (17% of the global population) live in a state of extreme poverty, subsisting on air and whatever food they stumble upon. Simultaneously, 40% of food in the U.S. goes to waste each year. EVERY THREE SECONDS examines the gap between indifference and activism through the stories of five ordinary people who prove that remarkable things surround us and that solutions to overwhelming questions do not rest in the hands of superheroes but rather in ours.

Charlie Simpson, a 7-year-old British boy is heartbroken for Haitian children suffering in the earthquake's aftermath and organizes a fundraising bike ride, raising over USD \$400,000 for UNICEF's efforts in Haiti. University student, Josh Nesbit, revolutionizes the way impoverished communities receive medical care by bringing them old cell phones. Lisa Shannon, a disillusioned 30-something year old, is moved by an Oprah show on the plight of women in Congo that she begins running, having never run before. Ingrid Munro, a retired Swede living in Africa, enlists the poor to help her start a microfinancing system, so they might lift themselves up on their own. And Gloria Henderson, a retired southern lady, delivers wasted food to those who need it most.

Through the tales of these extraordinary individuals, we become aware that extreme poverty rests with us, right now. With pure intentions and simple actions, the solution is within our reach.

FILM THEMES

Is it possible to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty in the course of a lifetime? Five multi-generational individuals pave a path through the minefields of injustice and hardship.

EXTREME POVERTY

Despite our many advancements, nearly 20% of the people on this planet live sub-standard lives. We fly to the moon while so many are denied sustenance and stripped of their basic rights. How can this be? How can we allow our fellow human beings to suffer through meager existences? As the film displays, however, even the simplest steps taken by ordinary people can eliminate the detrimental state of affairs for millions across the globe. Extreme poverty and its many side effects can be placed in the history books where it belongs.

“HERE IS THE LADDER, YOU CLIMB ON YOUR OWN”

Ingrid Munro felt that people had to free themselves of poverty. She could not change their lives for them, but could offer them tools to utilize. Likewise, those featured in the film provide things that others can use to help themselves. Instead of fixing a broken situation, they use their strengths to instigate positive momentum. Charlie, on his bike, raises awareness and funds. Josh uses cell phones to put connectivity in isolated communities. Gloria uses her network, and Lisa her pair of running shoes. No single person fixes an enormous problem, but by working together, the true power of each one's role within the global community is realized.

EMPATHY = HUMANITY

Withdrawing into the bubble of everyday life, we excuse ourselves from the suffering of others. That the problem is elsewhere, either thousands of miles or just a few blocks away, motivates toward indifference. But this is a question of humanity, which undeniably connects us to one another, and is something we can never escape. A Congolese woman's suffering exists in the components of an American teenager's mobile phone. Once we embrace the humanity within us, reject the sophisticated denial mechanisms we have constructed, and choose empathy and compassion over pity and grief, we are fully empowered to take action.

THE BIOCHEMISTRY OF ALTRUISM

We are familiar with the adage, “Giving is good for you,” but how does this translate into in real terms? Scientists have proven that generosity and giving incite positive health benefits within our bodies. Every time we give, our brain buzzes with positive energy, sending messages of goodwill, peace, and wellbeing throughout the entire nervous system. So it is true then: while helping others, we not only improve their lives but also our own. Acts of altruism benefit everyone. When one life is lifted, everyone affected in that chain of events reaps the nourishing benefits.

“There is no greater threat to human security on this planet than our well-trained capacity to flip off our empathy switch.”

Lisa Shannon

“We all have a need to be connected and a part of something larger than ourselves.”

Susan Davis

FURTHER DISCUSSIONS:

1. Which of the 5 stories in the film affected you most? Why do you think this was the case?
2. Was any of the subject matter completely foreign or shocking to you?
3. Do you believe that extreme poverty will be eradicated from the planet during your lifetime?
4. Have you ever volunteered to help those in need? If so, what was your experience like?
5. Do you think that certain causes are more worthy to support than others? Should people focus on their local community first before extending themselves globally?
6. Did the film leave you feeling more empowered or paralyzed, in terms of bringing about change?
7. How long have you owned your current cell phone? Where are your old cell phones?
8. Do you think a microfinance program like the one Jamii Bora started could work in your community?
9. How are children taught to be wary of helping others? What societal factors encourage individuals to ignore the suffering of others?
10. Do we have a responsibility to help those in need? Do you innately feel all human beings are interconnected?

NOTES:

FILM FACTS:

- EVERY THREE SECONDS was released in 2014 on October 16, World Food Day, which honors the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 1945.
- When starting to make EVERY THREE SECONDS, director Daniel Karlake was intent on finding individuals from all generations. At Sundance, sitting in a bar, he saw a CNN feature about Charlie Simpson and thought, “That is the kid.” He met Josh Nesbit at Stanford University, where he was a visiting scholar, meeting with kids who had returned from interesting summer breaks. He learned about gleaning through an NPR report and called the organization, which led him to Gloria Henderson. Lisa Shannon, on the other hand, had recently written a book about her involvement in Congo. Her publisher heard about Karlake’s project and sent him a copy of the book, convincing him to include her in the film. For the microfinance story, Karlake asked a friend for information and he ended up choosing Ingrid Munro due to the fact that she never gave out microloans until after she had retired.
- Charlie Simpson organized a bike ride in 2011 to support children in Somalia.
- Gloria Henderson grew up on a farm. Her father was a tenant farmer of cotton and tobacco.
- Lisa Shannon earned a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from Harvard in 2013.
- Medic Mobile, the company co-founded by Josh Nesbit in 2010, was being used in 21 countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa as of 2014. It is used as a tool in disease surveillance, antenatal care, drug stock monitoring, remote communications, and childhood immunizations.
- Approximately 500,000 cell phones are discarded in the U.S. every day, making up 11% of overall electronic waste. American and European consumers, on average, replace their cell phones every 18 to 22 months. When discarded, cell phones leach the many toxic metals they contain – including cadmium, lead, nickel, mercury, manganese, lithium, zinc, arsenic, antimony, beryllium, and copper – into the environment. In Brazil and India, consumers replace their devices the least, approximately once every 8 years.
- Ingrid Munro began Jamii Bora, which means “good families” in Swahili, in Kenya with 50 beggar women. Members can only receive their first loan after saving up money for 6 weeks.
- 12% of the female population in Congo has been raped, with around 1,100 women raped every day. Although the war officially ended in 2003, fighting has never ceased, and 5 million people have died since the conflict began in 1998.
- In terms of percentage of gross national income, Norway and Sweden top the list for foreign aid giving. The U.K. is 5th, while the U.S. is 20th.

WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. **Share** this film. Consider hosting a screening and follow it up with a discussion.
2. **Help** share the film’s message through [donating](#) to the impact and education program for the film.
3. **Donate** an old cell phone to [Hope Phones by Mobile Medic](#), enabling doctors in rural communities across the globe to help those who would be otherwise isolated from receiving medical care.
4. **Read** “A Thousand Sisters” written by Lisa Shannon on her experiences in the Congo. Keep your eyes open for “Yes, You! Everywoman’s Guide to Becoming a World Leader”, which she is currently co-authoring.
5. **Support** children by donating money or starting a fundraiser. Organisations like [UNICEF](#) aids children around the world.

We believe a good documentary is just the beginning...

In a world of sound-bites, documentaries provide an opportunity to think, understand, share, and connect with the world.

They are controversial, divisive, fascinating, unexpected, and surprising. They can be thrillers, dramas, comedies, romance, tear-jerkers, and horror films.

Documentaries provide the perfect topic for meaningful conversations. If you want to talk about the things that matter with people that matter then pick a film, invite your friends, and watch & discuss together. It's as easy as that.

Influence Film Club – We are the conversation after the film.