



TEDxExeter talk by Exeter Professor tops [TEDx YouTube Channel](#) playlist: **The Way We Work**

Professor Michelle Ryan's 2015 [TEDxExeter talk](#) has been viewed nearly 70,000 times in the past six months, and tops a recent compilation of TEDx talks on [the way we work](#).

Michelle Ryan is Professor of Social and Organisational Psychology at the University of Exeter. Her TEDxExeter talk examines work-life balance – asking whether it is about balancing time or balancing identity. Her research demonstrates that in male-dominated professions, such as surgery, science and the police force, men and women start out with the same ambition to succeed, but women's ambition erodes over time.

"It was incredible to participate in the TEDxExeter event and be able to speak to so many engaged people about my research," says Professor Ryan. "To see the talk reach out to a global online audience through the TEDx website is very rewarding. We really need to rethink what we mean by work-life balance and understand how issues of identity and belonging might feed into how we can strike a balance between who we are at home and who we are at work."

The lack of women at the top is often put down to a ticking biological clock or the time constraints of having a family. Professor Ryan's research has found other reasons why women don't make it. Fewer than 10 per cent of surgical consultants are women – and yet their hours and demands on time are no less than those on nurses or midwives, both careers with many women in senior roles.

Ryan argues that how people feel about their workplace is important. "You feel you have a good work-life balance if people like you have made it [to the top]." Where people can't see anyone like them in senior roles they are more likely to stop aspiring to achieve them, and are less likely to make the sacrifices needed to succeed.

"We are delighted that Michelle's talk has got this recognition from TEDx," says TEDxExeter licensee and curator Claire Kennedy. "It brings a new angle to why women are not as successful in the workplace as we know they can be, and that knowledge will help more people to break down barriers.

"It is also exciting that another TEDxExeter talk has been highlighted. Other talks have been selected to be on [TED.com](#) including Scilla Ellworthy's talk on [fighting win non-violence](#) and Bandi Mbubi's talk [Congo Calling](#) from 2012. Karima Bennoune's [when people of muslim heritage challenge fundamentalism](#) and Harry Baker's [love poem for lonely prime numbers](#) were also chosen for [TED.com](#) in 2014. These four talks have been viewed over 4 million times, *and talks from our first four conferences* have been viewed more than 5 million times."

For more information about TEDxExeter please contact Cathy Debenham, cathy@tedxexeter.com, 07786 440129. Photos of Michelle Ryan are attached. If you use them, please credit James Millar.

Photographs of past speakers and events are available for download from the [TEDxExeter Flickr page](#). Click on individual pictures to see captions and picture credits.

Notes to editors

TEDxExeter is organised by a team of local volunteers. It is made possible by the generosity of local companies who support the event. TEDxExeter 2016 will take place in the Exeter Northcott Theatre on Friday 15 April, with a simultaneous livestream to the nearby Alumni Auditorium. Tickets for both venues are now sold out (the Northcott has a waiting list). Other livestream viewing parties will take place in venues around Exeter and beyond. Details will be announced nearer the event.

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In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At a TEDx event, TED Talks video and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and connection. These local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, where x = independently organized TED event. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events are self-organized. (Subject to certain rules and regulations.)

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About TED

TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or fewer) delivered by today's leading thinkers and doers. Many of these talks are given at TED's annual conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, and made available, free, on TED.com. TED speakers have included Bill Gates, Jane

Goodall, Elizabeth Gilbert, Sir Richard Branson, Nandan Nilekani, Philippe Starck, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Sal Khan and Daniel Kahneman.

TED's open and free initiatives for spreading ideas include [TED.com](http://ted.com), where new TED Talk videos are posted daily; the Open Translation Project, which provides subtitles and interactive transcripts as well as translations from thousands of volunteers worldwide; the educational initiative TED-Ed; the annual million-dollar TED Prize, which funds exceptional individuals with a "wish," or idea, to create change in the world; TEDx, which provides licenses to thousands of individuals and groups who host local, self-organized TED-style events around the world; and the TED Fellows program, which selects innovators from around the globe to amplify the impact of their remarkable projects and activities.

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