

# Analysis of this is water speech by david foster wallace

[Environment](#), [Water](#)



In 2005, Wallace address the graduating class of Kenyon College with a blunt speech that has now become one of his most well-known pieces. Wallace is trying to prepare his young audience for some of the situations they will be face in daily adult life. He talks about his views on life, but he does this in a very comical, honest, raw, and powerful manner. He strives to get his audience to think about the world from other people's perspectives instead of being self-centered. He believes that we should all make conscious decisions how we perceive others rather than forming an opinion on what he calls our " default setting". This speech is an exceptional guide on how to be a better person.

In his speech, " This is Water", Wallace declares that everyone has a default setting that is hard wired into us when we are born, but we can change the way we choose to think and how we perceive things. He expresses that we can learn how to think and control our thoughts. Wallace is explaining to the graduating class of 2005 that they really do not have a clue about what adult life is really like. He talks about how adults often face boredom and frustrations all while working a job to provide for a family. He urges his audience not to operate in the automatic belief that they are the center of the universe, but instead, take the time to put themselves in their shoes and understand that they may be dealing with tragic circumstances that are beyond their control.

Last year, I started a new job at Target. I spend most of my time at work showing guests around the store, helping them locate items, or doing price checks. I constantly have to deal with customers complaining about things

like “ Why don’t you have this item in stock? It shows it is available online” or they complain about prices when someone puts an item on the wrong shelf or in the wrong department. Some days are much more frustrating and exhausting than others. However, if we all embrace Wallace’s way of thinking we would have more compassion and empathy for each other. In his speech, Wallace asserts, “ learning how to think really means learning how to exercise some control over how and what you think.” The customers would understand that I am there to do a job and those things are out of my control. I would also recognize that they took time out of their day to drive to our store to pick up something that might be for a sick child, a special occasion, or an item they need to get through their day.

Last year, 2017 was a year of intensified awareness to the struggle for gender equality and women’s rights. There was a movement confronting sexual harassment and violence influenced our Twitter feeds and other social media as people everywhere stood up and said #MeToo. Women, more so than men, are sexually assaulted. Women have struggled for many decades with equality. In the past, women have not always been considered for certain jobs and even today there are stereotypes in some fields that the job can best be performed by a male. Some people do not believe women are equal to men, and in reality, they are. Women are not helpless. In some foreign countries, the women are treated as property or trophies of sort. That the sole purpose women possess is to reproduce and expand the population. People abuse women in the work force, in marriage, etc. There are people who say that an abused woman only has herself to blame for letting the

abuse continue, when in all reality they're scared and it's traumatic. Most of these women persevere and continue to be strong while facing a tremendous recovery process. Just as Wallace stated, "...the most obvious, ubiquitous, important realities are often the ones that are hardest to see and talk about"; yes it may be obvious that the women should've left it just as hard for her to see her worth and value, especially after being told she has none. It may be hard for her to talk about but she does, she continues because that's what she has to do to survive. Women should be treated equally and with respect. We are just people trying to survive this thing called life. Life is hard enough without sexism. If everyone could view things as Wallace did, the world would be a better place.

So what would this world look like if we all tried to apply Wallace's speech to our lives? I believe we would all love a little harder, show more empathy, and be compassionate and understanding. We would remember that we are not the center of the world. We would be mindful of the people around us and be willing to make sacrifices for others. I hope that we would all be less arrogant and more reasonable because we would exercise our choice at how we look at the world.