

Good afternoon Humbio. To open, I want to say “Thank You,” to all of my teachers. What I mean by this is: thank you to every one of you I’ve ever interacted with.

To me, Human Biology is a liberal art. It is a way of thinking. While we were trained in some very practical skills, like staining fish brains, culturing cells, and catching butterflies, the questions humbio really answers are the fundamental ones. How did things get to be the way they are? Why *is* lactose tolerance concentrated at high latitudes? The answer, to everything, is co-evolution. To those unfamiliar, this core concept says that everything that exists today is a result of chance events being reinforced in the context of our environment. Today, I want to point out two ways we can use this in our own lives.

First, evolution is a “tinkerer,” and it can really take the pressure off to know that on any one day, we can’t change the whole; we can only tinker with the details. As we learned in the core, this tinkering can then lead to change either gradually or at a climactic moment, like punctuated equilibrium. Further, every organization, just like every animal, exists because a series of small mutations, or “decisions,” led to a more complex whole. Just remember in whatever system you enter, medical, financial, educational, and so on, that just like kuru in the Fore, problems are often more complex than they seem. Never forget about the person who prepares your food, or you just might get holes in your brain.

Second, I encourage you to think about evolution as it applies to your own behavior. Evolution is outcome independent, meaning failure is part of the game. Take advantage of natural selection. As you go out into the world, take risks. Allow for mutations of the self and see if they are selected for. If so, let them grow. If not, let them die out. Either way, you are evolving.

I'll leave you with a couple thoughts. In Portuguese there is a word called *saudage*, which offers a different way to remember the past. Instead of simply remembering factually what happened, you are supposed to go there physically in your mind, to be transported in mental body and spirit. So look around, and let this place, this moment, be one you can come back to.

At many points here at Stanford, I have been walking or sitting, really just existing, when suddenly I feel my eyes widen and like a baby the whole world becomes miraculous and new. I know you know what I'm talking about. I hear the birds and smell the eucalyptus, the sun hits me and I look to the people around me and feel energized, connected, and alive. Feel this now. We are surrounded by beauty. Freshman year, I thought this feeling was because of Stanford. I was wrong. It was because of the world, and the people in it. Next year, we get to be freshmen again. Take this energy with you, widen your eyes, and open yourself up to all it has to offer. After all, we are just animals, trying to evolve. A small piece in a much larger system of species, ideas, and cultures with no right path to the future. By definition, nothing can go wrong. Good luck.