

Introduction to Richard Saul Wurman. 2:15 min. Interview: Raymond Elman. Post-Production: Lee Skye. Music: Dee Yan-Kee. Recorded via Zoom: 8/16/2021, Golden Beach, FL.

# Richard Saul Wurman

## Architect of Ideas

By Elman + Skye

**RICHARD SAUL WURMAN** (b. 1935) -- architect, author, and designer -- invented the **TED conference**, which he chaired from 1984 to 2002, and the TEDMED conference, which he chaired from 1995 to 2010.

He has written, designed, and published 90 books on wildly divergent topics. Two of these are **“The Notebooks and Drawings of Louis I. Kahn”** (1963) and **“What Will Be Has Always Been”** (1986), a seminal collection of Kahn’s words. Wurman chaired the IDCA Conference in 1972, the First Federal Design assembly in 1973, and the annual AIA Conference in 1976.

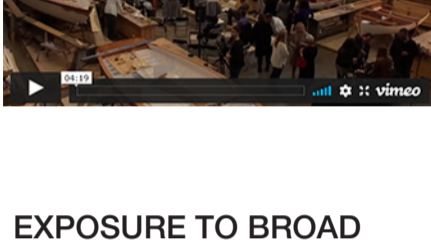
Wurman received both his masters and bachelor degrees in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania, from which he received the Penn Alumni 2014 Spirit Award, and the Arthur Spayed Brooks Gold Medal. He has been awarded several honorary doctorates, Graham Fellowships, a Guggenheim, and numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as being the Distinguished Professor of the Practice at Northeastern University. He is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum. Wurman has also been awarded the Annual Gold Medal in Discourse from Trinity College, Dublin, the James Joyce Award Literary and Historical Society at the University College Dublin, a Gold Medal from AIGA, and Boston Science Museum’s 50th Annual Bradford Washburn Award. He received the Winner of the Best Guide Book Award from London Tourist Board and Convention Bureau in 1987. He is also a Fellow of the AIA and in the Art Director’s Club Hall of Fame. Wurman received the Ladislav Sutnar prize for his outstanding performance in the field of fine arts, as well as accepting an invitation to contribute to Genius: 100 Visions of the Future, a project sponsored by the Einstein Legacy Project, which features essays submitted by the 100 greatest innovators, artists, scientists, and visionaries of our time. Most recently he was awarded the 2019 Star Award from the IIDA (The International Interior Design Association) in recognition and in celebration of his impact to the field of Interior Design.

His current projects include **“Urban Observatory,”** **“UnderstandingUnderstanding”** – a journey through the myriad ways that he and his many muses have created their own idiosyncratic manners of understanding, and his latest book entitled **“Mortality.”**

Wurman lives in Golden Beach, FL with his wife, novelist Gloria Nagy.

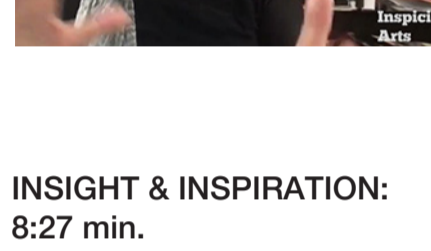
The videos below were **recorded via Zoom**, are organized by Success Factor, and run between 30 seconds and 10 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos

### THE MUSIC OF CONVERSATION: 4:19 min.



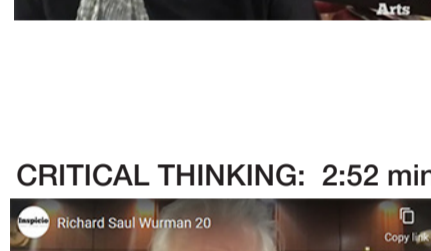
A conversation with friends.

### EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 9:23 min.



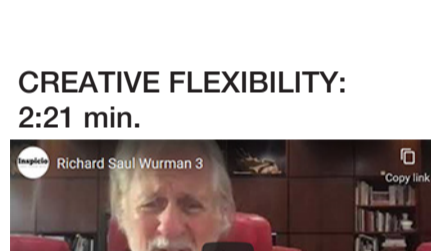
What was your earliest awareness that you had any affinity for the arts and ideas?

### INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 8:27 min.



Did the architect Louis Kahn make artwork as well?

### CRITICAL THINKING: 2:52 min.



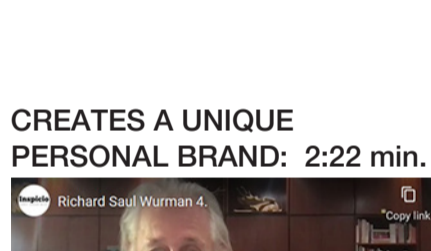
What are some of your passions?

### CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY: 2:21 min.



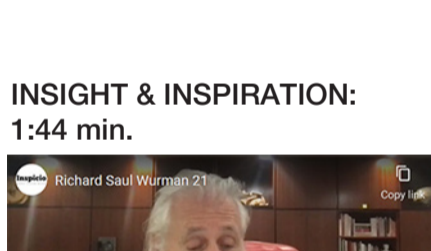
You have a broad spectrum of interests, and it seems like you go through many doors, no matter what anybody else thinks.

### CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 5:30 min.



Throughout your life you have pursued what interests you, even if it involves stepping into another dimension. Yet you also demonstrate a strong affinity for organization. How do you reconcile the two?

### CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 2:22 min.



Describe your stellar invention: the TED conference.

### INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 1:44 min.



I have heard of you say that the punchline of a good joke is often the opposite of expectations. Which comedian is best at doing that?

### SERENDIPITY: 1:10 min.



The comedian and TV variety show host Milton Berle was a civil rights supporter and hung out at the Hampton House in Brownsville during Segregation.

### DEVELOP A VOICE: 1:44 min.



Were your parents supportive of your diverse interests?

### CRITICAL THINKING: 2:31 min.



You have said, “I was the golden boy, and I realized I knew nothing. My passion is the simple journey from not knowing to knowing.”

### CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY: 2:11 min.



You started making watercolors and sculpture because of the restrictions of the Covid 19 pandemic.

### DEVELOP A VOICE: 8:58 min.



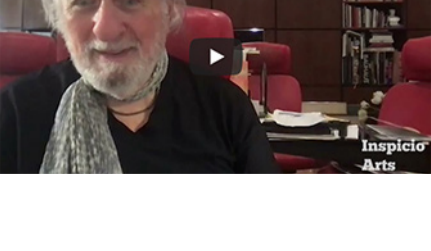
The current exhibition of your watercolors and sculpture at the Coral Gables Museum (8/6 to 11/8/2021) is the first art exhibition you’ve ever had. What’s the backstory?

### EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 5:12 min.



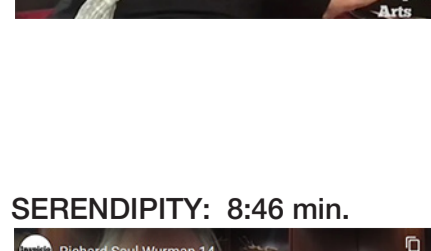
Dan Klyn is writing your biography. How’s it going?

### COLLABORATION: 1:24 min.



Having someone write your biography, documenting all the stories of your life, is so much better than writing an autobiography.

### INTEGRITY: 1:24 min.



Your biographer, Dan Klyn, is interviewing original sources, how does he know that they are telling the truth?

### BREAKS THE RULES: 6:24 min.



Tell me the backstory of your book, “Urban Atlas: Twenty American Cities.”

### SERENDIPITY: 8:46 min.



Why did you live in Newport, Rhode Island for 20 years?

**VALUES FIRST-RATE**

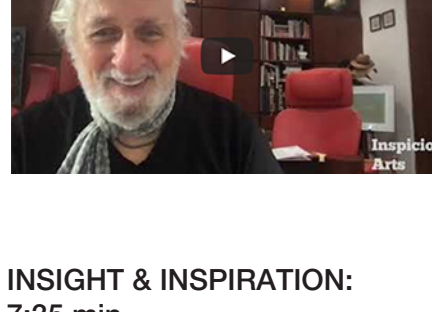
**EDUCATION: 9:27 min.**



*Let's talk about our system of education.*

**CRITICAL THINKING:**

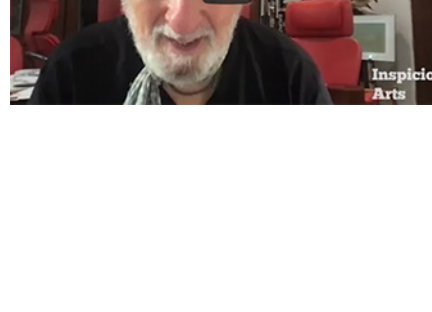
**1:53 min.**



*Tell us about the TED conference called "Geeks and Geezers."*

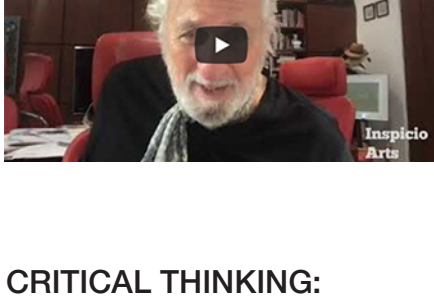
**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:**

**7:35 min.**



*I am a strong believer in the power of storytelling. How does storytelling fit into your concepts of how people learn?*

**RESILIENCE: 4:05 min.**



*You have given yourself permission to fail. Please explain.*

**CRITICAL THINKING:**

**6:41 min.**



*Spider Webs vs. Cobweb.*

**CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 3:15 min.**



*What were some of the unusual features of your TED conferences?*