

A Dinner with Benjamin Franklin

People hear Benjamin Franklin and picture the man who famously sits centerstage on the one-hundred-dollar bill. Benjamin's role in the history of this country is much more valuable than this. Imagining Franklin, I see a confident and intelligent man who embodies the core values of this country. Through years of scientific research and political speech, Franklin became a learned man with an intriguing mind. I believe he could talk for hours to the benefit of this world. For these reasons, I would choose to meet him.

Growing up in Philadelphia, in a time when education was limited and poorly mandated, a young Benjamin Franklin held values of learning, leadership, and education. By the age of 10, he was an avid reader and taught himself the ways of a writer. At 17, he worked as an apprentice for his older brother, and a few years later he began a successful printing business.

Franklin boasted an impactful career in Pennsylvania politics and was key to the formation of America as we know it. Throughout his life, he signed the four texts which are thought to have been responsible for the creation of the United States. The first of these was the Declaration of Independence which cut ties to Great Britain. The second is the Treaty of Alliance, Amity, and Commerce with France. This treaty had France recognize the United States and allowed for increased trade between the two. The third treaty was known as the Treaty of France. This document finally ended the Revolutionary War and cemented America's position as a nation. Last but not least was the Constitution, which served as a rising sun to the new nation. Benjamin was also known for being a leader in the abolitionist movement.

Along with his many other occupations, Franklin worked as an inventor. He invented lightning rods in a time of wooden villages and homes which were often at risk from fire. Benjamin also reinvented the wine glass by creating an instrument known as the glass armonica for which even Mozart wrote music. As a fellow musician, this increases my admiration for him.

For a period of Franklin's life, he would spend a week at a time focusing on one of his 13 virtues. Through this process, he hoped to achieve what he considered moral perfection. Eventually, he relented on this goal and considered a 'speckled axe best.' This refers to a metaphor of his in which a person must spin a grinding wheel long

enough that his axe is perfectly shiny but after days of grinding, he realizes that though his axe is not perfect it's all he needs.

I would ask Franklin about his fight for perfection and if he wishes he could have gone further in its pursuit. I have always admired his impressive weekly dedication and I believe it created lasting effects on his personality which I would love to more fully understand. I am always searching for perfection but often I wind up considering my own speckled axe best.

Given the opportunity, I would also ask Benjamin what was his secret for balancing life. He managed many different occupations. In my day-to-day life sometimes I find it hard to balance my time between many odd projects. Benjamin's many facets of ingenuity in his work strike me as a feat and it is a quality which I dearly wish to attain one day.

Benjamin Franklin was an extraordinary character with impressive accomplishments. The Franklin I imagine is a Politician, a Scientist, and a Philosopher. To spend time with Benjamin would create a conversation unlike any other that I've had and I believe there would be monumental amounts of knowledge. For this reason, I consider Benjamin Franklin to be the perfect candidate.