

Doug Manuel

Keynote speaker on human connection. Creator of the From Me To We™ Method.

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- Former BBC documentary producer
 - Shared the stage with Oprah Winfrey
 - Harvard Business School · IMD · HEC Paris
 - TED speaker
 - Founder, Lighting Up Lives NGO
 - INSEAD · CEIBS · World Economic Forum

Doug Manuel doesn't simply talk about human connection – he creates it, live and in real time.

Loneliness quietly takes a team apart. Belonging is what puts it back together. Doug has spent thirty years understanding how that shift happens – starting with himself in the villages of rural West Africa, and spending most of them on stages around the world, from Harvard Business School to the World Economic Forum.

He arrived at that understanding by an unlikely route. Doug left school at seventeen, drifted through the travel industry and talked his way into a runner's job with a film company, which turned into eight years at the BBC. Then, at twenty-seven, a friend took him along to a djembe drumming workshop. Within months he had quit the BBC, rented out his flat and flown to Gambia, Senegal and Guinea to study with the masters.

What began as a personal journey became his life's work: understanding what allows human beings to connect deeply, overcome their differences and perform as one. He bought a home in the coastal Senegalese village of Abéné, and thirty years later he is still returning.

Today Doug is an internationally sought-after keynote speaker, performer, filmmaker and humanitarian. He has delivered more than 1,000 events for over 500 organizations, including many of the Fortune 500, and has worked alongside IMD Business School for more than twenty years. He has taken the same three steps into leadership teams and business schools, and into refugee centres, schools and prisons. Whether addressing senior executives or several thousand people in an arena, he combines storytelling, music, film and interactive rhythm-based exercises to turn passive audiences into active participants.

His work responds directly to one of the greatest challenges facing organizations today: talented people who are increasingly isolated, disengaged and disconnected from one another. As Doug puts it, loneliness is not the absence of other bodies – it is the absence of being known by them. Through the From Me To We™ Method – awareness of self, awareness of others, collective synergy – Doug helps participants recognize the habits that create separation, become more aware of those around them, and experience what becomes possible when individual contributions align around a shared purpose.

The result is far more than a moment of entertainment. Silos begin to dissolve. Trust grows. Energy shifts. People feel seen, valued and part of something bigger than themselves. Teams leave more connected, more collaborative and ready to move forward together.

Beyond the stage, Doug is producing a feature documentary about the cure to the loneliness and isolation epidemic, and he founded Lighting Up Lives, a nonprofit that has brought solar energy and sustainable community solutions to underserved villages in West Africa – reflecting the principle at the heart of everything he does: meaningful change is not created **for** people, but **with** them.

BOOKING

Formats

The Keynote	30–75 minutes · up to 5,000 people · conference stage, leadership summit or auditorium. Virtual option available.
The Drums	15–90 minutes · 10 to 3,000 people · every hand on a drum, one team by the end of the session.
Workshops	Half a day · 10 to 200 people · time to turn the insight into habits.

Not sure which format? If your people will be seated in rows in a large auditorium, The Keynote is the one. If they can sit with an instrument in front of them, consider The Drums. Doug speaks to your organizers before the event and tailors the framework to your theme either way.

Enquiries: hello@dougmanuel.com · answered within 24 hours. Headshots, the stage introduction script and the technical rider are all at dougmanuel.com/for-planners.

SHORT VERSIONS**Ready-to-use introductions**

Copy these straight into your program, website or app. No approval needed.

One line (19 words)

Doug Manuel is a keynote speaker on human connection and the creator of the From Me To We™ Method.

Short (65 words)

Doug Manuel is a keynote speaker on human connection, a former BBC documentary producer and the creator of the From Me To We™ Method. He left an eight-year BBC career to study drumming in West Africa and has spent thirty years since between rural Senegal and the world's leading stages, delivering over 1,000 events for more than 500 organizations, including many of the Fortune 500.

Medium (127 words)

Doug Manuel doesn't simply talk about human connection – he creates it, live and in real time. A former BBC documentary producer, he left broadcasting to study music in West Africa and spent thirty years learning how belonging is actually built. Today he brings that understanding to conference stages worldwide, from Harvard Business School to the World Economic Forum, using storytelling, music and participation to turn an audience into a team. His From Me To We™ Method moves a room through three steps – awareness of self, awareness of others, collective synergy – so that people leave not just informed but changed. He is producing a feature documentary about the cure to the loneliness and isolation epidemic and is the founder of the Lighting Up Lives NGO.