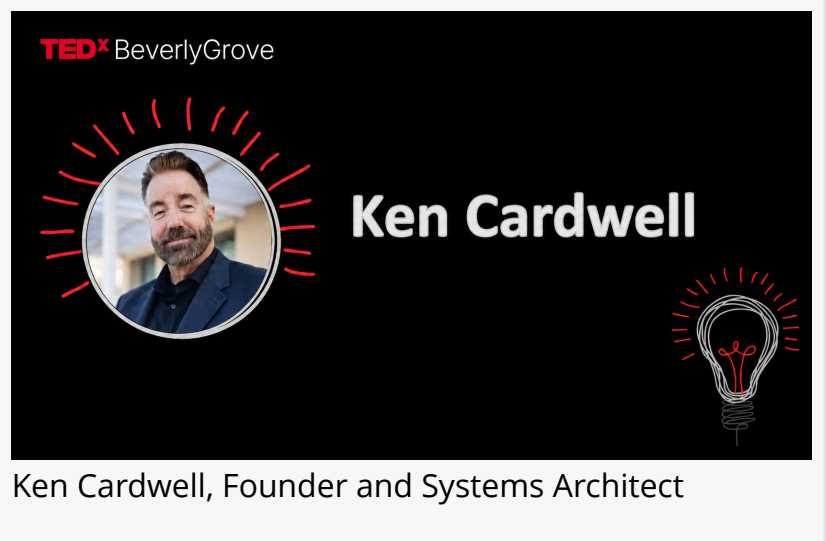


TEDx Talks Releases Ken Cardwell and Johnny Wu TEDxBeverlyGrove Talks on Identity, AI, and Performance

The newly released talks examine who is representing us, from synthetic identity and AI delegation to the pursuit of applause and external validation

WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA, UNITED STATES, September 2, 2026

/EINPresswire.com/ -- TEDx Talks has released two additional talks from the TEDxBeverlyGrove 2026 speaker series, both addressing a version of the same question from opposite directions: when something else is representing you, whether a synthetic identity or a curated version of yourself, who is actually in control of what people see.



“

Delegation without identity is power without authorship,”

Cardwell told the TEDxBeverlyGrove audience.

The talks, delivered on March 14, 2026, at the Marilyn Monroe Theatre in West Hollywood under the theme "Reimagining the Possible," approach that question through very different disciplines, one technological, one personal.

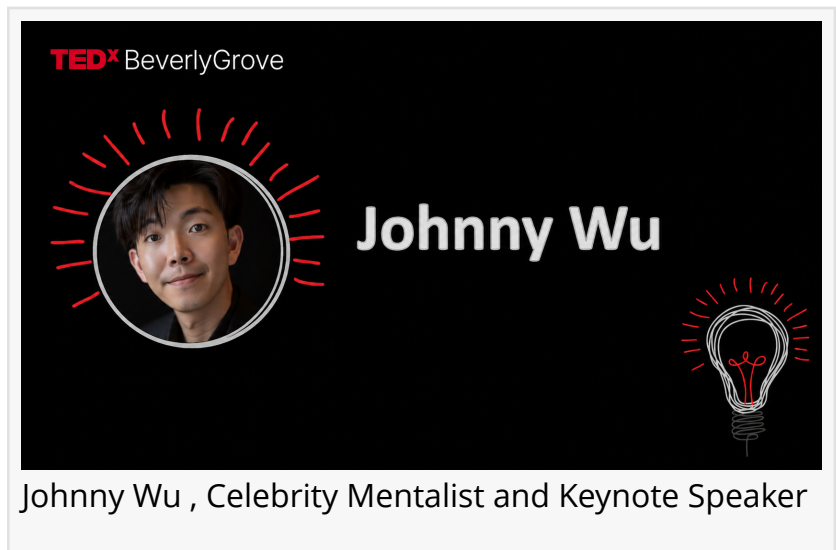
Ken Cardwell: Identity, AI, and Who Gets to Represent You

Founder and systems architect Ken Cardwell opened his talk by pointing out that for most people, a deepfake feels like a distant threat. For Cardwell, it is a symptom of a structural problem that has already arrived.

Cardwell is the founder of ActorForge and the Virtual Actors Guild, where he is building early infrastructures for governed synthetic performers, digital entities designed to operate with defined identity, consent, authorship, and lifecycle control. He has filed multiple provisional patents spanning synthetic identity binding, delegated presence, lifecycle management, and

platform authorization frameworks, work focused on making digital representation accountable in an age of programmable identity.

His talk argues that the question is no longer whether AI will represent people. It already does, in synthetic voices, deepfaked likenesses, and automated agents acting on someone's behalf. The real question, Cardwell argued, is whether that representation carries any of the consent, authorship, or accountability a real identity requires.



Ken Cardwell's talk is now available on the TEDx Talks YouTube channel.

Johnny Wu: Is Your Success Just an Illusion?

Celebrity mentalist and keynote speaker Johnny Wu took a different route to a related question. Born in Taiwan and raised in Toronto, Wu built his talk around his own journey from a bullied immigrant kid to a nationally recognized performer with over 2,000 five-star reviews and clients including Google, Netflix, Amazon, and Bvlgari.

His talk, "Is Your Success Just an Illusion?", uses storytelling and live demonstration to examine what Wu calls the oldest trick in the modern playbook: confusing applause for alignment. Wu argues that many people spend years climbing toward a version of success they never actually chose for themselves, mistaking external validation for internal direction.

Wu described the talk not as a pep talk, but as a mirror, an invitation for the audience to examine the invisible expectations shaping their own path before climbing any further.

"We think we're making our own moves. But most of us are living by someone else's rule," Wu told the TEDxBeverlyGrove audience.

Johnny Wu's talk is now available on the TEDx Talks YouTube channel.

Two Talks. One Thread.

Cardwell and Wu did not coordinate their talks, and neither talk was built with the other in mind. What connects them is a shared concern with representation, who or what is actually speaking for a person, whether that is an AI system acting without consent or a curated version of the self built for applause instead of alignment.

Both talks are now available as part of the TEDxBeverlyGrove 2026 speaker series on the TEDx Talks YouTube channel.

About TEDxBeverlyGrove

TEDxBeverlyGrove is an independently organized TED event devoted to ideas that transform culture, leadership, and human potential. The 2026 theme, "Reimagining the Possible," invited leaders across disciplines to rethink how we navigate uncertainty, rebuild from loss, and discover what becomes possible when endurance replaces inspiration.

About Ken Cardwell

Ken Cardwell is a founder and systems architect working at the intersection of identity, artificial intelligence, and human representation. He is the founder of ActorForge and the Virtual Actors Guild, where he is building early infrastructures for governed synthetic performers, digital entities designed to operate with defined identity, consent, authorship, and lifecycle control. He has filed multiple provisional patents spanning synthetic identity binding, delegated presence, lifecycle management, and platform authorization frameworks, focused on making digital representation accountable in an age of programmable identity.

About Johnny Wu

Johnny Wu is a celebrity mentalist and keynote speaker known for blending illusion with insights on identity, ambition, and performance. With over 2,000 five-star reviews and performances for brands including Google, Netflix, Amazon, and Bvlgari, Wu brings both credibility and depth to the stage. Born in Taiwan and raised in Toronto, his journey from bullied immigrant to nationally recognized performer shaped his core message: many people are chasing a version of success they never consciously chose.

[About Marvin V. Acuna](#)

Marvin V. Acuna is a TEDx Organizer and Producer. In that role, he curates speakers, ideas, and the architecture of a high-trust live stage. Separate from his work as a TEDx producer, Acuna advises leaders, founders, attorneys, and public figures as a speaking coach and talk architect. He helps clients uncover the idea inside their story, sharpen their message, and deliver it with clarity, authority, and impact. He also serves as Head of Business Strategy for The Lawyers Roundtable and is the founder of MoBal Systems.

About TED

TED is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to discovering, debating and spreading ideas that spark conversation, deepen understanding and drive meaningful change. Our organization is devoted to curiosity, reason, wonder and the pursuit of knowledge, without an agenda. We welcome people from every discipline and culture who seek a deeper understanding of the world and connection with others, and we invite everyone to engage with ideas and activate them in your community.

TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, but today it spans a multitude of worldwide communities and initiatives exploring everything from science and business to education, arts and global issues. In addition to the TED Talks curated from our annual conferences and published on TED.com, we produce original podcasts, short video series, animated educational lessons (TED-Ed) and TV programs that are translated into more than 100 languages. Through The Audacious Project, TED has helped catalyze \$6.6 billion in funding for projects that support bold solutions to the world's most urgent challenges. Follow TED on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, and X.

About TEDx, x = independently organized event

In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At a TEDx event, TED Talks video and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and connection. These local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, where x = independently organized TED event. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events are self-organized.

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