

Scott/Nov. 1/Matt Cutts

While 30 days may not seem like a long period of time, the Google engineer who spoke at IUP says one month "is just about the right amount of time to add a new habit or subtract a habit."

"The idea is actually pretty simple," Matt Cutts explained. "Think about something you've always wanted to add to your life and try it."

Cutts spoke at 5:00 p.m., Oct. 25 in Davis Hall on the IUP campus. Sponsored by the IUP journalism department, Cutts gave his brief, positive speech on a life-changing practice to roughly 20 students.

"My self-confidence grew," Cutts said of his experience. "I went from desk-dwelling computer nerd to the kind of guy who bikes to work for fun." Such self-confidence is what led to Cutts climbing Mt Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain.

Cutts began doing 30 day challenges a few years ago. After feeling like he was stuck in a rut, Cutts found inspiration from Morgan Spurlock, the documentary filmmaker who created the reality television show "30 Days."

"If you really want something badly enough, you can do anything for 30 days," Cutts said. During one 30-day period, he wrote a 50,000 word novel, claiming the key was to write 1,667 words a day before going to bed.

"Is my book the next great American novel? No!" Cutts said, gaining laughs from the students. "I wrote it in a month. It's awful!" He added that he no longer has to say he's a computer scientist when he meets people at parties. "If I want to I can say I'm a novelist."

Besides writing a novel, Cutts' 30 day challenges have included removing sugar and caffeine from his diet, biking to work, not watching television and taking a picture every day.

“I learned that when I made small sustainable changes—things I could keep doing—they were more likely to stick,” Cutts said.

While some students were inspired by Cutts’ speech, others were a bit skeptical.

“I feel that habits have a lot to do with motivation and will power,” said Adam Haring, “and not the fact that you do it for a certain quantity of days.”

Haring is a journalism student and sat next to Ashley Hartung during Cutts’ speech.

“I felt it was a good idea and a good concept,” Hartung said, “however, his presentation was rather corny.”

With the assistance of Powerpoint, Cutts had shown pictures from his challenges, one of which featured a mountain of candy bars and was described as Day 31 of his no-sugar diet.

Whether students were skeptical of or inspired by his speech, Cutts received applause from his audience and left them with a final thought.

“What are you waiting for?” he asked. “I guarantee you the next 30 days are going to pass whether you like it or not. Why not think of something you have always wanted to try and give it a shot for the next 30 days?”