Shamelessness and Modesty

Lincoln University
Oakland, CA

Philip B. Stark
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University of California, Berkeley
Ne sutor ultra crepidam.
Ultracrepidarianism

- opining beyond one’s expertise
The Dunning-Kruger Effect (1999)

- People with low competence tend to overestimate their competence.
The Dunning-Kruger Effect (1999)

- People with low competence tend to overestimate their competence.
- Documented in business, politics, medicine, chess, driving, flying, literacy, debate.
Overconfidence Effect

- Our confidence is typically much higher than our accuracy.
People think they understand things better than they really do.
Illusion of Explanatory Depth (2002)

- People think they understand things better than they really do.
- You don’t know what you don’t know.
107 Nobel laureates sign letter blasting Greenpeace over GMOs

By Joel Achenbach

June 30, 2016 at 9:10 a.m. EDT
160 Nobel Prize winners have signed:

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<tr>
<th>Chemistry</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Literature</th>
<th>Medicine</th>
<th>Peace</th>
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Nullius in verba.  
—Royal Society of London
Be intellectually humble:

- You don’t know everything. Nobody does.
- Ego can get in the way of learning, discovery, and curiosity.
- There are many smart people who have thought hard and have lots of experience. Learn from them!
Imposter Syndrome (1978)

- Feeling like a fraud—despite being competent.
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- Feeling like a fraud—despite being competent.
- Common among high achievers.
Be intellectually shameless:

- Fear can block learning, experimentation, discovery, & accomplishment.
- Trust that you can learn almost anything if you try.
- Trust that you can contribute, with or without a credential or coursework.
- Follow your curiosity & passion.
- Acknowledge your limitations—and plow ahead anyway.
Modesty and Shamelessness are Compatible

- The opposite of modesty is *arrogance*.
- The opposite of shamelessness is *timidity*. 


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- Everything is negotiable.
Congratulations, Lincoln University Class of 2023!