

Shamelessness and Modesty

Lincoln University
Oakland, CA

Philip B. Stark

27 May 2023

University of California, Berkeley

Apelles of Kos, 4th century BCE painter

Ne sutor ultra crepidam.

- 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.

Illusion of Explanatory Depth (2002)

- 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



What you need to know about GMOs

1:30

160 Nobel Prize winners have signed:

Chemistry	Economics	Literature	Medicine	Peace	Physics
50	15	1	54	2	38

160 Nobel Prize winners have signed:

Chemistry	Economics	Literature	Medicine	Peace	Physics
50	15	1	54	2	38

Science is the belief in the ignorance of experts.

—Richard P. Feynman

160 Nobel Prize winners have signed:

Chemistry	Economics	Literature	Medicine	Peace	Physics
50	15	1	54	2	38

Science is the belief in the ignorance of experts.

—Richard P. Feynman

The core of [the scientific method] is remembering your own level of ignorance.

—Jaron Lanier

160 Nobel Prize winners have signed:

Chemistry	Economics	Literature	Medicine	Peace	Physics
50	15	1	54	2	38

Science is the belief in the ignorance of experts.

—Richard P. Feynman

The core of [the scientific method] is remembering your own level of ignorance.

—Jaron Lanier

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.

Imposter Syndrome (1978)

- 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*.

Herbert S. Stark's rules of business

- Don't fall in love with something before you buy it.

Herbert S. Stark's rules of business

- Don't fall in love with something before you buy it.
- Never make an offer you're not ashamed of.

Herbert S. Stark's rules of business

- Don't fall in love with something before you buy it.
- Never make an offer you're not ashamed of.
- It's easier to buy than to sell.

Herbert S. Stark's rules of business

- Don't fall in love with something before you buy it.
- Never make an offer you're not ashamed of.
- It's easier to buy than to sell.
- You make money when you buy, not when you sell.

Herbert S. Stark's rules of business

- Don't fall in love with something before you buy it.
- Never make an offer you're not ashamed of.
- It's easier to buy than to sell.
- You make money when you buy, not when you sell.
- Nothing increases the selling price more than a new coat of paint.

Herbert S. Stark's rules of business

- Don't fall in love with something before you buy it.
- Never make an offer you're not ashamed of.
- It's easier to buy than to sell.
- You make money when you buy, not when you sell.
- Nothing increases the selling price more than a new coat of paint.
- Everything is negotiable.

**Congratulations, Lincoln University
Class of 2023!**
