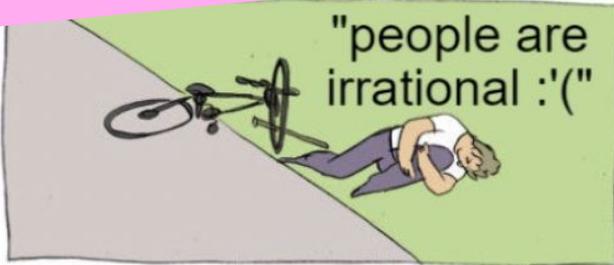


# THE LOOP

commented on Mar 9, 2024

You have single-handedly restored my faith in humanity. I think your analysis/understanding of my argument and what happened in that Twitter thread are spot on.

## DIY! INTERNET ARGUMENT SURVIVAL GUIDE



## A BUCKET FILLED WITH NOTHING !?

"Feeling pointless might hurt as much as feeling pain."



## \$\$\$ LIES PEOPLE TELL ABOUT MONEY

"Now she thinks she owes me AN ETERNAL DEBT."

EXCLUSIVE: FIELD GUIDE FOR GETTING PAST REVIEWER 2



## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The LOOP is a record of the undertakings, studies, and labours of curiosity from around the world. Our ingenious contributors offer accounts of the present Philosophical Matters from around the world. We salute our friends for their thoughtful reporting.*



**–SLIME MOLD TIME MOLD** 🌸

**Page 2:** 📍 You are here 📍

**Page 3:** MISS PAIN PIGGY 🐷 LOVES TO PUT HER HAND IN A BUCKET OF ICE 🧊🧊🧊

**Page 6:** Creatine 💪 and PMS !? Sign up today!

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**Page 22:** Contributors 🖋️🎨

# MISS PAIN PIGGY LOVES TO PUT HER HAND IN A BUCKET OF ICE

## *A party experiment*

By Adam Mastroianni - Experimental History on Substack

My friends and I were hosting a party and we thought it would be funny to ask people to stick their hands in various buckets, just to see how long they would do it. We think people are way weirder than anyone appreciates, and we figured this might be a way to put a number to it.



### ~\*~\*~\***MATERIALS**~\*~\*~\*

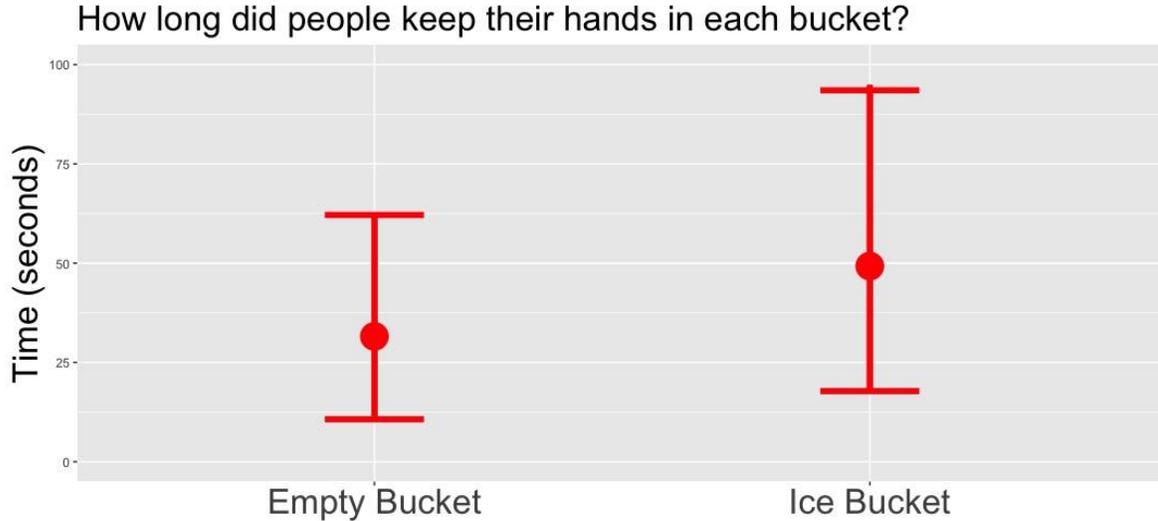
We decided on two buckets: one filled with ice water and the other one filled with nothing. Sticking your hand in a bucket of ice water is known in the psychology biz as the "cold pressor task." Researchers use this task to study pain because it hurts so bad. Sticking your hand in an empty bucket is just a weird ass thing to do.

### ~\*~\*~\***PROCEDURE**~\*~\*~\*

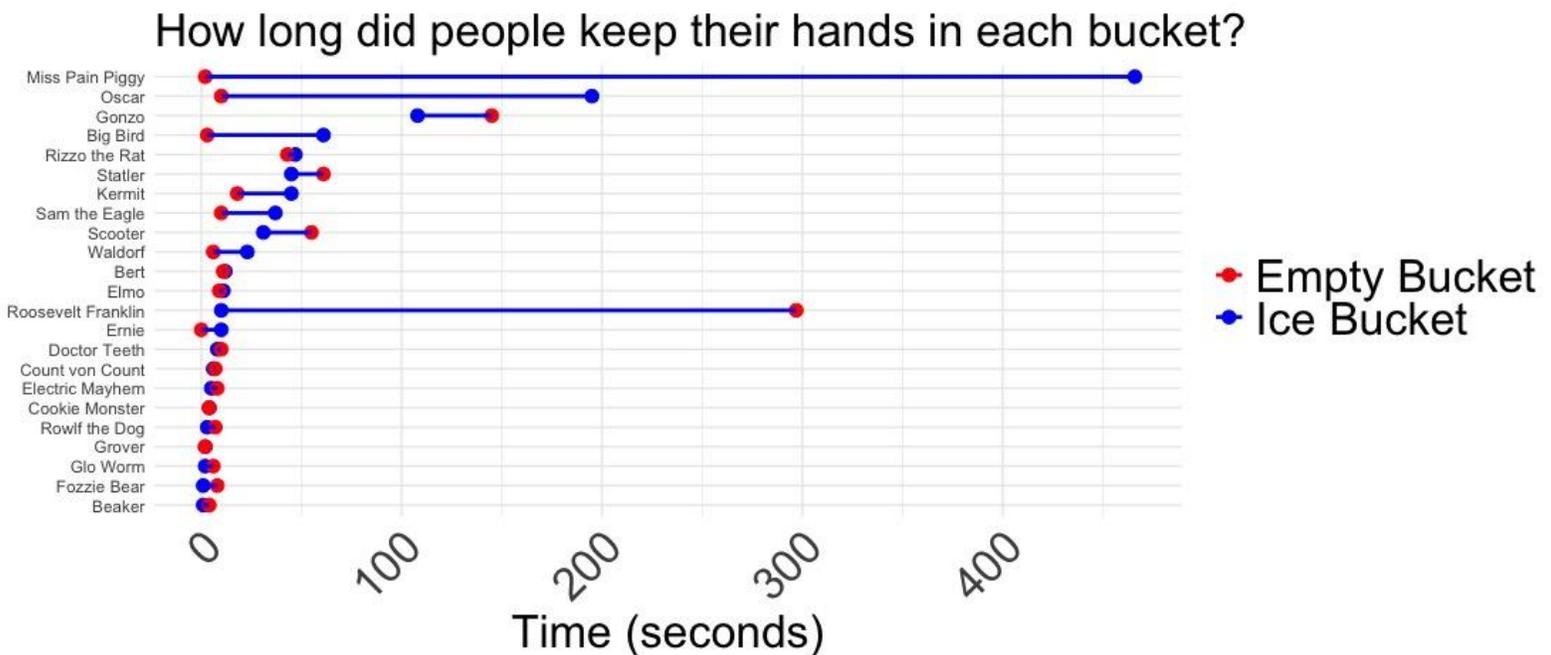
We brought partygoers to the second floor one by one and flipped a coin to determine which bucket they would encounter first. Upon entering the room, we told them, "Please put your hand in the bucket for as long as you want." We timed how long they kept their hands in the buckets.



On average, people kept their hands in the ice bucket for 49.26 seconds, and they kept their hands in the empty bucket for 31.57 seconds. These two averages were not significantly different,  $t(22) = 0.69, p = .50$ .



But averages aren't very revealing here because people differed from each other a lot. Here's another way of looking at the same data. Each participant has their own line and two dots: one for how long they spent in the empty bucket, and one for how long they spent in the ice bucket.





We learned two things from this study.

## 1. *People are weird*

Putting your hand in a bucket of ice is supposed to be a negative experience for everybody. But some people liked it! One guy thanked the experimenter for the opportunity to make his hand really cold, which he enjoyed very much. Another one revealed this: you know those drink chillers at the grocery store where you can put a bottle of white wine or a six pack in a vat of icy water and it swirls around and it chills your drink really fast? He used to stick his hand in one of those *for fun*.

**STICK YOUR  
HAND IN  
HERE—IT'S FUN**



## 2. *Feeling pointless might hurt as much as feeling pain.*

Putting your hand in a bucket of ice is supposed to hurt, and our participants confirmed that it *did* hurt. Putting your hand in an empty bucket does not hurt at all. But judging by the time spent doing them, people liked each of these experiences *the same amount*.

Maybe that's because sticking your hand in an empty bucket is boring and humiliating. Say what you will about sticking your hand in an ice bucket: it's something to do! You feel like you're testing your mettle, your skin changes colors, your fingers tingle and that's kinda fun. When you put your hand in an empty bucket, *nothing happens*. You just stand there like an idiot with your hand in a bucket.

People think physical pain is inherently negative, like it's pure badness. But when you lock eyes with Miss Pain Piggy and he holds his hand in ice water for 466 seconds straight, you start to question a lot of assumptions.

# Creatine and PMS

## *The hottest new EA intervention?*

By Guy — @nosilverv on Twitter

In recent months, an unexpected link between creatine supplementation and PMS relief has been making waves on Twitter. It all started with a casual, personal observation: I had been taking 5 grams of creatine daily and my girlfriend, who saw me doing it, thought, "Why not?" What happened next shocked both of us: she reported that her typically painful PMS symptoms had subjectively improved by 70–80%.

We thought, "No way this is real," but I tweeted it out just in case. Replies poured in with several women reporting the same effect: creatine substantially eased their PMS symptoms. Entranced by the glory of potentially having stumbled onto a hot new EA intervention, I ran a Twitter poll to dig deeper.

The results? Out of 249 votes, 4.4% of women who tried creatine said it helped, while 4% said it didn't. That's 52.4% reporting improvement which, combined with creatine's low cost, easy availability, and safety profile—and how bad PMS can get—gets you a high-EV intervention. Bingo.

**“That’s 52.4% reporting improvement which, combined with creatine’s low cost, easy availability, and safety profile—and how bad PMS can get—gets you a high-EV intervention. Bingo”**

Dreams of glory and fame aside, what might be going on here? Creatine is originally a gymbro staple for getting swole but, more recently, it's also been linked to mood improvements. Could it be affecting hormones, inflammation, or neurotransmitters too? We don't know yet, but the anecdotes keep stacking up.

Maybe creatine offers a simple and affordable way to ease PMS symptoms—but we need more data to make sure. If you're a woman who has tried creatine, please share your experience through our survey below..

Who knows? This could mark the start of a breakthrough intervention—or at the very least, a practical PMS survival hack that doesn't involve crying into a pint of ice cream.

**IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, TRY ~5 GRAMS OF CREATINE MONOHYDRATE IN THE DAYS LEADING UP TO & INCLUDING YOUR PMS, THEN FILL OUT THIS FORM —————>**



# LIES WE TELL ABOUT \$\$

Conversations with millennials and their parents reveal the lies we tell each other about money—and the lies we tell ourselves. True(ish) stories, fake names.



## The Bank of Mom and Dad 🏦

The affluent Smith parents provide a “**parent loan**” of **\$20,000** to their 30-year-old daughter Kelly, outlined in no fewer than seven signed PDF documents—only to “forgive” the loan post-graduation. 🎓

The Jones family skipped the written docs, but imposed a **market-rate interest**. Infinitely committed to “**simulating the real world**,” the interest rate was lowered to 0% under the CARES Act during the COVID-19 pandemic. 🧑‍⚕️



## A Holiday Loophole

Maddie Williams proudly paid her own MBA tuition without parental support. Okay, her parents may have covered the two quarters that overlapped with Christmas. But those were just **Christmas presents!!** 🎄 🎁 🧑‍🎄

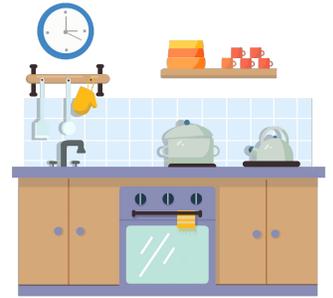
## The Secretive Shall Inherit 💰



Blake is DEFINITELY going to tell his conservative Christian parents that he **doesn't believe in god anymore**. But he's sure it can wait until he has **full control of the trust fund**. 💰

# LIES WE TELL ABOUT \$\$

## Quid Pro Kitchen !?



Shelly was adamant—she **WOULD NOT ACCEPT** her in-laws' offer to **pay for her upcoming wedding**. 🏠 She set a firm boundary: Shelly's in-laws are using **THEIR MONEY !** to **renovate Shelly's kitchen**, and Shelly will use **HER MONEY !!** to **pay for the wedding**.

## An Eternal Debt, Forgotten



**Kim:** One time I bought my mom a plane ticket ✈️ to escape a bad situation. Now she thinks she owes me **AN ETERNAL DEBT**.

**(Me to Kim's mom):** So, has Kim ever given you money?

**Kim's Mom:** I can't really remember. 🤔

## Who Pays the Phone Bill? ➡️ 📱

**Hannah:** I pay the phone bill for me and my mom. I think I started helping out bc my mom lost her job. 😞 😞

**(Me to Hannah's mom):** So, who pays the phone bill these days?

**Hannah's mom:** I made Hannah start paying it after she got drunk on vacation and lost her damn phone in a cab. 🚕

# OUTMANEUVERING PEER REVIEW

## The field guide for getting past Reviewer 2

By Matt Wedel

*The Net interprets censorship as damage and routes around it.*

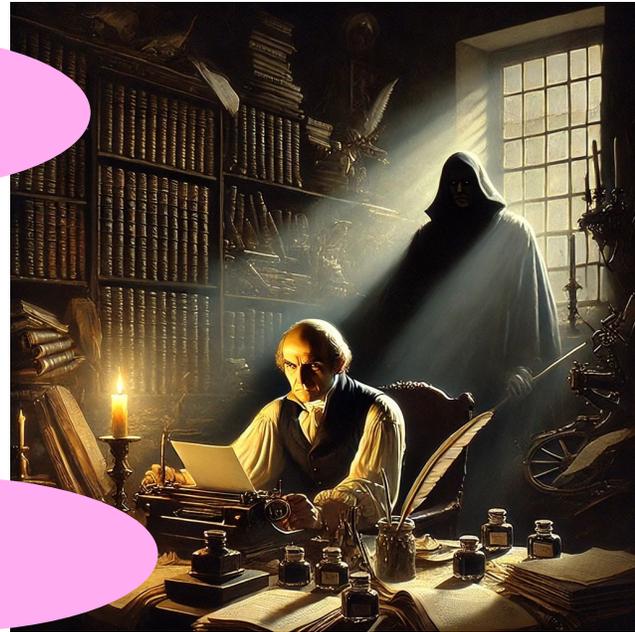
- John Gilmore

For the purposes of this essay, unwelcome peer review comments are damage, and we'll explore some strategies to route around them. If you're doing solid work and Reviewer 2 just has a stick up their butt, here are some strategies to try.

### 1. Pick the right enemy

Your adversary is not Reviewer 2.

*It's the editor.*



### 2. Deploy “agreement chaff”

Sort the reviewers' suggestions into four bins:

(1) **Generally useful changes** that you want to make anyway because they will make the paper better. <- *Give these up freely.* This is your “agreement chaff,” the freebies that make it look like you're complying.

(2) **Neutral to minorly-painful changes** that require some work on your part but don't degrade the paper to an unacceptable level <- *Give these up too!*

(3) **Things you'd really like to keep in the paper**, or not add to the paper, but that aren't deal-breakers. <- *Don't give these up!!*

(4) **Suggested changes that are so unwelcome** that they would mangle the paper, to the point that you'd rather just pull it and go to another outlet. <- *NEVER EVER GIVE THESE UP!!!*

### 3. Pit reviewers against each other

Let's say that Reviewer 2 thinks your attempt to synthesize the fossil record of Early Cretaceous dinosaurs – which is near and dear to your heart – is pointless bloat and wants you to cut it, but Reviewer 1 says that it's really useful and one of the best parts of the paper (to pick a hypothetical example completely at random).

Easy peasy: leave that section in the paper, and in the resubmission cover letter (or rebuttal letter if that's a thing your chosen outlet does), explicitly tell the editor that *because Reviewer 1 really liked that section*, you're leaving it in.

### 4. Enthusiastic noncompliance

Explicitly and enthusiastically adopt as many reviewer suggestions as possible — just elide the fact that you didn't follow Reviewer 2's 17th (stupid) suggestion.

This strategy is most effective against the annoying “death by a thousand cuts” style of review. It will be all-but-impossible to defeat a competent reviewer with only three suggestions using this strategy. But a bloviating asshole who wants you to make 97 changes? They've already done most of the work for you. You might well be able to skip 10% of their suggestions before any alarms go off.

***“bloviating asshole”***



### 3. Exhaust the editor

Write a rebuttal letter that is longer than the review, exhaustively citing your evidence. You may just be able to sway the editor by sheer weight of argument, or mentally exhaust them to the point that they internally say, “Fine, whatever, I need to go make dinner.”



*“The Exhausted Editor”, a lost work by Rembrandt*

### 4. Undermine Reviewer 2

Try to write as if you and the editor are the sane, reasonable people stuck in the unpleasant situation of having to deal with Reviewer 2. “Despite the abrasive tone and opaque argumentation, Reviewer 2’s comment on line 227 led us to substantially revise that section” (where by ‘substantially revise that section’ you mean ‘minimally revise that section’).

*“...it might just restore (a miniscule portion of) your faith in humanity.”*

## 5. If all else fails, try blunt honesty

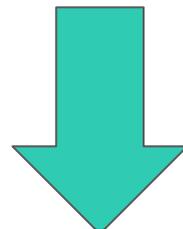
Sometimes it's worth a shot to write to them, one imperfect primate to another, and openly and frankly explain your position.

Why do I think this would possibly work? A few years ago I had a paper rejected by the editor even though the reviewer comments had been fairly positive. I emailed the editor and basically said, “What's up? The reviewer comments were positive. Please reconsider publishing our paper.” The editor agreed, and the paper was published.

The advantages of this method are that it costs very little in time or energy, and it might just restore (a miniscule portion of) your faith in humanity.



**MATT'S  
BLOG**



# LUGOL'S NOTES

By CHANDLER GARRET

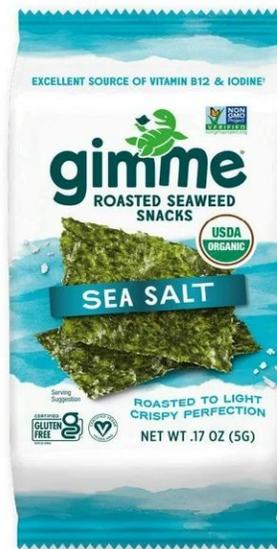
The story begins when I noticed that the 6-packs of "gimme" brand roasted seaweed snacks at my grocery store were on sale, and decided to buy several dozen.

As soon as I saw the giant tower built from boxes of these snacks, I started to crave them, and I suspected that this craving might reflect an iodine deficiency. The snacks don't contain much besides iodine and salt (40 mg sodium, 55 mcg iodine, 3.2 mcg B12, plus tiny amounts of fat, protein, and fiber). I do like these other nutrients, in fact they are among my favorites, but I wasn't craving other things that contain sodium or B12.

*Editor's Note: The medical information in this piece is provided as an informational resource only, and is not to be used or relied on for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. This information does not create any patient-physician relationship between you and THE LOOP, and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment. Please consult your health care provider before making any health care decisions or for guidance about a specific medical condition.*

If I bought a huge supply, and let myself eat as many as I want, I wondered how many snack packs I would eat before I got tired of them. So I decided to try it.

To my surprise, I was able to eat these snacks ALL DAY, I basically never got tired of them. I took this as some evidence in support of the idea that I was craving large doses of iodine.



JUST 3 INGREDIENTS!

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
Serving size 1 package (5g)	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories 30</b>	
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 2g	<b>3%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>1%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 40mg	<b>2%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 1g	<b>0%</b>
Dietary Fiber 1g	<b>5%</b>
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	<b>0%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 1g	
Vit. D 0mcg 0%	Calcium 0mg 0%
Iron 0.3mg 2%	Potas. 70mg 2%
Vit. B <sub>12</sub> 3.2mcg 130%	Iodine 55mcg 35%

\*The % Daily Values (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

INGREDIENTS: SEAWEED\*, SUNFLOWER OIL\*, SEA SALT. \*ORGANIC  
Made on shared equipment that also processes soy, sesame oil.



the object of my desire

The seaweed results were suggestive, but you can't eat seaweed all day [**Fact Check: FALSE**]. Ok, you can eat seaweed all day, but I didn't want to [**Fact Check: FALSE**]. Ok ok fine, I did want to, but it seemed more rigorous to go right to the source and test iodine directly [**Fact Check: TRUE**]. So next I purchased a 2oz bottle of J.CROW'S® Lugol's Solution of Iodine 2%. In case anyone wants to replicate this at home, the exact product I used was: (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B001AEFM9Y>). *[Editor's note: DON'T get the 5% solution, as it's a much stronger concentration and may burn a hole in your esophagus.]*

The self-experiment ran from September 9 to October 6, a total of 27 days. I didn't plan for this in advance, that's just how long I kept going for.

## Dosing

By my estimation, one drop of Lugol's 2% provides a dose of ~2500 micrograms of iodine. In comparison, the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for adult men and women is 150 micrograms of iodine per day. (That said, Americans are not very good at following health guidelines: median intake of iodine from food is in the range of 190 – 300 per day). The FDA puts the upper limit of iodine per day at 1,100 micrograms.

I'm skeptical. Mean consumption of iodine in Japan is estimated at more like 1,000-3,000 micrograms of iodine per day, so I'm pretty sure higher doses are safe.

Even so, I wanted to be extra cautious and not fry my thyroid by accident. So for the first step, I put one drop of Lugol's 2% on my wrist in the morning. In theory, iodine can be absorbed through the skin, a slower form of release because our skin is not as good at eating things as our mouths are. But this didn't make me feel anything in particular.

Around 1:00 pm the same day, I put one drop of Lugol's 2% in 2 cups of water, mixed it well, and drank half the water, sending the rest down the drain. This is effectively the same as consuming half a drop. In theory this was about 1250 micrograms, more than 8 times the RDA and slightly above the recommended upper limit, though still on the lower end of what people get in Japan.

For the next several days, I followed the same procedure: I put one drop of Lugol's 2% in 2 cups of water, mixed it well, and drank half the water, pouring the rest down the drain. It tasted a little sterile, which I guess it really was, since iodine is used as a disinfectant.

On September 14, I tried increasing the dose. Around 12:00 noon, I put one drop of Lugol's 2% in 2 cups of water, mixed it well, and drank half. This time, instead of sending the other half of the water down the drain, I saved it for later and took the second dose around 6:30 pm. Together the two doses made for about 2500 micrograms of iodine per day.

Perhaps I was being overly cautious, but it seemed worth ramping up slowly. Fortunately, I still felt ok on 2500 micrograms per day. So I kept following this procedure for the next several days.

Eventually I increased my dose to one drop taken all at once. On September 22, around 4:30 pm, I put one drop of Lugol's 2% in 2 cups of water, mixed well, and this time I drank all the water. Again this is about 2500 micrograms of iodine per day, just taken as a single dose.

## General Results

Early signs were positive. Even on the first day of the trial, the circulation in my feet seemed to have improved, I had a slightly heightened sense of smell, things felt brighter overall. I stayed up until 3 AM and felt super productive, went to bed, then couldn't sleep and worked until 4 AM instead. That felt pretty good.

After a couple of days, everything seemed just slightly better — I felt slightly stronger, my joints felt slightly more flexible, I was slightly more relaxed, and my head seemed more full of thoughts. I also noticed that I felt slightly more emotional — both positive and negative emotions. So if you try this at home, watch out for that.

But this was just at first. In retrospect, things were worse when I was taking higher doses. I was more stressed, and started to have a hard time sleeping. I noticed these symptoms a bit at the time, and I wondered if late-afternoon and early-evening doses might be disrupting my sleep. So, I tried taking the second doses a bit earlier, closer to the middle of the afternoon, and also skipped a dose at one point, but it's hard to tell if this made any difference.

**“The seaweed snacks now tasted like dry plastic, almost no appeal at all.”**

## Snacks Results

To test if my cravings had been reduced by the iodine self-treatment, on September 10 (Day 2) I went out and got more seaweed snacks. But even after taking the iodine drops for the first two days, for a total of around 2500 micrograms of iodine, I appeared to still have an almost unlimited drive to eat these things. Maybe I hadn't gotten enough iodine yet. I suspected I would benefit from more, which is why I eventually increased the dose.

On September 17, I noticed that the seaweed snacks, while not revolting, no longer held the same intense attraction. I could and did still eat them, but I didn't feel driven to keep eating and eating like I did before.

On September 25, I tried seaweed snacks again, and it was notable that I didn't feel at all compelled to eat them, even though lots were available.

On September 26, I found that seaweed snacks now tasted like dry plastic, almost no appeal at all.

## Closing Thoughts

On October 6, I stopped taking iodine.

I chose to end the study because my conclusion at the time was that there were no serious changes from the iodine, and taking it every day was a bit of a hassle.

This cut the study pretty short, and I definitely didn't get any firm answers. But I still feel good about ending the study where I did because it didn't feel like I could learn any more with such a simple, casual method. Unless I decided to try a higher dose, or decided to track things like my fatigue and mood more rigorously, more days wouldn't make more useful data.

What I notice in retrospect is that I was fairly happy and full of energy on half a drop a day, and things only started getting weird on higher doses. Maybe this was too high of a dose. Maybe it's because I started taking iodine in the afternoon and it messed up my sleep. Or maybe it's just coincidence. But it definitely suggests that half a drop a day might be the better dose.

If nothing else, up to 1 drop/day (about 2500 micrograms of iodine) was safe, at least for me and at least in the short term.



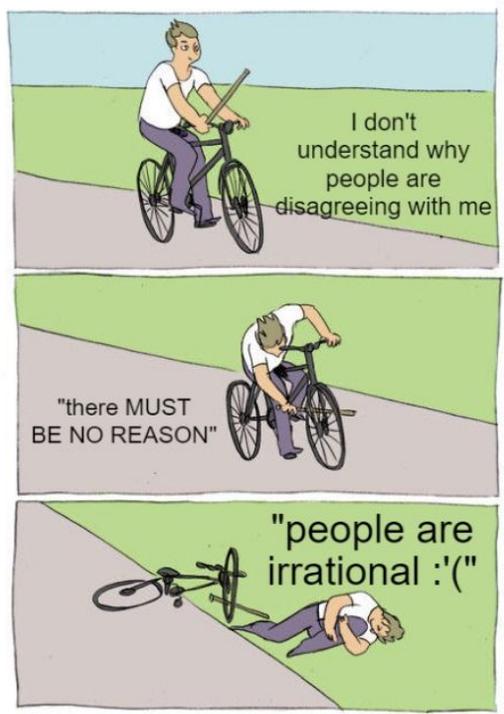


# INTERNET ARGUMENT SURVIVAL KIT



by DefenderOfBasic

**“I love arguing with strangers on the internet!” — said no one ever. But that’s because everyone’s always raw dogging it. Like trying to drive in an unfamiliar neighborhood without using GPS, and also you are blindfolded.**



← exhibit a

✨💖 Good news 💖✨ you can just try to understand people (they can't stop you). People do change their mind, all the time, just never in front of people smacking them on the head with “logic” & “reason”.



**Ozymandias**  
@Letskillplanets

Successfully replied to a polarizing Instagram story in good faith, debated, discussed and came pretty close to changing their mind. Feels incredibly good even if it wasn't successful. I hope @DefenderOfBasic is proud of me.

6:14 PM · 17 Sep 24 · 65 Views

commented on Mar 9, 2024

You have single-handedly restored my faith in humanity. I think your analysis/understanding of my argument and what happened in that Twitter thread are spot on.

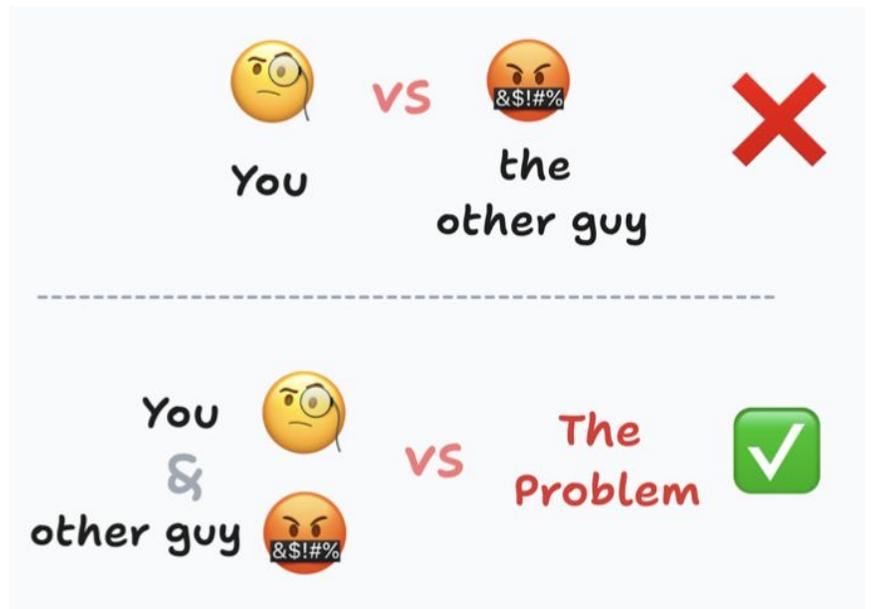
Thank you so much. I've been feeling so crappy watching all of these notifications come in calling me terrible things. I hope you're having a lovely day wherever you are.

## the correct fight stance

If it's you VS the other guy, you've already lost

If it's you AND the other guy VS the problem, you have a fighting chance

Remember, people who argue on the internet are *WEIRD*. They spend their limited time on earth spreading what they believe to be good and true, and fighting what they believe to be evil



In a world overcome with apathy, this is rare, and kind of beautiful 

## be a mirror

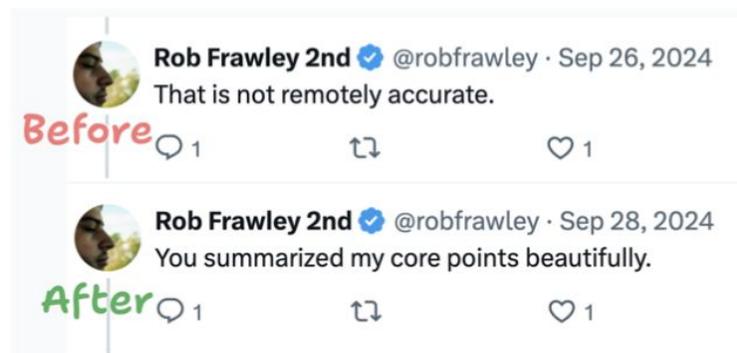
It's impossible to make progress on any argument until TWO conditions are met:

- (1) you understand them
- (2) they FEEL understood

 "no, you're wrong, because \_\_\_\_"  
-> they feel attacked,  
they stop listening

 "are you saying \_\_\_\_ ?"  
-> get the "enthusiastic yes"  
(THEN you can attack them)

(even if you are 100% sure you understand them, you still need to signal to THEM that you understand)



## 🤔 There are no unreasonable people on the internet 🤔

Everyone is smart, reasonable, and willing to change their mind. Strangely, there are no exceptions to this.

When you encounter something (1) wrong or (2) crazy, switch into puzzle mode: **why would a good, reasonable person say something so stupid & wrong?**

- ❌ "because they're stupid/evil"  
-> lazy, not true, fails to accurately predict their behavior
- ✅ "they believe it makes sense because"  
-> unravels a whole new worldview, provides great predictive power to future behavior

## 🧩 How to win EVERY internet argument 🎮

If all else fails, you can always change your own mind

the reason I've never lost an Internet argument is because I understand there is a bronze, silver, and gold medal

- 1 convince the other guy
- 2 get the other guy to understand you
- 3 understand the other guy

I always go for 3 first

9:20 AM · Aug 19, 2024 · 4,590 Views

12 18 178 38

 **Defender** ✓  
@DefenderOfBasic



hot tip for intellectual humility: when someone says something that objectively contradicts reality, the only question is why do they believe it

they're not an idiot, and neither are you. There is a puzzle in front of both of you, will you figure it out or give up?

4:53 PM · Jul 14, 2024 · 126.3K Views

38 572 4.5K 1.3K

## ⚠ Beware of load bearing beliefs ⚠

Even if you could change someone's mind & convince them of something true, it may not be a good idea

They may need to build scaffolding first

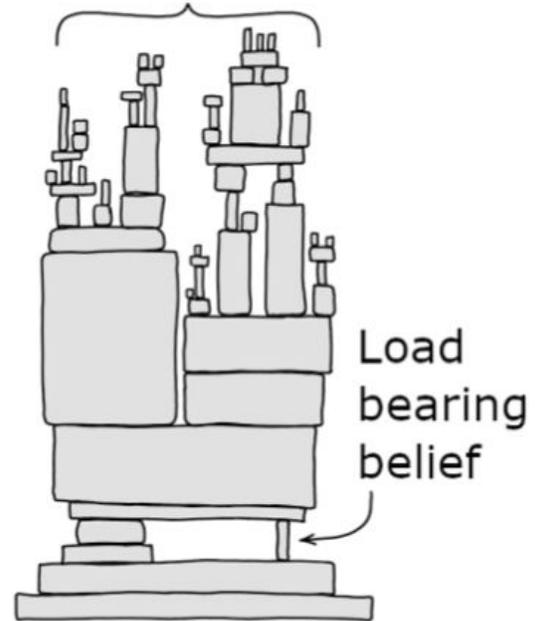


Substack



Twitter

their self-worth



## Criticizing your own people is how you win

The people most likely to change their mind are our own friends. If someone is doing propaganda for your side, you should call that out. Because, presumably, you're on the right side and you have better, true stories to tell.



N3W\_3NGLAND  
@N3W\_3NGLAND

Follow

I loath Kamala... but this was taken out of context. We gotta be fair. She didn't say don't say merry christmas she was talking about children not having a merry christmas so how dare we say it. It's important to be factual. Otherwise, what separates us from them?

7:20 PM · Aug 1, 2024 · 101.7K Views

Hank, my friend, I understand but you've lost the meta.

The TL;DR:

These types have been pitching over-the-counter-don't-trust-your-doctor crap for longer than you have been alive. You are giving them a foot in the door to destroy the FDA and science based on their 2% truth

Do not **criticize your own people even if they are wrong**

January 1

1 repost 47 likes

# THE LOOP

## CONTRIBUTORS



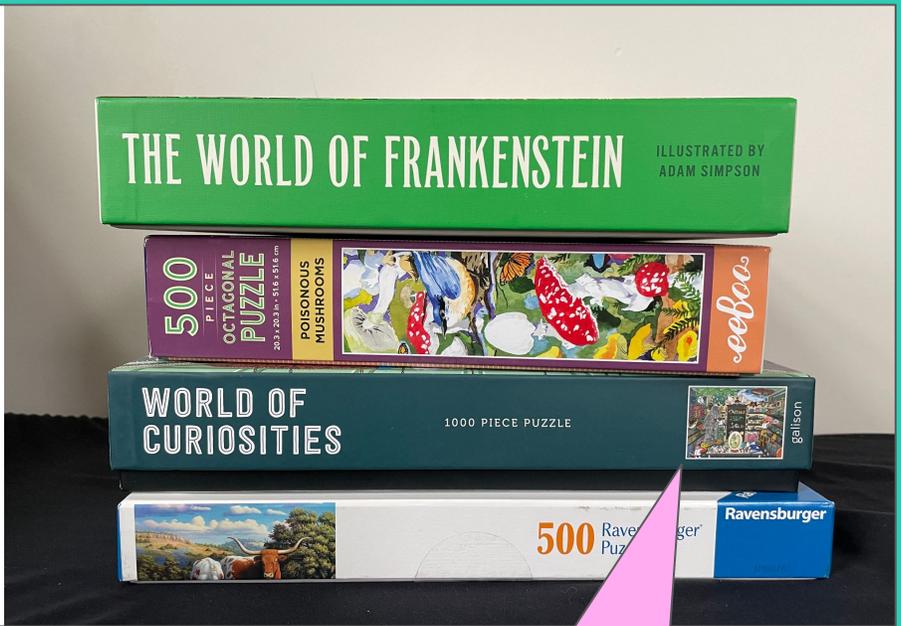
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**Intern** | Igor Beaver



*Volume 1, Issue 1, January 2025*

**NUMBER OF  
PUZZLES  
COMPLETED:  
4**



# **BRINE 2025**

***Congratulations to Krinn for her pioneering work in the exploration of brinespace.***



# Don't Just Look Up. Know What's Up.



offworldlab.com

**Have you noticed recurring lights in the sky? You're not alone.**

Introducing RETINA™, the latest innovation from Off World Lab, Inc.—designed to bring your celestial curiosities into focus. Whether it's Venus, airplanes, drones, or... something out of this world, RETINA™ provides the clarity you need to see the unseen. It's the first personal rooftop radar system, engineered to identify and track overhead objects with pinpoint precision.

**RETINA™: Because it's not paranoia if you know what's up.**

Available without a prescription. Side effects may include increased curiosity, newfound UFO enthusiasm, and smug satisfaction when your neighbors ask, "How did you know that was a drone?". Internet connection required for full triangulation.