

# Advice to a Radical Thinker

2017 December 1

Dear [deleted]

You are asking me for advice, so I'll tell you a few things I've learned in my 70 years of experience.

Your goal seems to be to convince people of a truth that you have discovered. That's an impossible goal. Even if your truth is completely obvious to you, it won't be accepted by others. For example, it is completely obvious to me that there is no big man in the sky who can hear prayers and perform miracles. But a lot of other people cannot be convinced of that. And symmetrically, it is completely obvious to them that there is a big man in the sky who can hear prayers and perform miracles. But they can't convince me of that. Trying to convince others of things that are obvious to you is a losing battle, so don't make that your goal.

Sending people things that you want them to read but they don't want to read is not effective; it just annoys them. What I do is to write something as well as I can, which I enjoy doing, and then put it on my website. Anyone can make a website. Someone who is interested, and does want to read it, may find it. I presume that is how you found my name.

There are two good reasons for pursuing a topic like yours. First, because you are interested in it, and you find it fun. Second, because you want to increase your own understanding of it. Your own fun and your own understanding are good goals to pursue.

Do not become obsessed with it. If it's taking over your life, then for the sake of your mental health, drop it. But if it's just a hobby, and not out of proportion to other activities, then enjoy it.

Never be certain you are right. One of the ways to become more certain you are right is to try your best to prove that you are wrong. I really like a line from the movie about Stephen Hawking, when someone asks him "What are you working on now?", he answers "I'm trying to prove that my doctoral thesis was wrong."

I hope you find some of my advice useful.

Cheers,

[Eric Hehner](#)

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