Better to LOOK stupid, than to BE stupid

Fred Henry Williams
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"*Never underestimate the power of human stupidity.*"

Robert A. Heinlein

(P.s. Many highly intelligent people are actually stupid)

Epistemology

"the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion."

Genuine stupidity is dangerous

- Stupid people don't know they are stupid
- Stupid people like to appear "smart"
- Stupid people can be very convincing
- Stupid people demand that everyone else must agree with them

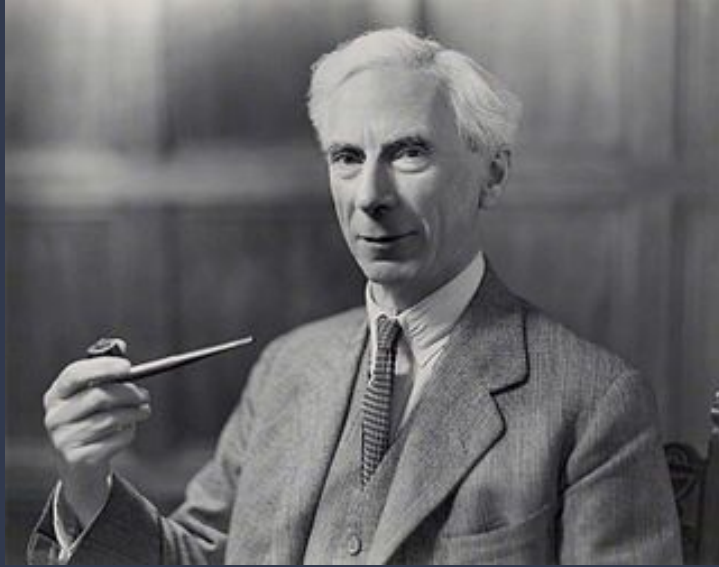# Stupid people are often put in charge of projects

- Peter principle at work
- Confidence = Leadership?
- "Go fast and break things" (without fixing them later)
- The project manager problem

Lying and Deception

- Smart people sometimes lie to protect others
- Stupid people always lie to protect themselves

Pretending to Understand

- A **smart** person asks lots of dumb questions
- A **dumb** person:
  - pretends they don't need to ask questions,
  - refuses to answer your questions,
  - gives overly complicated answers

"*A stupid man's report of what a clever man says can never be accurate, because he unconsciously translates what he hears into something he can understand.*"

Bertrand Russell

How to "Look Stupid"

Using the 6 Ws

(Opting out of intellectual belly bumping)

1. Who

- Who benefits?
- Who needs/wants this?
- Who will pay for this?
- Who will test this?

2. Why?

- Why will this be valuable?
- Why will someone use this?
- Why should WE make this?

3. When?

- When will someone use this?
- When should it be ready?
- When will people NOT use this?
- Is there something that must happen BEFORE this gets used?

4. Where?

- Where will someone use this?
- Where will they look for it?
- Where will we make it?
- Where will we test it?

5. What?

- (the least important question?)
- What is this thing?
- What else is available?
- What did we forget to ask?

6. Weird?

(the most important question!!!)

- What is weird about this?

(If it's not weird, why are you making it?)

Results and Recommendations

- Looking stupid can make you smart
- The 6 Ws are powerful tools
- Don't worry what others think…
- …think for yourself and ask stupid questions