

10 Easy Steps to a Better Intellectual Life

by Benjamin Matvey

Let's face it, there are simply too many things too know these days. Unlike a few decades ago when I'm guessing only a few dozen books existed, now, thanks to the interwebs there have to be, like, WAY over a thousand. Given the staggering amount of stuff you would could and even should never ever know, here are some tips on how to make your intellectual life easier, without ever having to admit that there are things you don't know:

1. Condense Roger, Francis and Kevin Bacon into one person. There is no need for three. Bonus: very helpful when trying to link Footloose to Pope Clement the IV
2. Remember correlation is the new causation. I can't tell you how much easier this makes things.
3. Practice Cafeteria Relativism: Moral relativism can really help you breeze through otherwise thorny arguments, but makes it really hard to blame people for being assholes. When convenient pivot to "our universal shared moral vision" a.k.a. "Even Kierkegaard said the objective truth is that you're a douchebag."
4. Apply Occam's Razor to Occam's Razor: "All things being equal, 'cause I said so' is usually the simplest answer, which under Occam's razor makes it right."
5. There are way too many philosophers to remember. Claim that any philosophers after David Hume were either "Nazis or Pedophiles." If challenged on this point directly at the person and say "Methinks thou dost protest too much."
6. When you lose track of an argument at a cocktail party immediately and forcefully inject "yes, but where do you draw the line!?!?" Repeat later when you lose track again.

7. Insist the modern psychics get back to the "Plum Pudding" model of the atom first proposed by physicist J.J. Thomson. To further simplify insist that all things are actually made up of tiny bits of plum pudding.
8. When totally cornered by someone who clearly knows more than you shout (in order) 1) "Heisenberg's uncertainly principle!" 2) "The Grand Inquisitor scene from Brothers Karamazov!" 3) "I slept with your wife!"
9. When people discuss the theories of Karl Marx and its relationship to historicism steer them onto the works of Richard Marx. Hum "Right Here Waiting" until they comply.
10. $E=mc^2$

