

Trust the experts?

 By [Bronwyn Williams](#)

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"Rabbit's clever," said Pooh thoughtfully. "Yes," said Piglet, "Rabbit's clever." "And he has Brain." "Yes," said Piglet, "Rabbit has Brain." There was a long silence. "I suppose," said Pooh, "that that's why he never understands anything." ~ Benjamin Hoff

Winnie-the-Pooh was a core part of many of our childhoods. For many of us, the Hundred Acre Wood's impact has extended into our adult lives. Likewise, the ancient Chinese classic, Tao Te Ching has made a deep and lasting impression on countless lives all across the world since it was published in the 6th century.

In the *The Tao of Pooh*, Benjamin Hoff brings together the ancient philosophy of the Tao with the more contemporary home-spun wisdom of Pooh and his friends.



It is a wonderful, whimsical book that simplifies and enlivens the timeless principles of enlightenment, to make them accessible to just about everyone.

What stands out, for me at least, is Benjamin's healthy disdain for establishment wisdom and so called "experts" who's

statements we are supposed to accept at face value.

Ask more questions, swallow less lies

Take this extract for example:

“ Nowone rather annoying thing about scholars is that they are always using Big Words that some of us can't understand ... and one sometimes gets the impression that those intimidating words are there to keep us from understanding. That way, the Scholars can appear Superior, and will not likely be suspected of Not Knowing Something. ~ Benjamin Hoff ”

Instead, Benjamin encourages us to question our experts and test their ideas rather than simply swallowing statements wholesale just because of who said it.

Listen to the innocents

Of course, there are lessons here for the experts themselves too.

People in positions of authority - be they in business leadership, political power or academic prestige - should be humble enough to answer the questions of the most innocent and least experienced people in the room, and to admit when they do not have the answers rather than for them to give bad answers, outright falsehoods or, perhaps worse, silence.

There is no shame in admitting we do not have the answers. Ignorance is not a crime. Admitting ignorance is the first step towards enlightenment.

ABOUT BRONWYN WILLIAMS

Futurist, economist and trend analyst. Partner at Flux Trends.
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