

UNITED WISDOM

Persistence Without Checking Reality

Freedom and Action

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Persistence Without Checking Reality

Epigraph

> *Devising alternative hypotheses*

John R. Platt, Strong Inference, 1964, the first step of his proposed scientific method. Our everyday application is a limited analogy: consider several explanations instead of declaring personal confidence a scientific result.

What this article is about

Persistence helps us return after difficulty. Repeated effort alone does not show that the chosen method fits its conditions, however. Someone may become increasingly active while noticing less of what actually happens. Every setback then means only that greater effort is needed. Questions about what is being examined and which result might change the action gradually disappear.

This article concerns persistence that has lost contact with checking reality. We distinguish a goal's value, assumptions about its method and observed consequences. An unsuccessful result does not always disprove an intention: conditions may have changed, the method may have been carried out differently or information may be insufficient. Yet uncertainty must not permit indefinite repetition without consideration.

Checking does not mean cold distrust of oneself. It preserves participation and reveals opportunities to learn. Continuing, changing a method, clarifying a goal or stopping may each be appropriate. The practice requires neither risky experiments on people nor demonstrations of courage, and does not turn every value into a measurable indicator. Its purpose is to restore grounds to the conversation about the next step.

I. When effort becomes the only answer

The organiser of a free meeting believes people stay away because they need more reminders. After a weak response, more messages are sent. The same happens after the next meeting. Preparation increasingly consists of reminders, although the time is inconvenient for some, the topic unclear and some recipients no longer want messages. Effort grows without examination of the original explanation.

This persistence may have an understandable history. Additional effort helped previously. The organiser values the topic and does not want to give up quickly. A promise that the project would happen may also make examination feel threatening. None makes the person bad. Each

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can nevertheless postpone consideration of what currently happens with this particular form of participation.

A closed circle arises when every result confirms the same explanation. A successful meeting proves reminders work. An unsuccessful one proves there were too few. No response means another message is needed. Information that might support a different assessment has little place in this arrangement. The assumption is being repeatedly defended rather than examined.

A precise question provides a starting point. Instead of asking whether I am sufficiently persistent, ask whether insufficient information is genuinely the main cause of limited participation in this meeting. This question is bounded and open to consideration. It settles neither the entire project's future nor the value of conversation. A particular explanation becomes distinct from an overall judgement of character.

II. Goal, method and assumption

Goals and methods often become fused. Someone says they want to help people meet while defending messages in one particular form. When the method proves inconvenient, criticism sounds like rejection of helping itself. Separate what matters, which action supports it and why that action is expected to produce the desired result.

The organiser may value accessible conversation about a shared subject. The method is an evening meeting on a particular day. The assumption is that interested people mainly stay away because they are insufficiently informed. Each can be examined separately. Conversation can remain valuable at another time. Interest can vary. One reminder may help while repeated reminders become intrusive.

Calling an assumption an assumption does not make it weak. It honestly names what supports action. Someone may expect a brief description to clarify the format. That expectation can be compared with responses and actual meeting experience. Confidence ceases to be the sole support, without removing the possibility of useful action and learning along the way.

Checking must not become compulsory measurement of every value either. Friendship, care and meaning cannot be reduced to response counts. A three-person meeting may matter despite an initial expectation of broad participation. Attendance answers a limited question, not the worth of relationships. Checking reveals methods and conditions without appointing one indicator to measure the value of a whole life.

III. Another explanation need not betray the idea

In Strong Inference, Platt proposes alternative hypotheses, tests distinguishing them and renewed consideration after results. This is a methodological argument about scientific research, not an established instruction for every sphere of life. Our useful analogy is willingness to formulate more than one explanation before increasing effort on behalf of the first.

Limited attendance may have several causes. People may be unaware, unclear about content, unavailable at that time, prefer another format or lack interest. These can coexist. An enormous list is unnecessary. Several genuinely different possibilities can prevent the same result from automatically demanding more messages.

Alternatives should avoid blame. Calling people lazy or ungrateful often closes consideration before information arrives. An inconvenient-time explanation allows questions about availability. An unclear-description explanation allows checking understanding. Participants nevertheless need not explain refusal or ensure another person's project succeeds. Silence cannot become agreement to further pressure.

Considering alternatives does not require immediately abandoning the initial explanation. It may prove suitable, but can now be compared with others. Defending a right to be correct gives way to clarifying conditions. Persistence remains involvement in the task while its object changes: the search for a suitable method continues, rather than repetition of a familiar form alone.

IV. What information could change the next step?

A check concerns the meaning of information for a decision, not simply its quantity. Someone may read feedback, take notes and discuss results while already knowing the action will remain identical. Consideration then becomes an accompanying ritual. Before acting, name which observations would support continuing, changing the method or acknowledging that the question remains open.

The organiser can ask several willing participants whether the format is clear and the time suitable. This is neither a representative sample nor scientific proof of a general cause. But someone's concrete inability to attend on that day matters for this agreement. A request to stop invitations is chiefly a boundary of consent, not material for persuasion.

A check that unambiguously distinguishes every explanation is not always possible. Information may be incomplete or contradictory. Retain several possibilities instead of declaring a convenient answer final. A small reversible step, another clarification or

acknowledgement of insufficient grounds may be appropriate. Uncertainty calls for proportionate action rather than necessarily increasing its scale.

Identify the consequences of checking beforehand too. If an inconvenient-time answer cannot affect scheduling, the question was not an honest invitation to reconsider. If disagreement meets argument, people may decline to answer. Checking reality includes willingness to use what is learned. It does not authorise demanding openness and then continuing to pressure someone who described a limitation.

V. An execution error and unsuitable grounds

An unfavourable result can concern different parts of action. Sometimes the method was not performed as intended: an invitation arrived late, a description failed to open or the venue was inaccessible. Sometimes the method was performed but the initial assumption lacks support. Sometimes assessment is premature. Distinctions prevent both declaring every difficulty final failure and explaining every difficulty through insufficient effort.

If a message failed to arrive, examining the channel makes sense first. If it arrived but the topic was unclear, consider content. If everything is clear but participation unwanted, more explanation may merely increase pressure. Different information leads to different steps. Persistence without this distinction provides one answer to every question, regardless of the actual obstacle.

An initial expectation may itself have been mistaken. The organiser expected regular large meetings while participants prefer occasional brief conversation. This need not make the whole intention meaningless. Preserving the original form at any cost, however, continues on grounds now needing reconsideration. A corrected expectation can retain useful content and reduce unnecessary work for everyone.

An execution explanation must not endlessly rescue every assumption. If each check is called inadequate without naming what needs changing, learning disappears. Better information gathering is sometimes necessary. Sometimes available results no longer support further investment in the old form. The decision depends on conditions and the cost of another attempt.

VI. Reflection as attention to grounds

In How We Think's first chapter, Dewey distinguishes the movement of thoughts from reflection addressing a belief's grounds and consequences. What matters here is moving from rehearsing confidence to considering its support. This is a philosophical and educational motif. Doubt does not automatically prove error, nor does the motif offer a universal recipe for a correct decision.

Someone can think extensively about a meeting, imagine success and devise reminders without examining why attendance is limited. Asking about grounds redirects attention: what indicates insufficient information rather than insufficient time or interest? What did participants say? Which part remains the author's hope alone? Such questions restore attention to particular conditions.

Doubt can be a working interval rather than an endpoint. Absolute certainty, often unavailable in everyday life, need not precede action. Name limited knowledge and choose a proportionate step. Discuss one possible format with voluntarily interested people without declaring the entire project confirmed. Decision remains possible while the unknown is acknowledged.

Dewey's historical examples and assumptions require critical consideration. This article adopts no racial or civilisational prejudice of his period. It uses a particular motif from the selected chapter rather than the entire book's authority as a guarantee. Checking a source and checking one's intention share attention to grounds but remain different activities, each requiring an honest account of scope.

VII. Decisiveness after consideration

Checking can become an excuse for indefinite delay. Someone repeatedly demands more information despite having enough for a limited step. Distinguish a missing necessary condition from wishing to eliminate every possibility of error. Ordinary decisions can retain uncertainty. Persistence is needed after checking too, when action still has understandable grounds and an acceptable cost.

In the selected Psychology: Briefer Course passage, James describes different experiences of deciding and the involvement of effort. This historical psychological account partly draws on inner observation; it is not a modern clinical classification. It supports comparison of consideration and decision without assigning a type of will or explaining every difficulty through one cause.

The organiser may choose one differently formatted meeting with clearly willing participants. This does not prove the whole future project will succeed. Yet the bounded action has sufficient grounds: an understood topic, accessible time, consent and resources. Endless preliminary discussion is unnecessary. Checking supports action when it clarifies conditions rather than demands an impossible guarantee.

Afterwards, return to the questions and consider the result. This differs from changing explanations to protect oneself. Confirmed conditions may support continuing. A new obstacle deserves examination as such. If people no longer want participation, their decision still matters. Decisiveness and attention to reality can coexist while reconsideration remains acceptable.

VIII. A conversation that permits disagreement

Checking often depends on others' information. A question mark alone does not make a question open. When someone is told beforehand that support is the correct answer, agreement is being sought instead. A useful conversation allows another assessment, refusal and uncertainty. Otherwise, answers may reflect the convenience of the exchange more than actual attitudes towards the plan.

The organiser can explain that understanding participation conditions, rather than persuading someone to attend, is the aim. Ask what is clear, what is inconvenient and whether they even want to continue discussing it. A complete answer is unnecessary. Some reasons are private or unclear to participants themselves. Their right not to explain their life remains, even if missing information complicates another person's project.

Consider disagreement by its content. One person reports an inaccessible venue, another a lack of interest and another excessive messages. These are different limits. Avoid concluding that nobody wants anything, but avoid dismissing an inconvenient answer as an exception simply because it challenges expectations. Information may require limited participation, changed conditions or preserving someone's option not to participate.

Dependence or unequal power makes honest feedback especially sensitive. An employee may struggle to say a manager's plan is unsuitable. A relative may fear conflict. The article proposes no secret loyalty checks or imposed tests. Make participation limits and the acceptability of refusal understandable; serious consequences may require appropriate competent support.

IX. Examining a definition and ethical discernment

Laches examines definitions of courage and discovers difficulties. It does not end with one simple answer available as a universal formula. Our relevant connection is willingness to avoid treating a confident name as a sufficient explanation. Calling repeated action steadfastness does not show which action is reasonable under particular conditions or what supports the course.

Dhammapada's selected Chapter XIX compares outward signs, much speech, discernment and conduct. The historical Müller version actually read includes nonviolence, law and equity. We do not substitute another modern formulation about hurried judgements. The chapter's ethical domain is not experimental falsification of hypotheses.

The sources' connection stays limited. Platt proposes a scientific way to distinguish explanations. Dewey examines grounds in educational philosophy. James describes experiences of decision. Plato's dialogue tests courage, while Dhammapada concerns an

ethical and religious path. They do not prove one another. Their comparison invites attention to an action's content rather than satisfaction with its name or outward sign.

This distinction also prevents checking from becoming the only way to understand life. Ethical duties, consent and dignity do not receive permission only after a successful result. Even a useful project cannot justify pressure on participants. Considering reality includes relationships and limits, not merely a means' effectiveness. Otherwise, precise calculation can coexist with inattention to people.

X. Persistence that can learn

Persistence with checking retains the ability to return to a meaningful question without binding personal worth to one unchanging form. Accessible conversation can remain important while frequent invitations stop. A large format can end while a small meeting remains. A project may become unnecessary and its consequences need completion. Each concerns particular action rather than a person's right to hold values.

Identify an understandable point for considering the next step: one meeting's end, necessary information arriving or an agreed date. This need not become a rigid rule for all life. It prevents indefinite postponement under the pretext of another attempt. A substantial change or risk arising earlier need not wait for that date before communication and reconsideration.

Name the review's result concretely. Beyond better or worse, explain what was learned about conditions and what changes now. Interested participants may prefer a shorter conversation on another day, which the organiser offers. Available time may be absent, ending further invitations. Insufficient information may make limited clarification the next step rather than a declaration of victory or defeat.

Past effort can remain respected without becoming the only reason to continue. Work can yield materials, skills and relationships that survive a changed method. These also do not prove another identical step will help. Persistence matures through learning: attention to information, acceptable conditions and people's right to choose their participation.

What this means in practice

Choose an ordinary undertaking where effort repeats without an understandable change in results. Select a small accessible question, not danger or a decision needing specialised medical, legal or professional assessment. This is an author-created reflection practice, neither established therapy nor instructions to experiment on people.

1. **Name the value separately from the method.** What matters, and which action supports it? Do not treat one familiar form as the only faithful expression of a goal.

2. **Formulate an examinable assumption.** Why should this method help? Name a particular connection rather than judging yourself strong or weak.

3. **Offer several alternatives.** What other explanations fit available information? Avoid blaming people or compiling a long list merely to appear thorough.

4. **Identify distinguishing information.** What can help choose between explanations? How can it be learned safely, voluntarily and without demanding private reasons for refusal?

5. **Name how results affect action.** What supports continuing, changing or stopping? If every answer already leads to the same action, consideration has not yet become a check.

6. **Make an accessible clarification.** This may be conversation, checking a condition or one reversible agreed step. Separate observation from inference and do not call an individual answer scientific proof.

7. **Decide while permitting updates.** Name the step, its limits and when consideration returns. Respect consent; a substantial change need not wait for an agreed date.

The organiser stops unnecessary messages and speaks with willing participants. Some cannot attend evenings; others lack interest. An accessible alternative is offered to the former, while invitations to the latter cease without consent. Group growth is not guaranteed. The next step nevertheless rests on actual conditions rather than an explanation that always demanded greater effort alone.

In a personal undertaking, someone may repeat a demanding study schedule and call every missed session insufficient discipline. They separately consider time, material clarity and workload. Another sequence or competent assistance may be needed instead of an even stricter timetable. This is neither diagnosis nor a promise of successful learning. It avoids assigning every difficulty to one predetermined explanation.

The practice can end when assumptions, alternatives and available information are named and the next step fits what is known. Eliminating all uncertainty is unnecessary. Stop using persistence as a substitute for consideration. Continuing becomes meaningful when effort retains the ability to notice reality and change participation.

Key quotation

> *what experiment could disprove your hypothesis?*

Platt, Strong Inference, the concluding testability discussion; a complete interrogative fragment without the introductory address. The scientific text concerns experiment. Our practice uses a limited question about information capable of changing an assumption; it permits neither experiments on vulnerable people nor violations of consent.

Connections between traditions

Scientific methodology. Platt advocates alternative hypotheses and distinguishing tests. His proposal is not universally proven the best method for every field.

Educational philosophy and historical psychology. Dewey considers grounds of belief; James considers experiences of decision and effort. Neither replaces modern clinical assessment.

Platonic dialogue. Laches tests definitions of courage and retains difficulty rather than providing a final behaviour formula.

Buddhist ethical tradition. Dhammapada XIX concerns conduct, discernment and a religious path. Nonviolence and equity cannot be reduced to a successful experiment; comparison with scientific checking remains limited and authorial.

Sources

1. John R. Platt — Strong Inference. Science146(3642),1964,347–353, DOI10.1126/science.146.3642.347. Opening/method steps and concluding testability discussion read. The transcription warns of punctuation differences; the entire source is not claimed read.

2. John Dewey — How We Think, 1910. Chapter I read. The philosophical grounds-of-belief motif excludes historical prejudices.

3. William James — Psychology: Briefer Course. Preface and selected XXVI Will, pages428–434, read. Historical reasoning is not a clinical typology.

4. Plato — Laches, Jowett translation. Selected definitions discussion and dialogue ending read. Characters' positions are distinct from a settled authorial statement.

5. Dhammapada, F. Max Müller translation. Chapter XIX,256–272, read. The actual historical version is used; ethical meaning is not replaced by scientific procedure.

Tags

persistence, reality check, assumption, alternatives, decision, grounds, consequences, consent, voluntary participation, attention, learning, goal, method, conditions, uncertainty, discernment, effort, reversible step, reflection, Platt, Dewey, James, Plato, Dhammapada, ethics, participation, feedback, boundaries, reconsideration, action

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