

Wrong

by Wayne Chen
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If there is a record kept for it, I very well could be the record holder in a couple of years. What glorious claim to fame am I speaking of? The title of Most Wrong Person in the World!!

A dubious distinction no doubt. One that I would be proud to wear. How does one go about achieving such a title? By asking questions and digging deep to find out the answers. That's how. Not just everyday informational questions such as directions or the name of a good restaurant to eat at. But, questions that strike at the very heart of why things are the way they are.

Questions like why do certain events happen? How do we make them happen again? How do we prevent them? Who is involved? What are those people like? Where do the things I buy come from? Why do they come from there? What is the purpose of life? What if I believed in X? What if I didn't believe in X? What if I knew the secret to X? Similar to the questions many young children ask. Similar to questions you have probably asked.

For me reading and traveling stimulates questions like why do people in X society/country live like this? How do they live with more / less of whatever? Going further - what if I lived without item or rule X? What if I met person X? What if I read book X? What if I spoke language X? What if I did X? What if I behaved in X manner?

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The list of possible question types is more than I seek to try and list here. So why might I get the title of most wrong person in the world? Because many of the answers I find out prove wrong some pre-conceived notion of the world which I have held.

On top of that I often ask the same question many times. I ask at different times of the day, in different moods, toward different people, to the same people at different times, in different places. Sometimes the answer is the same, but often it is different. Asking the same question in different situations is like testing it. Digging deeper to find an answer or set of answers.

During the course of my travels and writing I am going to make a lot of claims or judgements about different subjects. For many questions there is no right answer per se. Human preference and perspective will testify to that. But, I do believe there are optimal answers for many situations. Given a certain question - there may not be one right answer for every situation (No absolutes), but there likely is a small set of "optimal"

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answers that would satisfy most situations and most question askers in the context of the given question(s). I'm sure there must be some mathematical way to describe this. but I'm no mathematician.

Once Right & Baseball

So why would anyone want to put their mind and ego through so much torture just to get one of these optimal answers? I like to think of this analogy:

Anyone familiar with the game of baseball knows that hitting a home run is very exciting. It is a closely watched statistic. In order to hit a home run batters have to take more chances and exert more power, often at the sacrifice of control. What does this mean? Home run hitters tend to strike out a lot. Striking out is the worst way to use up an opportunity at the plate - nothing is gained. No ball was put into play. It is the ultimate expression of being wrong. But, hit a home run, and it is the ultimate baseball expression of the batter being right. Many teams send up fireworks when one of the home batters is right.

And there is the irony to being "dead on right" a lot. You inevitably (Except for a small minority of stellar hitters) must be dead wrong a lot too.

The following link leads to historical major league baseball statistics for batters at ESPN.com. If you click the various columns for Home Run leaders, Batting Average leaders, and Most Strikeouts by batters - you will see that the top home run hitters have a much higher percentage of strikeouts than those batters who have high batting averages.

<http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/alltime/leaders?breakdown=2&year=0&type=0&sort=8>

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This is a short version of a longer article on being wrong that I would like to write.