



NextGen Trainings (NGT) is a transformational personal development program created to **inspire today's youth to discover** purpose and passion in their lives.

NextGen Trainings is a project of the NextGen Academy (NGA) - a registered 501(c) 3 non-profit organization based out of Valley Springs, CA.

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NextGen Academy
*Change the World Through
 Personal Transformation*

Agnotology and the Will to Say "I Don't Know"

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NGT Juice is a motivational message sent out to pump you up with inspirational stories, quotes, testimonies, video clips, songs, and even home activities.

Agnotology and the Will To Say "I Don't Know"

The new NGA year is beginning in under a week! Those of you in the Bay Area are invited to come to the Opening Ceremony this Sunday, September 27 from 3-7 pm. The event will take place at 2929 Avalon Ave. in Berkeley. See you there!

College textbooks are big and expensive. They are stuffed with facts about things that we know (or think we know). In those college classrooms, and in other levels of education as well, students are tested on their knowledge of those facts. It's no wonder that many students have the misconception that we know just about everything we need to know about most subjects. It's also no wonder that many people, starting from their school days, are afraid to admit ignorance about a certain topic.

Columbia neuroscience professor Stuart Firestein discussed in his book "Ignorance: How it Drives Science" that many of his students believed, at first, that we understand almost everything about the human brain. Sure, most people seem to be aware of the perplexing horizons of all possible knowledge, but the general attitude toward our modern zeitgeist is that it is an adequately complete and informed one. But this couldn't be further from the truth, and we shouldn't be afraid to acknowledge it. The things that we don't know are the most exciting things!

For example, the social and physical science fields are both very young. The findings of prior generations are constantly being reevaluated and, when found lacking, improved upon. For example, the Reproducibility Project at the University of Virginia sought to duplicate the findings of 100 psychology studies that had been published in three major journals. The Project claimed that more than 60 of the studies did not hold up to their scrutiny. While some psychologists are disputing the Project's own methods, most experts in the field recognize the need for a huge overhaul of the field's previous output.

More and more colleges are creating courses on agnotology, or the study of ignorance. In other words, these classes focus solely on the questions that we have about a particular subject. These classes are exciting because they remind students that they are needed for their future contributions, that it is okay to not have an answer, and that the field of the unknown expands as our knowledge grows.

The implications of agnotology go beyond the classroom as well. Rather than trying to do and learn new things (largely because they are out of their comfort zone or might contradict their current belief system), many people will actually lie about their ignorance. Talk shows like *Jimmy Kimmel Live* have exploited this human trait for our own entertainment and have duped strangers into saying outrageous lies for the camera. In this example festival goers pretended to know bands that don't exist:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AVrryvHhk8>

Lie Witness News: 4:46

To be sure, the power of suggestion in this video may create false memories for some. But on the whole, many of these people wanted to appear a certain way, and admitting they didn't know something would've tarnished that image in their minds.

The more time a person spends trying to cover up their ignorance and weak points is less time dedicated to actually addressing those questions and problems. It's the basic law of public and personal denial. The wisest and most confident of people can admit when they don't know something and enjoy the never-ending journey of learning and self-improvement.

So the next time someone asks you if you know about something—and you don't know about it—you know what to do! Say with gusto, “I don't know, but I can't wait to find out!”

***Take a moment to digest the message above
and identify key points or ideas that
resonate with you.***

Thank You,

From your friends at [NextGen Trainings](#)

*The ideas and views expressed in Juice do not necessarily, or always,
represent the views of NGT and its diverse staff.*