

Doubling down

By [David Williams](#)

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One of the most striking features of our degraded public dialogue is our tendency to "double down." When confronted with a failing, or challenged because our assertions seem to have no connection with reality, we don't pause to consider whether we might need to modify our position. That would be a sign of weakness, or so we're told.

Instead, we double down. We counterpunch. We find reasons, any reasons, to justify continuing what we were doing. Every countervailing source of information is incorrect. Every criticism is invalid, because the person offering it is obviously an ignorant moron.

It's satisfying, in that it means we're never wrong, and were never wrong. It's affirming of our self esteem. It makes us feel fierce, and right, and vindicated.

There is also no surer sign of being a fool.

It's biblical, really, it is. Proverbs 26:11 lays it out, clear and clean and uncompromising as reality itself.

"As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool returns to his folly."

Or Proverbs 9:8, which reminds us of the anger of those who'd rather fight than abandon their ego-path. Or Proverbs 12:15. Or 13:1. Or 13:18. Or 15:32.

It's a theme in wisdom literature, a strong and intentional thread, not just a single verse, but part of an integrated whole.

It doesn't matter if a course of action has failed, and failed, and failed again. It doesn't matter if that approach has caused us stress and suffering, or if it looks like that course of action is leading to calamity. The fool is utterly, fiercely, totally

committed to their path.

Which brings about a strange harmonization, a peculiar equivalence: there's no functional difference between a fool and an ideologue.

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