

Roots of Honor and Integrity in Science
Self Deception
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Beware of seeing only what you want to see. The most rigorous training in objective observation is often a feeble defense against the desire to obtain a particular result. Expectency leads to self deception which leads to the propensity to be deceived by others. Scientific hoaxes can be driven by mob mentality. Self deception is unwitting, unlike fraud, which is deliberate. Double blind experiments are common due to self deception (if you expect to see a result, you usually will). Animal to man communication is fertile ground for deception (Clever Hans the horse could “read minds”). Hoaxes can be perpetrated by the scientist and/or others (children gave “fake” fossils to some scientist who believed them to be real). Healthy skepticism is good. Piltdown man: skull made from old human and ape bones, modeling clay, and imagination. And once the seed is planted: a scientist who disbelieved the piltdown man’s existence started planting totally fake artifacts, but they were believed real when discovered by the group doing the dig because they couldn’t fathom that they would be fake. Parapsychology articles have been published in Nature. “Any magician will tell you that scientists are the easiest persons in the world to fool.” “Scientists are easy to deceive.”