



Foxes and Hedgehogs

**Dr. Philip Tetlock, University of Pennsylvania
IARPA Project**

How Foxes Think

Multidisciplinary -

Incorporates ideas from different disciplines and regardless of their origin on the political spectrum.

Adaptable -

Find a new approach or pursue multiple approaches at the same time if they aren't sure the original one is working.

How Hedgehogs Think

Specialized -

Often have spent the bulk of their careers on one or two great problems. May view opinions of "outsiders" skeptically.

Stalwart -

Stick to the same "all-in" approach, new data is used to refine the original model.

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How Foxes Think	How Hedgehogs Think
<u>Self-critical</u> – Sometimes willing (if rarely happy) to acknowledge mistakes in their predictions and accept blame for them.	<u>Stubborn</u> – Mistakes are blamed on bad luck or on idiosyncratic circumstances. (“A good model had a bad day.”)
<u>Tolerant of complexity</u> – See the universe as complicated, perhaps to the point of many fundamental problems being irresolvable or inherently unpredictable.	<u>Order-seeking</u> – Expect that the world will be found to abide by relatively simple governing relationships once the signal is identified through the noise.

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How Foxes Think	How Hedgehogs Think
<u>Cautious</u> – Express their predictions in probabilistic terms and qualify their opinions.	<u>Confident</u> – Rarely hedge their predictions and are reluctant to change them.
<u>Empirical</u> – Rely more on observation than theory.	<u>Ideological</u> – Expect that solutions to many day-to-day problems are manifestations of some grander theory or struggle.

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How Foxes Think	How Hedgehogs Think
FOXES ARE BETTER FORECASTERS.	HEDGEHOGS ARE WEAKER FORECASTERS.
<p><i>“The Fox knows many little things, but the Hedgehog knows one big thing.”</i></p> <p><i>- Archilochus</i></p>	