

100th Episode: Best Life Advice from Ologists + 100 More Ologies

Ologies Podcast

August 14, 2019

Oh heeey. It's your weird old internet Dad Ward Von Podcast, back with the, let's do a drum roll, might as well, [*drum roll*] 100th episode of *Ologies*! [*DJ airhorn to the tune of X-Files theme*]

Question: Can you even? Are you able to even? I can't! I thought for my 100th episode I couldn't just throw up a rando topic. I needed to do something numerical. I thought about doing numerology, just for fun, and for kicks. I just couldn't in good conscience put out for my 100th.

So I thought, for folks who have listened since the very beginning in September 2017, or folks who have just cherry-picked episodes without realizing that they may have skipped some real gems, I would give you a recap of the best life lessons I have learned from the last almost-two years studying other people's ologies. Overall just the top five things I have learned about life from making *Ologies*. These are things that I wish I knew when I first started.

So here it is. This is the 100th episode. I'm gonna give you the top five self-helpy things I have learned from making *Ologies*, as well as, after the break, the next 100 episodes of things I'm going to cover. Okay? Are you ready? We're 100. Okay, let's get into it.

Okay! The First Thing: Paths are not linear. [*"Wait. What?"*] Paths are not linear. I always used to think that other people's lives were like that airport people mover. Just, like, straight, very determined, measured. A consistent pace hopped on at the beginning and just coasted up to their gate of life. But that's not it at all, even a little bit.

What I've learned from *Ologies* is that I am not the only person who has had hairpin turns, and stops, and starts, and stalls, and sprints, and boink-boink, like hopping on to different paths like a Mario brother. [*Mario Brothers' coin tada*]

Sitting down hearing 100 stories, give or take, has taught me; nobody knows what they're doing, and it's great. Some of the best field biologists bailed on vet school. Some really amazing doctors thought they were only good at the arts. I never intended *Ologies* to be a podcast in the beginning. I had this idea to do a series. I thought way back then, 15 years ago, I came across this list of ologies and I thought, "I should make a book about this. I want to do maybe an illustrated book." It sat on the back burner forever, and then I pitched it as a TV series. [*crickets chirping*]

No one wanted it. Finally, I thought, "I could do a podcast now that they exist." It's been the best way for me to just make it on my own terms. I can leave all the swearing in. I get to talk about butts. I can make it as many minutes as I want to make it, with as many episodes as my brain and fingers and Zoom recorder can handle.

So, if you feel like your life has taken some twists and turns, that just means that you're like everyone. Also, it's the switchbacks that get you up the steepest hills. You just can't really see it until you're at the top. So, keep truckin'. Also hydrate, and [*megaphone*] check your crevices, as long as we are at it. But don't worry if your path is not a straight line. No one's is and that's great.

Okay. Another thing that I've learned from making this podcast is: It's really good to figure out what you love. [*"What do you love so much?"*] When we pick jobs, we don't always lead with the thing that kind of burns a big love-hole through our chests. We pick based on what's going to pay back student

loans, or maybe what we think our family would be proud of, or what someone like us seems capable of, then we forget to ask, what do we like? What do we dig? What makes us nauseated with excitement? [*splat*] What are we infectiously affectionate toward? What would we do for free?

I love stories about coral scientists who volunteered before they went pro; squid experts who badgered labs into hiring them; this feeling of these whole new worlds opening up. This is where volunteering helped me so much. I talked about it in the Field Trip episode. I was so bummed out at this point in my life that I just wanted to volunteer doing something that felt like me. It didn't have a lot at stake. It didn't have to be permanent. That put me in a place I didn't usually get to be, with people I would otherwise never meet. It completely changed my life. I realized that talking to scientists, and learning, and communicating all that was what I wanted to do more than anything.

I really would not have connected those dots years ago if I didn't start out very sad, newly single with a margarita hangover, lamenting that none of my current friends at the time wanted to talk about spiders with me. So, let yourself have a little corner o' time, a li'l notepad, and write down the things that you love the most. The stuff that gives you butterflies. Then ask yourself if you can spare like 3 hours a week to go volunteer somewhere in that field. The worst thing that could happen is that you use that time learning new things instead of, like, scrolling on your ex-roommate's cat's Instagram feed. Like, did your molecules spend this long in the universe and line up to make the person that you are, just so you could see a not even well-composed photo of someone else's cat on a couch that you never liked? No.

Go figure out what makes you horny for living. Not sexy horny, just like [*sped up like a chipmunk*] "Oh hell yeah! I like being alive! Then maybe if you can, volunteer. So, figure out what you love. [*"What do you love so much?"*]

Another huge lesson in making *Ologies*: Just do the thing. If you have a thing you want to do, or a painting that you want to make, or a garden that you want to plant, or a poetry book you want to write, or maybe a grad program you want to apply for, someone you want to be friends with, just hop in! Give it a try.

You know you can watch double Dutch jump rope for years, but nothing prepares you better than just getting your old patootie in there. Just screwing it up until you get it right. There are so many inventors I interview for my TV jobs and other science communicators and scientists who have told me that they learned as they went; that to get a dream to exist you have to just start and fail until you get there. Experiments go wrong all the time! Do you know how many rockets have blown up without people in them? A lot. Rough drafts get edited. Mistakes get corrected. You just learn as you go.

As a perfectionist and a workaholic, my favorite thing to do is to just wring my hands from the sidelines, mentally doing and imagining failing at something before I do it. Well guess what! That doesn't work! I started recording this podcast and sat on it for nine months before I was forced to put the first episode out on a deadline. My biggest regret is that I was too chickenshit to start earlier.

So, nothing will be perfect the first time. Nothing will ever be perfect. But you're gonna learn as you go. This is why experiments are repeated. You gotta get a larger dataset. This is why bands practice in garages and paintings start out as sketches. Failure is success because failure and learning is progress. No matter what! So, go do the thing! You not only have my permission, but you have my eager, paternal impatience, and some of my projected regrets. [*over an old telephone*] So, deal with that!

Another lesson, if all this evolutionary biology has taught me one thing, is to: Embrace your mutations. Every weird mantis that looks like an orchid, or your dog, or pine needles, or sea slugs, each of these things are the result of just a heap of mutations that worked out for the best. The stuff that's weird about you is your greatest asset. Look at Gros Michel bananas. They were all clones. Fungus came in, wiped them all out. They all died. There was no variation. So, in the words of an intonational phonologist, "Variation is a feature. It's not a flaw."

So, if you're weird, or you have a great memory for medieval cookware terminology, or you're fascinated with slime molds, or always silently psychoanalyzing your co-workers, or maybe you could read history books that put others to sleep, or you just don't feel like you fit in at any particular lunch table, that's great! Your weirdness is the best thing about you.

When it came to making *Ologies*, I was worried about doing a podcast with so many fucks and shits because no other science podcast in the top ten had an "E" next to it for explicit. I was like, [*cheekily*] "There's got to be a reason why. I can't do a science podcast for adults if I work on kids' science shows. There's gotta be a reason why everyone keeps this clean. And the asides that I do, what if people find them annoying?" The weirdest stuff about *Ologies* ended up being the thing that makes it what it is.

So, embrace your mutations! There would be no progress, no evolution, no adaptability without that weirdness. So, don't be a banana clone. Embrace your mutations. [*Ha-ha. You're weird!*] "*Thank you.*"

The last thing I have learned from doing *Ologies* and interviewing so many people who literally, like, swim with sharks, and give TED talks, and teach students, and find cures for things, and travel the world, literally turning over rocks and finding new species, is that: Sometimes, you just have to get out of your own damn head. Like the Sports Psychology episode recommended, "Just be in the moment."

I have a thing I have to tell myself when I'm nervous and that is to, "Show up like you belong, and have fun." Because imposter syndrome is very real. Everyone you admire probably has it. I feel like a charlatan sometimes. I worry this podcast isn't good enough. Sometimes I am plagued with regret over how many airhorns I dropped. [*DJ airhorn interrupted by record scratch*] Sometimes I'm like, "Didn't drop enough airhorns."

But no one could make this podcast better than me because I love it the most! Likewise, no one could do your life as well as you can. So, you got to show up like you belong because you do. If you don't see anyone that looks like you in the room, you belong even more because that room needs you and needs your perspectives. Have fun! It's such stupid-sounding advice but as, again, a perfectionist, I will sometimes [*robot voice*] "robot myself for the sake of professionalism."

I'm just going to go on record to say that, that sucks. I mean, yeah, in a business interview you should show up with pants on and not drunk, but it doesn't mean you can't enjoy the experience and be a hooman being. Just know you belong there. Have fun! Be loose! Don't police yourself into a fugue state. I have done that in the past. It never goes as well as when I just task myself with chilling out and goofing off a little. So, show up like you belong. And have fun.

So many episodes. So many lessons. I did not expect to make this episode like this, but I hope it helps someone. I wish I knew these things years ago when I started, but now we all know them. As well as so many facts about lizard dicks, and sky burials, and volcanos, and personality quizzes, and exploding whales, fungus gennies, and if your pet turtle loves you. (Yes! It does!)

So, are we out of ologies? Is that it? 100 episodes? Oh hell no! Oh, we're not done! How dare you? After the break you're going to hear about some very nutty ologies I haven't yet covered and what they mean. Let's just get pumped for the episodes that come up next.

But before I mention the sponsors I want to let you know, I'm going to be keynoting this year's 2019 SciComm camp which is run by my friends Cara Santa Maria, Sarah Keartes, and Jason Goldman. I'm so excited about that. I'll be giving a talk about science communication. Again it's SciCommCamp.com in case you wanna see the line-up. It's an incredible line up. I'm very, very honored to be included. This week, a donation will go to their scholarship fund to help folks afford the conference fee. So, I am donating ad revenue from this podcast to go toward a scholarship for that. I'm excited to see some of you there. So, for more info it's SciCommCamp.com. It is the first weekend in November 2019. The line-up is amazing. Some sponsors that made that donation possible:

[*Ad Break*]

Okay, so what ologies are coming up next? So many of you on Patreon have asked for musicology. So many, in fact, right now I'm going to say your names with my mouth: [some spellings phonetic] Amber Woodpark, Howard Yermish, AYYY Rene, Kelly King, Christopher Loughran, Alicia Linn, Sarah Sexton, Rayden Marcum, Leanna, Joe Weinmunson, Katie Stomps, Rhianna Humeny, and Kendall. So many want musicology or ethnomusicology. I'm in LA, UCLA has a really great program. So yeah, musicology has got to happen. I feel like that needs to be a 17-part episode. How many parts should it be? Should it be 18? Let me know.

Also, so many of you are just begging for bats. So Chiropterology. I'm hoping that I'll be up in October. I was supposed to go to Austin to go interview Merlin Tuttle. Like the king of bats, of chiropterology, in Austin. I wasn't able to go last week, so I have to find some time to go between now and October.

P.S. Should I do a whole spooky October? With, like, Spectrology? Which is g-g-g-ghosts. Or parapsychology? Or demonology? Or arachnology? Spiders. Osteology is [*spookily*] bones! Should I just do spooky October? [*spooky music*] Spooktober? Should I do it? Okay. Let me know.

I also really want to do meteorology, which is like weather, tornadoes, hurricanes. A ton of you want lagomorphology which is about bunnies, and rabbits, and hares. Just rabbit holes about rabbit holes! Fuck yes! Maybe I should save that until next spring. I'm not sure.

Okay. Cryptology, y'all really want; it's code breaking. But you also want cryptozoology, the study of Bigfoot, and the Loch Ness Monster, and the Yeti. Perhaps I should save that for next April 1st? Maybe?

Cetology is the study of whales. [*whale song*] Y'all want it. And whale, whale, whale, we are in accord on that one. Big, wet, leathery pickles. There will be a whole episode about you. Audiology is how people hear. I really would like to do that one. Oenology is about wines.

Garbology is a real thing. I have so many questions about garbage. There are actual garbologists out there. Oh, I want to sit down with one so bad. I want to smell them because I bet there are garbologists who smell way better than the average person.

Fromology, about cheese. That must happen! It has to happen. I want to do one on hippology which is about horses. [*horse whinny*] Aerospace technology is rockets. Thank you, Roxanne Parker, for mentioning that. I wouldn't have thought of aerospace technology as an ology. But boom! Here we are.

Pinnipedology is sea lions and seals and walruses. Hell yes! [*"I a walrus."*] I definitely want one on pharmacology or psychopharmacology. Glaciology is glaciers. So, I should interview someone, I guess, while we still have glaciers on Earth?

I've got New York Times crossword editor, Will Shortz, ready to record enigmatology, about puzzles, whenever I'm in New York next. So, give yourself a minute to scream about that alone in your car.

Y'all definitely want some proctology. I will be there to administer that episode to you. [*boing*] Also pathophytology? Phytopathology? Poisonous plants. It's on the list. As is exercise physiology and bromatology, which is food. Who eats? Everyone's hand should be up. There we go.

So that's 25 I've just mentioned. Let's see if I can come up with another 75 ologies I wanna do. Keeping us covered for at least a few years. Again, I may not do all of these in the next 100. I might swap some out. These ones are just on my radar.

Okay, speech language spath - pathol - Oh my god! Speech language pathology. That was not intentional. Odontology is teeth. Pomology, fruit. Heliology is the study of the sun. Numismatology is coins and money. There's cartology, maps. Megadrilology is a study of earthworms. I want to talk about their dirty, dirty guts.

Meconology is opiates and the opioid epidemic. Speleology is the study of caves. Curiology is technically, I think, the study of emojis. Several of you want chickenology, I don't know if that's a thing. Maybe gallology would be chickenology? But if we have to invent a chickenology, I feel like we get a pass on that one. I want to know about chickens.

Philematology. Kissing! That's a study of kissing. There are people who do it. There's futurology. What does the future hold? Does it hold more kissing? I don't know. Campanalogy is a study of bell ringing. OKAY. Otorhinolaryngology is the study of taste and smell. And yes, I said it wrong.

Bryology is the study of moss. I have a neuropsychopharmacologist who studies how LSD in mushrooms may be used in mental health care in the future. Do you know a lottologist studies lottery tickets? I know and now you know. There's one in New Jersey. I want to talk to them.

Brolliology. They specialize in umbrellas. Limnology, the study of water in rivers. Suicidology is a thing. They help with prevention, survivors, and grieving families. Fulminology is the study of lightning. Toxicology, poisons. Pyrology, fire. Pyrotechnology is the study of how humans used fire to our advantage. There is a whole subsection at Yale of people who study this. I want to just ask them about campfires. How much should you roast a marshmallow? What does it say about me if I burn mine?

Anyway, that's 50. Here a few more I'm itching to do. You ready?

Dermatology, skin. Sciuriology, study of squirrels. Cardiology, the heart. Maritime archaeology is the study of shipwrecks. Coprology, the study of porn. Latrinology is the study of writing on bathroom walls. Agnotology is a study of culturally-induced ignorance. Many of us know nothing about that. Is that induced by culture? I'm not sure.

Climatology, of course, very topical. Bacteriology because they are literally all over us, and in us right now. We would be dead without them. Hydrology the study of water. Bogology is a real thing. It is the study of bogs.

Momiology, mummies. Should I do that in October? [*"Ha!"*] Parasitology, parasites. Immunology. Neurology, the brain. Metrology is a study of measurements. Y'all want that so bad. I'm on it.

Sinology is the study of China. Kremlinology is a study of the Soviet Union. We could do papyrology. That's the history of paper. Diabetology, metabolism and blood sugar. Dysteleology is the study of seemingly useless organs. [*What?*] And I'm looking at you, Jacobson's organ. The part where we have an extra nose hole.

Plutology is the study of wealth. Seismology, earthquakes. Virology, viruses and how things go viral. Maybe I'll do Scientology or Astrology. Urbanology is the study of cities. Electrology is the study of electricity. What is it? How does it work? Why was Tesla in love with a pigeon?

Astacology the science of crawfish. Who does it? I'm gonna talk to them. Ridgeology, study of fingerprints. Medusology is the study of jellyfish. Nidology, bird nests. Eudemonology is the study of happiness. Probably said that one wrong too. Ethology is animal behavior.

So many types of psychology I can't even list them. Memeology is the study of memes. Nephology is the study of clouds. Ontology is the study of being. Scatology is poop. Tokology is childbirth. I have a feeling those are related sometimes. Lupinology, wolves. Vulpinology is foxes. Ursinology is the study of bears.

Those aren't for sure the next 100, but that is a vague sampling of some that may appear. "Now Ward," you ask, "What about a sneak peek at some coming up soon?" Well, shucks! Boy howdy! Why not! I've already recorded 'em and I'm working on these ones for upcoming weeks. One on chronobiology, or day/night cycles and circadian rhythms. I'm working on vexillology which is the study of flags.

There is a bisonology episode that involves three different ologists. That's a real doozy to put together but I think you are gonna like it. Also, disasterology is the study of disasters and emergency management systems. [*nervous squeal*] That one is recorded and it's going to be great. Also, I did one on porcine virology, which is pig flu outbreaks. I'm saving that for the dawn of the apocalypse.

Finally, there's one on Potterology. That is a two-part episode from a university chemistry professor about the chemical reactions behind *Harry Potter* spells. That will be a two-parter. That one will knock your round glasses right off your face.

Okay, so there it is. That's 100 down, many hundred more to go. In each episode, I'm gonna ask the smartest people the stupidest questions. It will be an honor to make this weird show for you. The last 100 episodes have just taught me so much from mucous-covered, slimy, sea spirals at the bottom the ocean to the outer edges of the cosmos, and my own brain and back again.

So, thank you so much everyone for listening. Thank you for asking your questions. Thank you for supporting on Patreon. Thank you for cheering me on just like marathon volunteers with some cold Gatorade each week with bad hair and crispy contact lenses. I'm just hustling to the finish line to get these up.

This is the best job in the world. I feel very lucky to be up in your ears.

So, cut bangs! Stare at the sky! Observe a snail! Text your crush! Do the thing! Follow a dream! Volunteer if you need to shake things up! Just be truly you. Don't be afraid of looking stupid because no one knows anything, seriously, until they ask.

So, to find me, I'm @AlieWard on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). We're @Ologies on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Thank you to Hannah Lipow and Erin Talbert for adminning the [Facebook group](#) and of being such

wonderful friends. Same to Shannon Feltus and Boni Dutch of the podcast *You Are That*. They manage merch at [OlogiesMerch.com](https://ologiesmerch.com) and are wonderful people. You can tag your photos #ologiesmerch on Instagram so we can repost you on Mondays. Thank you to Jarrett Sleeper for being so encouraging these past 100 episodes. Thanks, of course, to Steven Ray Morris who helped from the beginning showing me how to edit and eventually taking over edits so we can crank them out faster. Here's to 100 more. The very least.

Thank you to all my wonderful Nerd Brigade friends for always encouraging me to make things in my voice. I love you all. Also, thanks to my family who listens, even though I swear so much during this. The theme song was written and performed by Nick Thorburn of the band Islands.

If you listen to the end you know I tell you secret, and today's secret is that I'm really glad that the 100th episode is now done so that we can just go on and keep making them. I was like "What do I do with the 100th. What do I do?" and I was weirdly, like, "It's got to be big, but then not too big and self-congratulatory." So anyway. I'm glad we're through it. Now on to the next ones.

Also, I was in a bad mood for half of today and I couldn't figure out why. Then I realized it was just because I didn't have a hair tie and my hair just kept getting in my mouth. I got a hair tie now so I'm a new woman. We are all just big babies in large pants. Anyway, I think you're great.

Berbye.

Transcribed by Kelli Kerns Brockington

Edits done by Kaydee Coast in late May early June of 2020 so she can report that the following ologies have been covered in order of release date: (updated October 2020)

Disasterology - Aug 2, 2019

Vexillology - Sep 2

Potterology - Sep 9 and 17

Osteology - Oct 1

Demonology - Oct 23

Chiropterology - Oct 29 and Nov 4

Lupinology - Nov 19

Quantum Ontology - Nov 25

Chronobiology - Dec 10

Futurology - Jan 6, 2020

Bisonology - Jan 14

Diabetology - Jan 20 and 28

Nephology - Feb 4

Scatology - Mar 2

Virology - Mar 10

Philematology - Apr 7

Bryology - June 30

Agnotology - July 8

Medusology - July 30

Fulminology - September 22

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Sound editing by [Jarrett Sleeper](#) of [MindJam Media](#) & [Steven Ray Morris](#)

Theme song by Nick Thorburn

Thank you to all of the Ologists who have let me pepper them with questions and thank you to Hannah Lipow and Erin Talbert for adminning the Facebook Ologies Podcast group and Boni Dutch and Shannon Feltus of the [You Are That podcast](#) for handling merch, an all the Patrons who have supported along the way and my pals at the [NerdBrigade.la](#) and my family who looks past my sailor mouth and listens anyway.

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