

**BBC RADIO ULSTER
THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
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Have you ever noticed how much research appears to prove the obvious?

For example, a recent investigation made the astounding discovery that diet and exercise can extend your life.

It seems as if millions of pounds are spent every year to prove scientifically what we already knew anyway!

Did you gasp with surprise when a study published last week concluded that eating too much processed meat is bad for you?

Were you really gobsmacked when research revealed that 'cheap beer makes students drink more'?

Maybe there's a special University of the Obvious out there that does all this research.

My favourite example is the groundbreaking study, which found that 'sword-swallowers are prone to suffering from sore throats'.

Now, if like me, you have teenage children you will be familiar with the contemporary response to stating such obvious facts.

I regularly find myself making a statement to which the immediate response from my teenage daughter is "Dad! Duh!"

This roughly translates as:

'My dear father, how could you be so lacking in both intelligence and street credibility, not to realize that what you have just said is completely obvious'.

In a recent example I asked my daughter if she would be embarrassed to be seen at the cinema with her father. The response: 'Duh!'

But speaking of research, a paper has just been published that I think is worth considerable attention.

Researchers in the US analyzed the use of both violence and non-violence, to achieve political goals, in various countries over the past century.

They found that, contrary to conventional wisdom, nonviolence is more successful than violence.

The findings show that major nonviolent campaigns achieved success 53 per cent of the time, compared with 26 per cent for violent campaigns.

Millions of people across the world throughout history have suffered desperately because their leaders, including many religious leaders, believed that using violence to achieve your goals can be justified, when necessary.

But what if this new research is right?

What if violence is not just morally wrong, but ultimately ineffective?

If that fact really sunk in, this world would be a very different and much safer place.

And now there's proof: non-violence works better than violence.

As my daughter would say:

Duh!