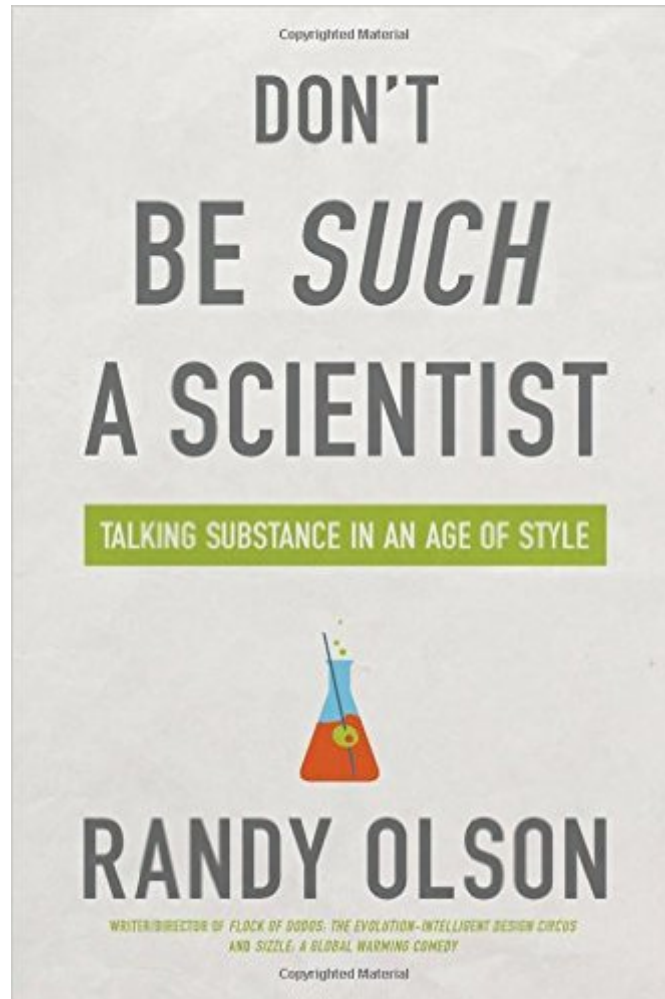


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# Don't Be Such A Scientist: Talking Substance In An Age Of Style



## Synopsis

"You think too much! You mother F@#\$%&\* think too much! You're nothing but an arrogant, pointy-headed intellectual. I want you out of my classroom and off the premises in five minutes or I'm calling the police and having you arrested for trespassing." Hollywood acting teacher to Randy Olson, former scientist After nearly a decade on the defensive, the world of science is about to be restored to its rightful place. But is the American public really ready for science? And is the world of science ready for the American public? Scientists wear ragged clothes, forget to comb their hair, and speak in a language that even they don't understand. Or so people think. Most scientists don't care how they are perceived, but in our media-dominated age, style points count. Enter Randy Olson. Fifteen years ago, Olson bid farewell to the science world and shipped off to Hollywood ready to change the world. With films like *Flock of Dodos: The Evolution-Intelligent Design Circus* (Tribeca '06, Showtime) and *Sizzle: A Global Warming Comedy* (Outfest '08), he has tried to bridge the cultural divide that has too often left science on the outside looking in. Now, in his first book, Olson, with a Harvard Ph.D. and formerly a tenured professor of marine biology at the University of New Hampshire, recounts the lessons from his own hilarious-and at times humiliating-evolution from science professor to Hollywood filmmaker. In *Don't Be Such a Scientist*, he shares the secrets of talking substance in an age of style. The key, he argues, is to stay true to the facts while tapping into something more primordial, more irrational, and ultimately more human. In a book enlivened by a profane acting teacher who made Olson realize that "nobody wants to watch you think," he offers up serious insights and poignant stories. You'll laugh, you may cry, and as a communicator you'll certainly learn the importance of not only knowing how to fulfill, but also how to arouse.

## Book Information

Paperback: 216 pages

Publisher: Island Press; 1 edition (August 28, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1597265632

ISBN-13: 978-1597265638

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (76 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #104,120 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #76 in Books > Reference >

## Customer Reviews

In 1997, marine biologist Olson recognized that scientists needed better communications skills to address a growing backlash against "rational data-based science." Inspired by the "power of video," Olson gave up a tenured professorship and went to Hollywood to reach a broader audience through filmmaking. The crucial lesson he learned was how to tell a good story, a largely absent concern for scientists, who focus on accuracy rather than audience engagement. It was a lesson Olson learned the hard way, after his intelligent design documentary, *Flock of Dodos*, flopped for lack of a lively story line. By "starting with a quirky little tidbit" about his mother and the intelligent design lawyer she lives next to, Olson found the hook he was missing. Olson values motivation over education, looking to Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* ("the most important and best-made piece of environmental media in history") for a hugely successful example of his principles in action. As if to prove all he's learned, Olson packs this highly entertaining book with more good stories than good advice, spurring readers to rethink their personal communication styles rather than ape Olson's example. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"If you are a wildlife professional who has ever been faced with hunters not believing your data and questioning your management recommendations, or have had to deal with angry property-rights advocates questioning not only your results but your integrity, then *Don't Be Such a Scientist* should be on your professional reading list." (Wildlife Professional)"Don't Be Such a Scientist is a stinging critique, yet it's also a funny, heart-felt account of one scientist's efforts to make non-scientists care about the natural world." (Carl Zimmer author of *Microcosm* and the award-winning science blog *The Loom*)

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