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They Won't Accept the What of Science If They Don't Get the Why and How

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Denial of evidence by policy makers on controversial issues, substituting ideology for research-based findings, and suspicion of scientists of bias or even conspiracy are all enormously distasteful and sometimes bewildering to scientists. Whatever the subject— climate change, nuclear power, or GMO's— scientists should understand that the problems originate, not with demagogic or misguided politicians, but rather with millions of Americans who do not appreciate the essence of science and have a poor understanding of the basic nature and procedures of science. The public appreciation of science shows signs of further erosion, suggesting that the problems may get even worse in the future. Scientists do little to help the problem by insistently trying to teach the specifics of the controversial subjects, however clearly and logically, when the public does not even understand how science works.