

The Most Contrarian Thing You Can Do

Be an optimist.

Insist on finding something valuable, useful, and promising in every person and idea you encounter.

The rebel, non-conformist, or contrarian is usually thought of as negative, critical, skeptical, and pessimistic. They find flaws in common tropes and beliefs. That's all well and good, and a critical eye is necessary, but it's easy to mistake negativity for genuine insight or analysis, and it's socially more rewarding and safer to be a critic and pessimist than an optimist.

Take any news item or phenomenon and spout off about what you think is wrong with it. You'll get some hate, but you'll get a ton of love too. People are ready for that. It's easy, and doesn't demand much of you. You can learn how to critique just by watching everyone else. Critics are a dime a dozen.

The real radical is the relentless optimist. Try that. It's really hard. It's lonely. Everyone has a "yeah but" to your creative take. But the reward to demanding to find something good or useful from everything is massive. You begin to see the world as an endless source of opportunity and enjoyment.

Join me in rebel optimism. It'll be great.