

Is That Woo Woo You're Using?

I have a term I'd like to coin: "The fear of woo-wooing out."

Should I call this FOWO?

Anyway, here's the idea: the fear of woo-wooing out is when you hesitate to do things that are fun, fulfilling, or useful to you because your friends might think you're being too weird, too new-agey, or too unscientific. No one wants to be accused of practicing "woo woo."

Example: Let's say you like to practice guided imagery meditations, or creative visualization exercises, or positive affirmations because they put you in a space where you feel more focused and motivated, BUT...you're not sure if the scientific community has reached a consensus about how those activities affect human performance.

Are you being delusional? Are you engaging in wishful thinking? Is this merely the placebo effect at work?

I'm no Neil deGrasse Tyson, but here's my two cents:

It's not "woo woo" if it actually works for you.

Your personal experience is a lab where ideas can be put to the test.

Experimenting with ideas and sticking with what proves useful is not being woo woo. That's being a pragmatic individual who understands the relative and real value of subjective experience.

If something consistently delivers the outcomes and advantages you want, you don't need the permission of your local physics professor to do it.

As long as you don't preach your personal strategies as some kind of universal philosophy that works for all people in all conditions, you're entirely free to do what works for you. As long as you don't equate "this works for me" with "this is objectively true and everyone else should do it too," you're safe from woo woo.

It doesn't matter if your tools and techniques are quirky. What matters is your willingness to measure them by the results they generate in your own life.