IGS Institute of General Semantics
founded in 1938 by Alfred Korzybski

13 Characteristics of Language with a ***Scientific Attitude***

1. ***Facts*** are clearly distinguished from ***non-facts*** (assumptions, beliefs, opinions, inferences, etc.).

2. ***Multi-valued evaluations*** more often recognized than simplistic either/or, right/wrong, black/white two-valued evaluations.

3. ***Multiple causes*** for events, circumstances, behaviors, etc., are investigated and considered … not 'the' cause.

4. Role of the observer is not overlooked … ***"to-me-ness"*** is recognized in statements, opinions, etc.

5. ***Operational definitions*** preferred over simple classifications; what something or someone ***does*** rather that what one ***is***.

6. Avoid **objectifying (or reifying) processes** and inanimate abstractions ... *the weather, the economy, science, security, terrorism …*

7. Emphasize importance of ***differences, distinctions, and uniqueness*** — even among apparent similarities.

8. ***Every 'thing' changes all the time*** even when changes are not apparent … including people.

9. Limit ***absolute, all-inclusive terms*** such as: *all, none, absolutely, certainly, without a doubt, best ever, like no other, exact same.*

10. Our knowledge/beliefs about anything is ***incomplete***, therefore our language should be tentative, recognize uncertainty, open to change when new knowledge arrives.

11. Take responsibility for the ***outputs of your own nervous system***: … *It made me so mad … she hurt my feelings …*; actor/action/acted upon.

12. Don't forget that there is ***always more*** data, more information, more sensory inputs … you'll never have "all the facts;" there's always ***etc.***

13. Avoid perpetuating pre-scientific myths and superstitions.