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The features marked with a star (\*) are based entirely on material taken straight from standard research (and other Official and Therefore Always Correct) literature. Many of the other articles are genuine, too, but we don't know which ones.

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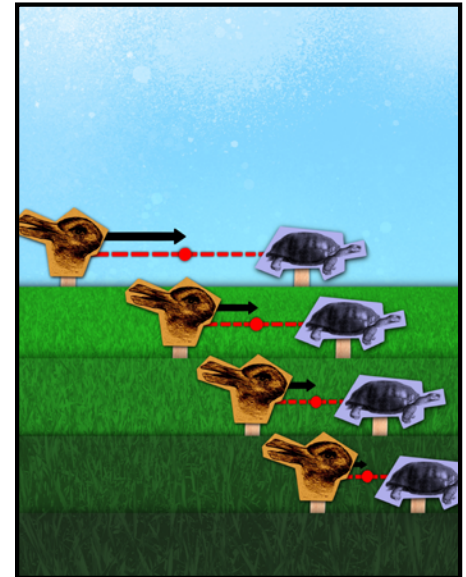
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There's always new improbable — it's not what you expect! — stuff on the **Improbable Research blog** at [IMPROBABLE.COM](http://IMPROBABLE.COM)



*On the Front Cover*

A graphical depiction of Zeno's paradox.



### Some Coming Events

(See [IMPROBABLE.COM](http://IMPROBABLE.COM) for details of these and other events.)

**March/April 2025**

— Ig Nobel EuroTour

**May 23-26, 2025**

— Balticon,

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

**May 28, 2025**

— Washington, D.C., USA

**Date TBD**

— CALPACS,

Santa Barbara, California, USA

**September 2025**

— The 35th First Annual

Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony

**September 2025**

— Ig Nobel Face-to-Face

**November 7-9, 2025**

— Falling Walls,

Berlin, Germany



# THOUGHTFUL PARADOXES: ZENOS'S PARADOX & STUPIDITY

*Straightforwardly twisty situations*

*compiled by Philberta Kim, Improbable Research staff*

## Zenos's Paradox: Food for Food for Thought

"Thinking About Thinking about 'Thinking About Thinking': Neurobiology as the Background for Brain and Mind," Zenos M. Linnell, *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, vol. 57, 2002, pp. 93-117. The author explains:

This title is not a joke but rather an attempt to emphasize the importance and the extent of recursive thought among all human thinking.... This paper presents details of the development of recursive thought from early infancy to early childhood.

## The Paradox of the Vitality of Stupidity

"The Vitality of Stupidity," René ten Bos, *Social Epistemology*, vol. 21, no. 2, April 2007, pp. 139-150. The author, at Radboud University, The Netherlands, explains:

It is argued that the focus within organization studies on wisdom is one-sided in the sense that it ignores stupidity, wisdom's little stepbrother. Too often it is simply taken for granted that an increase in wisdom will lead to a decrease in stupidity. The problem with this assumption is that it is philosophically uninformed. Stupidity and wisdom stand in a deeply paradoxical relationship, which has been studied by philosophers at least since the Stoics. Some recent contributions to this endless debate will be highlighted in this paper. However, the overall aim of the paper is to show that organizations too are familiar with these philosophical paradoxes.

## Thinking about Thinking about "Thinking about Thinking"

Neurobiology as the Background  
for Brain and Mind

ZENOS M. LINNELL, M.D.

*This paper presents details of the development of recursive thought from early infancy to early childhood. During this period the child is said to face the task of developing a "representational theory of mind." In earlier writings I have suggested eight developmental stages of mod-*



*velopment. My emphasis has been on the nature of the phylogenetic accompanying nurture of the mind. We have together fashioned a theory about thinking during the period of increasing sophistication.*

Zenos Linnell, author of the study "Thinking About Thinking about 'Thinking About Thinking': Neurobiology as the Background for Brain and Mind." Drawing by Nan Swift.

## The Vitality of Stupidity

René ten Bos

*It is argued that the focus within organization studies on wisdom is one-sided in the sense that it ignores stupidity, wisdom's little stepbrother. Too often it is simply taken for granted that an increase in wisdom will lead to a decrease in stupidity. The problem with this assumption is that it is philosophically uninformed. Stupidity and wisdom stand in a deeply paradoxical relationship, which has been studied by philosophers at least since the Stoics. Some recent contributions to this endless debate will be highlighted in this paper. However, the overall aim of the paper is to show that organizations too are familiar with these philosophical paradoxes.*

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