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You must always allow yourself to be disturbed. Some people when they start on a course which challenges their assumptions knit their assumptions up even closer to their heart. They feel somehow challenged. But I would like to say to anyone who's starting a course, as I used to say to students starting a course at York, let's see if I can do something to disturb you, to upset you. I mean one of my typical mean minded malevolent tricks was to say to them, for example I know that in the second term of your first year course, the number of phone calls that you make to your boyfriends, girlfriends, partners at home, is going to decrease by a factor of around about 35%, and by the end of the first year only 21% of you will still be with the partner you left behind at home when you came to university. I can also tell you that in your second year you will accumulate a large number of friends, you will move around in something of a gang. In your third year, you will revert to one particular person who shares your political and religious affiliations. And I produce evidence for this. And I'd say so really I'm telling you exactly what the next three years of your life are going to be like at university.

You know, and people I'd like to say would come up to me after and say that wasn't true for me you know, and I'd say no, we are talking statistically, I'm talking the language of predictions, and how much are you upset, how much are you disturbed by my capacity for being able to use sociology to predict what your behaviour's likely to be in coming years? Some would say oh I don't know, but others would be delighted by the idea that these predictions could be made, and they'd be delighted by the amount of disturbance it caused within them. The thought that I was predicting that they were likely to give up their partner at home by the end of the first year, it was a disturbing thought, but I would encourage them to try to live with it, because this is what social science always would do. It would always be annoying, it would always be shattering assumptions, it would always be making awkward predictions, it would always be messing up the ordered surfaces of the known world.