



# VANITY FAIR

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VF AGENDA

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## Curiosity Didn't Find Methane on Mars— But Did It *Really* Look? Like, *Really* Really?

by **Juli Weiner**



Curiosity? Is now a good time? Hi, there. Were you sleeping? Oh, no, just because it's three p.m. and a workday . . . never mind.

So, we read your claim that you did not detect life-supporting levels of methane gas in Mars's atmosphere, which is fine—it's just that on one hand, "telescopes and satellites have reported seeing small but significant volumes of the gas," but on the other hand, you say you can "pick up no such trace."

Listen, this is why we're *so thankful* you're up there, to test out our theories. And if something doesn't work, it doesn't work. No one's trying to force anything. But we just . . . want to make sure you're really looking for methane. Like, *really* looking.

Please don't take offense. This is not about whether we think you're working hard or doing a good job—well, it's a little about both of those things. It's just that, um, your Twitter . . . you, um, you wrote you "stopped to smell the science" just "six times," with, like, an exclamation mark.



First of all, we have asked you repeatedly to describe your experiments in greater detail than what you have been doing. We didn't appreciate it when you reported that you "maybe found water" because you had a feeling it's "time to get your drink on." That's not . . . it's just more harmful than it is helpful.

And second of all, stopping "six times" is not really that many times. It's not about laziness—not exactly—but was there something that prevented you from checking for a seventh time? Or several more times? It's, you know, you're *already up there*, you might as well do your job thoroughly.

And look, if you truly didn't find traces of methane, that's one thing, and maybe there is no life on Mars. But if it's issue of maybe, like, motivation or something, we'd rather you just own up to it—we're not going to be mad!—and go back and look again. We're taking cues from *you* here, O.K. boss?

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