

In addition to the moves, we'll introduce one more word of advice: *Check your emotions*.

This isn't quite a strategy (like "go upstream") or a tactic (like using date filters to find the origin of a fact). For lack of a better word, I am calling this advice a habit.

The habit is simple. When you feel strong emotion—happiness, anger, pride, vindication—and that emotion pushes you to share a "fact" with others, STOP. Above all, these are the claims that you must fact-check.

Why? Because you're already likely to check things you know are important to get right, and you're predisposed to analyze things that put you in an intellectual frame of mind. But things that make you angry or overjoyed, well... our record as humans are not good with these things.

As an example, I'll cite this tweet that crossed my Twitter feed:



### [Figure 1 Description](#)

You don't need to know much of the background of this tweet to see its emotionally charged nature. President Trump had insulted Chuck Schumer, a Democratic Senator from New York, and characterized the tears that Schumer shed during a statement about refugees as "fake tears." This tweet reminds us that that Senator Schumer's great-grandmother died at the hands of the Nazis, which could explain Schumer's emotional connection to the issue of refugees.

Or does it? Do we actually know that Schumer's great-grandmother died at the hands of the Nazis? And if we are not sure this is true, should we really be retweeting it?

Our normal inclination is to ignore verification needs when we react strongly to content, and researchers have found that content that causes strong emotions (both positive and negative) spreads the fastest through our social networks. Savvy activists and

advocates take advantage of this flaw of ours, getting past our filters by posting material that goes straight to our hearts.

Use your emotions as a reminder. Strong emotions should become a trigger for your new fact-checking habit. Every time content you want to share makes you feel rage, laughter, ridicule, or even a heartwarming buzz, spend 90 seconds fact-checking. You absolutely may want to share this or other content -- but you have to check it first.