**Can't seem to change IFS**

https://www.redditstatic.com/desktop2x/img/renderTimingPixel.png

I'm using a mac air, and logic decided to stop working:

~ $ IFS=$'\n'

~ $ echo $IFS

>

~ $ IFS=:

~ $ echo $IFS

>

~ $ IFS='please-start-working'

~ $ echo $IFS

>

It's quite frustrating as I'm just trying to get a good understanding of the shell and suddenly this throws everything.

2 points·[5 years ago](https://www.reddit.com/r/bash/comments/3g3mek/cant_seem_to_change_ifs/ctung6h/?utm_source=reddit&utm_medium=web2x&context=3)·*edited 5 years ago*

Nope, it's perfectly logical. Your unquoted variable reference $IFS is being field-split using itself as the field separators. By definition, that eliminates all characters from the expansion, no matter what IFS contains. As [/u/giigu](https://www.reddit.com/u/giigu/) said, quote your variables (unless you turn off both field splitting by making IFS empty and globbing/pathname expansion with set -u).

Also, to see the complete contents of IFS, including control characters, try feeding it to this od command, which will give you both hexadecimal and ASCII representations of each character:

printf '%s' "$IFS" | od -v -An -tx1 -c

(using printf instead of echo to avoid the extra linefeed and any interpreting of control characters).

level 1

[pimceau](https://www.reddit.com/user/pimceau/)

1 point·[5 years ago](https://www.reddit.com/r/bash/comments/3g3mek/cant_seem_to_change_ifs/ctuphd5/?utm_source=reddit&utm_medium=web2x&context=3)

I'm not sure it this applies to everyone, but whenever I stumble on an issue in shell scripting, 90% of the time it's because I didn't quote or double quote something.