



---

Most professors *like* good students, but I idolize them. For most professors, good students are a joy in the classroom, but a chore outside of the classroom. For me, good students are a joy through and through. I like talking with them, lunching with them, and even **gaming** with them.

Good students have three key traits.

First, good students genuinely want to learn. They don't study material merely because they see it on the syllabus or expect it on the test.

Second, good students fight the natural human tendency to forget material right after the final exam. Unlike most students, they consciously choose to try to remember what they learn.

Third, good students strive for what educational psychologists call **Transfer of Learning**. They earnestly try to apply what they've learned *outside* the classroom.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, good students put Truth first. They aren't afraid to entertain and embrace socially unacceptable ideas.

How can one become a good student? While decent IQ is important, being a good student is, to a large extent, a choice. Admit that there are important intellectual questions. Resist your **impulsive answers**. Don't worry about what people in your society are supposed to think. Calmly listen to the arguments of people who have reflected on the important intellectual questions longer than you have. Cross-examine the arguments. Apply your lessons to concrete cases. Do all this, and you're well on your way to being a good student.

What's so great about good students? Selfishly speaking, they're fun to be around. I've spent decades searching for answers. It's great to share what I've found with eager minds in search of shortcuts. Entertainment value aside, though, good students make the world a better place. Imagine political debates - or public policy! - if every voter were a good student.

If I admire good students so much, how can I make **The Case Against Education**? Because, as **I've explained before**, good students deserve something radically different from the status quo. People who care about learning should be surrounded by other students who feel the same way. In actual education systems, however, most students just grub credentials to signal for the labor market. Bad students sharply outnumber good students - even in grad school. Most teachers react as you'd expect: By catering to the vast majority of anti-intellectual careerists in their classrooms. Better teachers try to raise the bar, but giving good students a passable experience is an uphill battle when 90% of the class doesn't even want to be there.

Still, as always, we should focus on the positive. Today is the first day of a new academic year. I'll soon meet my latest wave of good students. They're going to be awesome. All the problems with the status quo notwithstanding, another great pedagogical journey is about to begin.

---