

## Backward—Foreword

This book was designed to get you as quickly as possible into *techniques* for surviving college, making the best possible grades, and learning as much as *you can*. The basic idea has been to improve *efficiency* to provide maximum FREE time for other than required academic activities. These “nonacademic activities” are still a valuable part of your total learning experience in college. If you have *used* our suggested techniques (modified as necessary to fit your particular needs) and found them valuable, then the *basic* purpose of this book has been served. If you have only *read* up to this point without trying the techniques yet, let’s reserve judgement until you do.

For whatever reason you reached this point, we want to drop a little “philosophy” on you that might normally be found in the Foreword of a book (but which, in this book, might have scared you away before you could get at the “techniques”). If you feel up to it, read on. (If not, what the heck! Most philosophers are never really appreciated during their lifetimes anyway!)

This philosophy of ours is directed to *beyond* surviving college and asks you to think seriously *now* about the kind of person you would really like to be *for the rest of your life*. One of the true keys to “the rest of your life” is your FUTURE ABILITY to grow and to develop as a human being. *Sometime* in your life you will want to be able to use your mind and your energies in new directions. You will want your life to be fuller and more meaningful. If that “sometime” really begins during your undergraduate days, you are one of the fortunate students. Our lives are spent (very roughly) about 1/3 earning our living, 1/3 sleeping and 1/3 in other pursuits. Your career can be a great “1/3” if you love the field and bounce out of bed eager to enjoy it again each working day. The sleeping “1/3” is marvelous if you can do it with tranquility. It’s the remaining and unprescribed “1/3” in which our maximum latitude lies. If we can see with the eyes of an artist, hear with the ears of a musician, touch with the sensitivity of a lover, think with the mind of a philosopher, and feel the expanse of universe about us—then we may truly be called *educated* men and women. Then we can both partake, with appreciation, and contribute, with meaning, to the culture that we are a part of.

The QUALITY OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS: Do *you*  
want to be a *unique* professional or an “assembly-line product”?

MOST DEGREE PLANS IN COLLEGE CATALOGS  
ARE DESIGNED FOR THE MASS PRODUCTION  
OF NEARLY IDENTICAL PRODUCTS.  
But, YOU can MAKE YOURSELF *UNIQUE!*

You probably know, or will learn fairly soon, the academic areas in which you do best. EXPLOIT YOUR STRENGTHS! Try to select your major in an area where your strengths lie. As much as possible, take *more* courses in this area than the regular curriculum requires.

If you are like most of us, you can identify some academic areas in which you are weak. WORK TO OVERCOME YOUR WEAKNESSES! Consider starting with courses in these areas at a *lower* level than your regular curriculum requires. Although this might add a few extra credit hours to

your total college program, it can pay **BIG** dividends in **OVERCOMING** a weakness that might otherwise cause *major* problems.

You probably have some significant interests in an area quite different from your academic major. **DESIGN A *UNIQUE* PROGRAM INCORPORATING YOUR SPECIAL INTERESTS.** Take as many courses as you can in this “secondary interest” area. Some academic degrees require a “minor field”, which you may be able to use for your special interests. Otherwise, use “unrestricted electives” in this area. It may even be worthwhile to consider one or more summer sessions, or even an extra semester, to gain the advantages of “uniqueness”. Some “unique” (and rather unusual) combinations that students have used successfully will illustrate what can be gained from planning a college program different from the “production-line model”. Think about how you might do the same kind of thing with your *own* special interests.

1. **Chemistry Major:** Used electives to gain 20 credits of a mixture of accounting, economics, marketing, and business administration. (Leading to a career in management in a chemical industry.)
2. **Biology Major:** Used art as a “minor”. (Leading to a career in medical illustration.)
3. **Journalism Major:** Used combined physical and biological sciences as a “minor”. (Leading to a career in technical writing, with an avocation in science fiction.)
4. **History Major:** Used romance languages as a “minor”. (Leading to a highly successful career in diplomacy.)

**THE QUALITY OF NONACADEMIC SUCCESS:** Do *you* want to be the kind of person that *you* respect and admire?

**MANY STUDENTS LEAVE COLLEGE WITH  
LOWER MORAL AND ETHICAL VALUES  
THAN THEY HAD WHEN THEY ENTERED  
COLLEGE.  
BUT, YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELF A *BETTER* PERSON!**

What you learn in the academic aspects of college is *not* the only *important* thing to learn. Part of the total learning experience of a good college program lies in gaining a better understanding of, and a higher respect for, *yourself* and *others*. The new insights that college can provide for *thinking* through problems, for developing new and improved **HABITS** (of study, for example), and for working in a *systematic* and *efficient* way to achieve goals **CAN ALL BE APPLIED TO HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS.**

One of the most important keys to effective and rewarding human relationships is **THOUGHTFULNESS.** Unless you *consciously* and *systematically* take the time and make the effort to **THINK** about what you like or dislike about yourself, you will not learn to improve your self-image. Unless you *consciously* and *systematically* take the time and make the effort to **THINK** about how you can deal with others more effectively and **MORE CARINGLY**, you can spend hours with a group

and learn nothing about improving human relationships. It is for these purposes that we suggested that you schedule a regular “thoughtfulness time” each week (page 12).

You may have entered college with philosophical, moral, and religious ideas that simply reflected those of your parents or community. These ideas may have been based on “faith”, without any deep intellectual thought. EXPECT to have your whole world turned upside down (at least temporarily) by exposure to persons with completely different ideas and convictions. These new ideas are often presented in a most persuasive way. If you develop doubts about “how you were raised”, there’s NOTHING wrong with you. This is a normal and healthy part of learning. You may decide, after adequate thought, to change some of your ideas, but you NEED NOT *destroy* what you had. Rather, you should use sound thinking to salvage all that is BEST for *you*. It is particularly important that you build a religious, moral, and ethical structure that is founded on both faith *and* thought—that will give you a “world that *cannot* be turned upside down”. It will help you greatly to identify persons (your parents, a pastor, some professors, some obviously “successful” students) whom you truly admire and respect. Then when tough questions arise, when doubts become problems, and when you must choose what to do (with regard to sex, drugs, religious controversy, ethical decisions, etc.), ask yourself:

“What would those I most deeply respect and those I most dearly love really hope I will do?”

If you answer that question *truthfully* and have the courage to act on YOUR considered decision, in spite of the pressures of “peers”, then, my friend, you will most truly have learned something worthwhile—for all your life.

A thought for filing away—

*“There is no greater pleasure than to  
be learning something.”*

—Aristotle

You should begin to understand these famous words at about the start of your senior year. If you’re lucky, they can hit you a little earlier.

We hope that this little book has helped you—to learn *how to learn*, how to organize work more efficiently, and even a little, perhaps, of how to *choose* what to learn. If it has done these things, in even a small way, then we’re glad that we wrote it.

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College Station, TX  
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