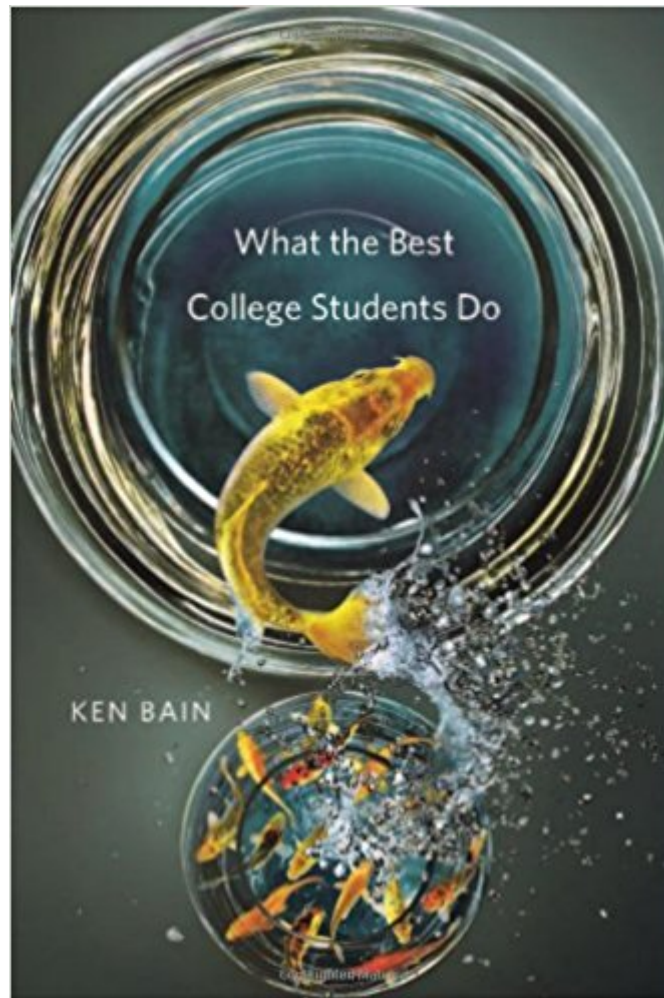




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What The Best College Students Do



Synopsis

The author of the best-selling book *What the Best College Teachers Do* is back with more humane, doable, and inspiring help, this time for students who want to get the most out of college—and every other educational enterprise, too. The first thing they should do? Think beyond the transcript. The creative, successful people profiled in this book—college graduates who went on to change the world we live in—aimed higher than straight A's. They used their four years to cultivate habits of thought that would enable them to grow and adapt throughout their lives. Combining academic research on learning and motivation with insights drawn from interviews with people who have won Nobel Prizes, Emmys, fame, or the admiration of people in their field, Ken Bain identifies the key attitudes that distinguished the best college students from their peers. These individuals started out with the belief that intelligence and ability are expandable, not fixed. This led them to make connections across disciplines, to develop a “meta-cognitive” understanding of their own ways of thinking, and to find ways to negotiate ill-structured problems rather than simply looking for right answers. Intrinsically motivated by their own sense of purpose, they were not demoralized by failure nor overly impressed with conventional notions of success. These movers and shakers didn't achieve success by making success their goal. For them, it was a byproduct of following their intellectual curiosity, solving useful problems, and taking risks in order to learn and grow.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Some very good books are worth reading for a few splendid pages alone. Ken Bain's *What the Best College Students Do* is one such book. His interview with the TV satirist Stephen Colbert is revealing both for its insight into Colbert and for its ideas on how higher education ought to work... *What the Best College Students Do* combines interviews with a review of academic research on university learning. The book builds on Bain's 2004 bestseller, *What the Best College Teachers Do*. To some extent, both books state what we already know--that straight A's are nice, but hardly guarantee a happy or productive life. Instead, it takes a personal sense of purpose. The 'best' students are curious risk-takers who make connections across disciplines. By following those instincts--rather than simply chasing 'success'--the best students achieved it. Bain's new book is a wonderful exploration of excellence. (David A. Kaplan *Fortune* online 2012-08-10) Bain reports on research about highly 'creative,' productive, and socially conscious students and how they negotiated college to attain their goals. They developed a 'deep,' transformative learning orientation, tenaciously pursuing what mattered to them over high grades. He reports that these successful students turned failure/mistakes into learning opportunities; learned to make choices/decisions in murky situations by reflecting and learning from past experience; and maintained self-esteem, which sustained them through failures or setbacks on their way to achieving goals. Bain writes in noncomplex language and artfully weaves scholarly literature and rich narratives from dozens of interviewees into a provocative, interesting, and fast-moving book... This book is informative and beneficial not only for current and future college students, but also professors, researchers, and parents and caregivers who strive to foster successful learning in children. (D. Truty *Choice* 2013-09-01) The experiences of successful students are certainly burnished by exposure to the length and breadth of a liberal curriculum, but they are spurred by awe and fascination. The best students seek the meaning behind the text, its implications and applications, and how those implications interact with what they have already learned. To think in so rich and robust a way as Bain describes--'trying to answer questions or solve problems that they regard as important, intriguing, or just beautiful'--is an aspiration of the first order... A soundly encouraging guide for college students to think deeply and for as long as it takes. (Kirkus Reviews 2012-06-15) *What the Best College Students Do* delivers on the promise of its title with rich descriptions of what the best college students do, how they think, and what they believe. Bain challenges his readers to give up the standard model of short-term success, in favor of deep learning with payoffs in living purposefully and well. I wish every college student, and every parent, could approach higher education with this sage orientation. It isn't just about the 'A.' (Pamela Barnett, Temple University) We are always telling students to 'find their passion.' Now we have a book that looks at

how that happens, and how we can encourage students to use their uniqueness, and be more curious and more resilient. Ken Bain can really tell a story and it is very rare for a book based upon research to be such a compelling read. (JosÃ©fÂ© Antonio Bowen, Southern Methodist University) Ken Bain, author of the best-selling *What the Best College Teachers Do*, has written the perfect follow-up. He skillfully weaves together some of the best research about effective learning strategies with moving stories about remarkable life-long learners. Some of them had great teachers. But most of them succeed because of what they did for themselves. If every college teacher read the first book and every student read this new one, we'd have taken a huge step toward solving some of the great challenges for higher education. (Thomas Luxon, Dartmouth College)

Ken Bain is President of the Best Teachers Institute and a former professor of history at Northwestern, Vanderbilt, the University of Texas, and New York University.

This is a great book for everyone. Many studies suggest that a growth mindset can help people fulfill their potential more effectively. When I finished this book, I marveled at how much I had learned from this book. The author gave the readers lots of stories from creative and successful people, and it shows not only our mind can change our body, but it could also change our life too. The author wants to inspire college students by using those remarkable examples as motivation to deliver his message about how the most successful people are often deep learners. The successful people also have very good growth mindsets which helped them achieve their knowledge and goals. This book talks about Professor Paul Baker and how he teaches his students that growth is the discovery of the dynamic power of the mind. Mr. Baker encouraged his students to have conversations with themselves and discover themselves because knowing oneself can really make a difference. If people learn to celebrate and appreciate who they are and the special qualities and experiences they bring, they can create in ways that no one else can. I was amazed at how much people can change and improve themselves through a changing their mindset. I am going to practice what I learn from this book to become a better me.

This book should be required reading for every student entering college. In it, Ken Bain provides concrete tips for success and uses many examples of real students to illustrate each point. Most of the advice is not surprising; maybe it even seems obvious but judging by many of the students I teach these points need to be made and students need continuous reminding. Among the insights

he discusses the need for successful students to take ownership of their own learning. After all, learning is something each individual does not something that is done to them. Students need to be active in their own learning. Also, students need to focus on this deep learning instead of obsessing over grades. It is quite possible to "succeed" in college by getting great grades but learning very little. Is this really the success that we want college students to embrace? Students need to embrace a growth mindset and be able to deal with failure and learn from it. This is much better than having a fixed mindset which is the view that a student's ability is something they either have or don't and there's not much they can do to improve if they are failing. Successful students cultivate curiosity, look for interesting problems to challenge them, and have the ability to embrace ambiguity as opposed to always looking for the one right answer. Much of this can be difficult in the classroom, especially if the professor does not encourage or support these traits. But, it is precisely in such environments that successful students need to take charge of their own learning and embrace the skills Bain outlines. Of course, you don't have to embrace these skills to get good grades. You can study just enough to memorize just enough to pass the exams and then forget what you just memorized. You can keep doing this for most, if not all of, your classes and rack up plenty of good grades; maybe even get on the honor roll and graduate with top honors. But, so what? What have you learned? What will your college degree really be worth after spending 4-6 years learning just enough to get by without really digging any deeper? Other college students will be putting these skills to good use and thriving in ways that will ultimately count for more in their lives. They will have recognized that learning is a lifelong pursuit, it's enriching and fun and, while it won't be their primary focus, deep learning will also likely lead them to the career success that most students are pursuing.

I was recommended this book by an instructor I trusted and although I'm not big on reading, I really enjoyed this book. I use the techniques it has shown me within my everyday life. It really has made me a better student by making me think differently and I don't think I could have done that without this book. The main reason I love this book is because I am constantly thinking of ways my classes overlap and connect with one another. I would recommend this book for anyone wanting to improve their learning techniques or anyone looking to challenge their process of thought and memorization.

Professor Ken Bain has written an excellent book on how to be a successful college student, better, a successful human being. Lots of examples of how learning deeply, instead of being overly concerned with achieving good grades is the key to be a healthy, happy and successful individual

This book isn't like the gimmicky "how to get all As" books out there. Instead, the author, a former college professor and now provost, interviews a variety of individuals who have made a creative impact on their fields. Many of these individuals are also financially successful, but financial success is not the focus of the book. Instead, the author describes the patterns in the attitudes, habits, and skills that these individuals cultivated while they were in college years ago. Some of the patterns he noticed through his interviews include a growth mindset towards intelligence, genuine curiosity, a reliance on intrinsic motivation, an interdisciplinary approach to solving problems, and an embrace of failure. He showcases these patterns through anecdotes (a little heavily at times) and current research, and he explains how today's college students can incorporate these characteristics into the approach to their own education. Insightful and accessible to today's college students, this book will make an impact on most readers and help them strive towards the deep education necessary to make a creative impact in whatever career field they pursue.

This book was an enjoyable read overall. The writer did very well at getting their points across and providing insight on how to make the most of a college education in today's world. This book received three stars due to some redundancy. The same principle would be introduced over and over again, and perhaps this was the authors intent. But overall I felt like the book was sending the same message over and over again.

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