### **BILL, RECORD LECTURE!!!!**

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# Life Advice

## **Exposition by William Gasarch**

February 17, 2025

### Kate Asked Me ...

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At our last Ramsey Gang Reunion Kate asked me for advice for College.

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At our last Ramsey Gang Reunion Kate asked me for advice for College.

I give you advice for College some of which is advice for life.

Try to match up what you LIKE with the courses you TAKE.

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Go to class and pay attention.

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For at least one course, every day go over your class notes: fill in proofs, work out examples, think of questions that come out of it, work on them.

Should you work on topic X?

Should you work on topic X? You Should Consider

Should you work on topic X?
You Should Consider
Are you interested in X?

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Do you have some prior knowledge about X?

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Do you have a mentor who knows more about X than you do?

Should you work on topic X? You Should Consider

Are you interested in X?

Do you have some prior knowledge about X?

Do you have a mentor who knows more about X than you do?

(Optional) I know A and I know B, perhaps I can combine them. (Tell them examples.)

Shoud your work on topic X?

Shoud your work on topic X? You Should Not Consider

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You Should Not Consider

Will X serve a practical purpose?

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You Should Not Consider

Will X serve a practical purpose?

Does anyone aside from me and my mentor care about X? (Tell them that line from **Love Long Distance**.)

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Will X serve a practical purpose?

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Will working on X lead to a paper?

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(Tell them that line from Love Long Distance.)

Will working on X lead to a paper?

Will working on X lead to a grant?

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(This may get less relevant if Musk/Trump destroy the granting process.)

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Surely someone else must have already worked on this question. (Its amazing how often the answer is no–tell them example)

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#### You Should Not Consider

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Does anyone aside from me and my mentor care about X? (Tell them that line from **Love Long Distance**.)

Will working on X lead to a paper?

Will working on X lead to a grant?

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Surely someone else must have already worked on this question. (Its amazing how often the answer is no–tell them example)

The problem with caring about the above is that it gets in the way of **doing** something.

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a) You've stopped making progress.

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- c) You have stopped learning from working on it.

Don't be shy about asking for help.

- a) You've stopped making progress.
- b) You don't have any new ideas to try (this may be hard to determine since you may get a new idea later).
- c) You have stopped learning from working on it.
- d) You've stopped having fun.

Don't be shy about asking for help.

- a) You've stopped making progress.
- b) You don't have any new ideas to try (this may be hard to determine since you may get a new idea later).
- c) You have stopped learning from working on it.
- d) You've stopped having fun.
- e) YMMV

### **Never Be Embarssed**

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Bill Tell the story about spelling your name in third grade.

#### **Never Be Embarssed**

Bill Tell the story about spelling your name in third grade.

Bill Tell the story about messing up in class last week.

### How to Respond to Insults

https://blog.computationalcomplexity.org/2024/10/random-thoughts-on-election.html