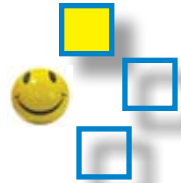


# White Board



Become An Effective Teacher & Save Your Valuable Teaching Time and Energy

Center for Effective Undergraduate Teaching (864) 388-8426

## Your Business Attitude is a Choice. I Choose Optimism.

*Optimists outperform pessimists on the job by as much as 50 percent.  
Which do you choose to be?*

By Harvey Mackay | @HarveyMackay | Jan 13, 2012

WHEN YOU WAKE up every day you have two choices. You can either be positive or negative; an optimist or a pessimist. I choose to be an optimist. It's all a matter of perspective.

You can whine because you have so much work or be grateful that you are your own boss and in control of your own destiny. You can complain about your lack of an IT department, or be excited about learning the tech you need to know. You can grumble about your unengaged employees or do everything in your power to make them succeed. You get the idea.

Pessimism doesn't grow your business or even maintain the status quo. The pessimists on your staff make the job harder for everyone around them. They make difficulties out of opportunities. And the worst part is that their surliness rubs off on others.

You need to be able to look on the bright side of tough situations in order to take risks, and survive both successes and failures. The sooner you accept the fact that you will have

both successes and failures, the easier it will be to get your business and personal life headed in the right direction.

An optimist understands that life can be a bumpy road, but at least it is leading somewhere. They learn from mistakes and failures, and are not afraid to fail again. It may not be your fault for being knocked down, but it is certainly your fault for not getting up.

Does success or failure have anything to do with mental attitude? The answer is a resounding, "yes."

A psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania proved that optimists are more successful than equally talented pessimists in business, education, sports and politics. Based on his research, Metropolitan Life, the insurance and financial services corporation, developed a test to distinguish between the optimists and pessimists when hiring sales people. The results of that experiment were phenomenal: The optimists outsold the pessimists by 20 percent the first year. During

the second year, the difference jumped to 50 percent. Find me a sales person—or company—that wouldn't beg for those numbers. I know we would find office space for those optimists at MackayMitchell Envelope Company.

The right attitude coupled with the courage to reach for opportunity is the defining factor for success. It's never too late to start early. Don't get discouraged just because you haven't practiced that approach until now.

I am an eternal optimist. I firmly believe that there is virtually nothing that I can't do if I set my mind to it, and that's true of everyone. It helps to be realistic. I know I am never going to pitch in the World Series, but I can be a player/manager of a top-notch company. I took a big gamble getting my company off the ground, but I've never looked back.

*Harvey Mackay, author of The Mackay MBA of Selling in the Real World, is founder and chairman of the MackayMitchell Envelope Company. He has written six New York Times bestsellers, including the #1 Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive. His website is [www.harveymackay.com](http://www.harveymackay.com).*

*Harvey Mackay; Your Business Attitude is a Choice; Inc.com; January 13, 2012; [ <http://www.inc.com/harvey-mackay/optimism-works-better-than-pessimism.html> ]; January 20, 2012.*

Homecoming - Feb 3-4  
Faculty Meeting - Feb 15  
Mid-Term Week - Feb 20  
Spring Break - Feb 27-Mar 2

## CAMPUS VIEW



### WHITE BOARD

2011-12 Publication Dates  
First Monday of the Month

September 5	March 5
October 3	April 2
November 7	May 7
December 5	June 4
January 3	July 2
February 6	August 6

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## How to Make the Most of Your Office Hours

**MOST FACULTY SCHEDULE** at least three office hours per week—that's 2,700 minutes a semester. If you have 135 students, that's 20 minutes for each student. Even if you have 270, that's still 10 minutes per student.

Recently I've been working to make the most of these 2,700 minutes of office hours. They offer prime time for one-to-one mentoring. In the process, my thinking about office hours has shifted a bit, and I'm using my office hours in more ways. Consequently I have had a greater number of students taking advantage of this learning opportunity.

### Two shifts in thinking

Rather than arbitrarily selecting any three hours during the week, I recommend selecting times that maximize the number of students who can meet with you during office hours, recognizing the constraints that today's college students face. They may be attending college part time, working full time and commuting to campus.

1. **Timing.** It's best to consult with your students before deciding when you'll hold office hours and then schedule times that are convenient for them. In all likelihood this rules out early Monday morning or Friday evenings, and that heavily scheduled 10 to 4 time window on Tuesdays and Thursdays (on my campus at least). I recommend three different weekdays, and I wouldn't rule out virtual office hours held at other times.

2. **Staging.** Move aside everything physically and psychologically that will interfere with devoting this time to students. If you share an office, stagger hours with your office mate. Use every way possible to let students know when you hold office hours; post them on your door, put them on the syllabus, position them prominently on the course website, announce them in class. Have a chair ready. Put away your cell phone. Turn away from your computer. Put peppermints in a bowl on your desk.

Seven ways to interact with students during office hours

1. **Teach.** Tell students that class attendance and note-taking is expected in your course, but also make clear that questions and additional help are available during office hours. Students sometimes think that professors are not willing to review content again in the office. I'm not suggesting that you do

more than teach. Students are responsible for doing the hard work of learning, but you can certainly help them do that during office hours.

2. **Advise.** Students do come to faculty offices with forms that need to be signed. Make the most of this time by being more than a bureaucrat. Ask a few questions of your own. Listen to their concerns. What information does the student need to succeed in your program, beyond your signature?

3. **Collaborate.** If you encourage students to seek out additional sources on topics introduced in class and they bring material to your office, ask them about it. I am always surprised by how few students say that they are never asked direct and challenging questions about the interesting topics and projects they are working on. It's a chance to give them practice answering questions like, "What's your research question?" "What have you found so far?"

4. **Offer books.** Like me, you probably have a decent personal library. You may have some duplicate copies of key texts or know where you can buy used copies of the classics in your field. Lend them out or give them away. Geoffrey Canada, the charismatic school principal and subject of Paul Tough's *Whatever It Takes*, talks about a professor who gave him an unassigned statistics book from his personal collection. That book helped him pass the hardest course of his undergraduate major. My experience has been the same. I cherish those books given to me by my professors.

5. **Listen well.** Use all the active-listening strategies you've ever learned to make this meeting memorable. I recommend taking notes; jot down names, phrases, and details of the conversation so that you can refer to these topics next time you talk with the student. If you are meeting with several students on the same day, this kind of record keeping is essential.

6. **Mentorship.** Students do ask us questions about

majors, careers, graduate school, and internships. Sharing your own educational and work trajectory can be very insightful. You can also direct students to alumni, library resources, and websites that will help them make their own decisions. If students need advice that is beyond your expertise, be prepared to say so. Know the phone numbers for student support services, and educate yourself so that you know when students need professional rather than academic assistance.

7. **Student feedback.** Don't put students on the spot and ask for specific feedback on your course or department. This can put students in a difficult position. Remember that office hours are for students' benefit. Keep every conversation professional.

2,700 minutes seems like a lot of time. It's good to reflect on how this interactive teaching time is being spent. Are there ways to make the experience more beneficial for students?

*Margaret Walsh is a sociology professor at Keene State College in New Hampshire.*

*Margaret Walsh; How to Make the Most of Your Office Hours; Faculty Focus; December 9, 2011; [ <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/how-to-make-the-most-of-your-office-hours/> ]; December 9, 2011*

