BILL, RECORD LECTURE!!!!

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Life Advice

Exposition by William Gasarch

August 14, 2025

A Former HS Ramsey Gang Student Named Kate Asked Me . . .

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Do you have any advice for College, and for Life.

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YES. That is the basis for this talk!

Taking Courses

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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.

Good Advice for Research

Should you work on topic X?

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You Should Consider

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Are you interested in X?

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

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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.)

Bad Advice for Research

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Will X serve a practical purpose?

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

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Does anyone aside from me and my mentor care about X?
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Will working on X lead to a paper? (Tell them about Ilya.)

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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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(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.

When Working on a Problem...

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Don't be shy about asking for help.

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a) You've stopped making progress.

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b) You don't have any new ideas to try (this may be hard to determine since you may get a new idea later).

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d) You've stopped having fun.

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e) YMMV

Never Be Embarrassed

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

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Bill Tell the story about messing up in class- Finding Medians.

Using ChatGPT

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Is it even good for a starting point?
I leave that as a question for the reader.

How to Respond to Insults

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