

# AN OPEN LETTER TO MY STUDENTS

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Dear Student,

Welcome to my class. Every student that enters my class teaches me something about teaching. I want to share some lessons that now form my **teaching philosophy**.

I strive to practice what I preach. I demand that you **think and act entrepreneurially**, which requires you to develop creative solutions, take early action, accept and learn from small losses, and pivot when things do not go according to plan. I have to do the same. Teaching entrepreneurship requires continuous innovation, fearless experimentation, and structured chaos.

I have learned that I must teach to excite, inspire, motivate, and even shock you. I strive to create the unexpected in order to capture attention and spark enthusiasm for entrepreneurship. I have **extremely high expectations with little tolerance for mediocrity and apathy**, yet the culture of my classroom is open, playful, and respectful. A class plan is necessary for organization and preparedness but not sufficient for your learning. Flexibility, humor, reactivity and improvisation are **pillars of my philosophy**.

Most importantly, my approach to teaching is **action-based**. It has to be. In order to learn entrepreneurship one must **do entrepreneurship**. I have worked tirelessly to ensure you are able to **practice** aspects of entrepreneurship rather than be passive learners. Every day I strive to create a learning laboratory for experimentation and practice in hope of creating **shared ownership** in the learning process.

I encourage you to use your **voice**—to debate, push back, and challenge your peers and me. I have developed confidence to do the same. However, I will admit that the little things bother me. I have **zero tolerance** for unprofessional behavior. Arriving to class late, being unprepared, using smart phones and laptops inappropriately, and disrespecting others has no place in my classroom. I will not hesitate to stop class, solve a particular issue, and then restart class. On the other hand **patterns** of negative behavior are 100% my fault. If half of the class is consumed by phones or computers then I am doing something wrong. If students are constantly arriving late or leaving during class to go (fill in the blank), I am doing something wrong. In those moments, I am failing to engage.

The fact that I have no tolerance for unprofessional behavior does not mean I want a staid atmosphere. This would be the antithesis of entrepreneurship. I strive for class sessions that are alive, exciting, relevant, challenging, creative, innovative and even playful and joyful. A **community of learning** and engagement must be omnipresent if we are going to transcend our preconceived notions of what entrepreneurship is and its importance to the world today. In other words, you have a huge **responsibility** as “wanna be” or practicing entrepreneurs of all kinds to **create** something of economic and social value to you and others.

I also have an enormous responsibility. Entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon, chaotic, and lacking any notion of linearity. As an educator, I have the responsibility to develop your discovery, thinking, reasoning, experimentation, and implementation skills so you may lead, manage, innovate and excel in highly uncertain, entrepreneurial environments. These skills enhance the likelihood that you will identify and capture the **right opportunity at the right time for the right reason**.

Entrepreneurs of all kinds impact the world, so entrepreneurship education is a necessary and formidable change agent. I really want you to do something great, take action, and change your world! I will do everything I can to help facilitate your journey.

**Start entrepreneuring!** I look forward to meeting you on Monday.

