

How to Win Over that Teacher you HATE (and who you are sure hates you)

“You’re not the brightest, but you if work hard enough, you’ll be fine,” Mrs. so-and-so chastised. Needless to say, I hate Mrs. so-and-so and worse yet, I know she hates me. She was trying to embarrass me for being distracted but as mean as she was for singling me out, her reprimand bothered me most because I failed to manage her in the most self-serving way.

Winning her over seemed impossible, but to salvage a respectable grade, I made it my mission. Here is what you need to know if you find yourself in this predicament.

Understand the source of the hatred. Before making changes, it’s important to identify why your teacher hates you. Are there specific behaviors that led to this situation? Taking time to figure this out will help you make improvements.

Take responsibility for your actions. If you’ve made mistakes, own them. Turning your enemy into a fan will be easier if you admit when you were wrong and are accountable. I know it’s painful to swallow your pride, but this shows maturity and humility—qualities that will win that teacher over.

Exhibit respect and composure. Regardless of how evil the teacher is, don’t give in to your impulses. Make it your mission to stay cool, no matter how tense the situation gets. This will show the teacher you deserve to be treated with respect.

Focus on performance. This may seem obvious, but consistently showing up on time, completing assignments, and demonstrating a willingness to learn can improve your relationship. Over time, hard work can help shift the teacher’s view of you from someone lacking commitment to someone they admire.

Build a connection. If they mention something especially interesting to them, remember it. Find a recent article on the topic and share it. Say you remember them talking about it and were interested. Whether your interest is real or not, this will give you great common ground to form a deeper relationship.

My biology teacher, Mr. Garrett, explained “I know when students try to get over on me.” So above all, you must be genuine when implementing these strategies.

All this can be super-annoying, and I know you want to scream some choice vocabulary at your teacher, but you can’t fold to antagonism. Winning them over can get you the grade you deserve and teach you a valuable life skill.