

"10 Things We Should Teach You In High School and Usually Don't"

Pete Herr

With all of the focus on reform and new education standards there is little time for teachers to spend on life skills that are essential for success in college, work place, and social groups. In **10 Things We Should Teach You In High School and Usually Don't**, award winning teacher, Pete Herr creates a guide, with easy to accomplish action items, to help bridge the gap when school is over.

Who is this book for? How many times have you said "Boy, I wish I knew that when I was younger"? This is a book about some of the things we wish we knew back when the we had the whole world in front of us. So, it's for anyone, of any age, who is looking for some tools for their toolbox. The earlier that we learn these lessons, however, the longer we have to use them to our advantage. So, I've included some action items at the end of each chapter for parents or teachers who want to help their kids learn the skills earlier.

Is this book about the Common Core Standards? Nope. Not even a little bit. This book is about life skills. Things like taking control of the habits you form, and self-promotion, and creating and managing your personal brand. It's about knowing when you are 18 that it is time to start thinking about retirement and knowing that fear is usually what stops us from hitting one out of the park.

What inspired you to write "10 Things"? After 20 years of teaching high school and some conversations with some college professors, I realized we weren't always delivering what we needed to for our kids to be successful. Kids don't read enough and can't write well. They don't understand what to wear to job interviews. They rely too much on their parents to take care of things for them. We do, however, spend an awful lot of time teaching them to factor polynomials (I don't remember how, or even the last time I needed to do this).

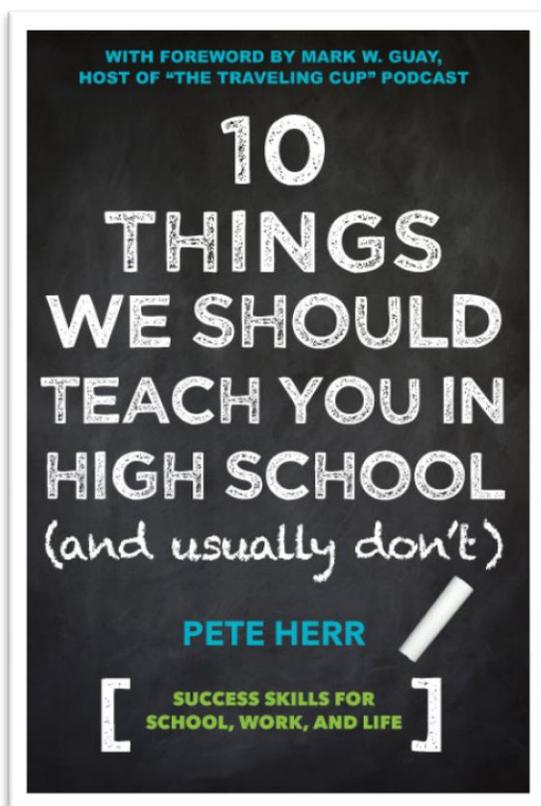
What are the most important ideas in the book? I think that people, as a whole, not just kids, need to understand how important the power of our personal image is, and how to build and maintain a personal network, and how incredibly valuable charity and community service are. There's a whole chapter on financial literacy that I wish I knew before I got my first credit card. Retirement never even occurred to me until about 5 years ago, and I'm 50. Too late now.

What was the hardest part about writing this book? Fear. Now that it is released, I am excited, and terrified. What if no one buys it? Worse yet, what if they buy it and hate it? There were lots of times that the fear stopped me in my tracks. I almost gave up a bunch of times. I think it's so important that I wrote about fear in the very first chapter of the book.

Why aren't these lessons taught in high school? A couple of reasons. First, they don't fit neatly into the categories that we do teach in school - English, Math, Science, History etc. Secondly, who has time? A teacher's day is full with all of the new reforms and trying to teach classrooms full of kids that have different learning styles, and trying to integrate new technologies. Teachers don't have time for the lessons that don't directly relate to the curriculum. To be fair, however, some schools do have some specialty classes in leadership or personal finance that hit some of the topics in the book.

Don't parents teach these lessons to their kids? I wish they did, but lots of parents don't know these things themselves. Throw that into the mix with parents that work all day and drive kids to all of the different activities the kids are involved with, and then run a household. It is a frantic pace and it is hard to drive home these important lessons when the most time you get alone with your kid is in the car going from a sports practice to music lessons.

What are the most important takeaways from this book? That we all have the power of choice, and that oftentimes, all we have to do is choose to change our circumstances in order to move to a better place. Social media is a force to be reckoned with and we can use it to show people how good and valuable we are. That we are what our habits are, and we can form habits that support who we want to be. That the power of charity and community service are awesome forces that can raise us up to new levels, and that this is a do-it-yourself world. There are so many things you can do all by yourself now, if you want to. I did this whole book by myself, or with the help of my personal network. It is one of the things I am most proud of.



Product Details

- **Paperback:** 172 pages
- **Publisher:** The Creative Buffalo; 1 edition (October 3, 2014)
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 0692281835
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0692281833
- **Product Dimensions:** 9 x 6 x 0.4 inches
- **List Price:** \$14.99 USD
- **Shipping Weight:** 11.2 ounces
- **"10 Things We Should Teach You In High School and Usually Don't"** is available at discounted prices for large orders.

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About the Author

Pete Herr has spent the last 20 years educating and mentoring high school students. In that time he has watched thousands of children grow into young adults and tackle the challenges of life. He has been honored to receive NHS Teacher of the Year twice, and Cheektowaga, NY Sam's Club Teacher of the Year once, awards that he cherishes enormously because they all came from his students.

Over the course of his career Pete has developed and taught courses in leadership, public speaking, marketing, media and journalism, and personal finance. In addition to teaching, Pete Herr has also directed many plays and musicals and served as the moderator of the school's Student Senate and Stage Crew. These are the jobs he loves because he can really mentor students towards leadership and success.

Outside of school, Pete is very active in his community. He has served on the Boards of Directors of Upstage NY and the Lancaster Youth Foundation, where he served as president for two years. He has also been very involved in the TEDxBuffalo conferences in Buffalo, serving as an organizer for TEDxBuffalo for 4 years, and as technical director for two TEDxBuffaloWomen and one TEDxYouth@Buffalo conferences.

A graduate of Clarence Central Senior High School in Clarence, NY and Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, Pete Herr lives outside of Buffalo, NY with his wife, Linda and son, Adam and the puggle named Moxy.



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