



Sunday, February 28, 2010

Student Emails, Flaming, and First Night Ass-Kickery



A few days ago, a friend and fellow teacher sent me a link to an article that describes a recent teaching-related occurrence, and I'm curious what y'all's think of it. Here's the nutshell version of the story (the link is below):

An NYU Business School professor named Scott Galloway (see photo... seriously) had a recent email exchange with a student who walked into his class one hour late on the first night. Galloway stopped his lecture, explained to the student that such extreme tardiness violated policy, and then asked that student to leave. The student sent Galloway an indignant email afterwards. The student himself didn't

end up actually enrolling in the class, but still felt the need to send one of those "just so you know..." sort of emails -- I guess hoping his complaint would pluck at a cello string of guilt deep within Galloway's psyche.

Awesomeness ensued when Galloway sent a reply, and then the correspondence spread over ye olde interwebs.

Part of me believes that Galloway is now officially the Chuck Norris of academia, in a good way. Another part of me wonders. (Yet another part of me wants to know what *exactly* is up with the whole Braveheart situation happening in Galloway's photo above. I'm pretty sure it wasn't something he wore to class -- in addition to teaching in NYU's MBA program, he's also the founder of redenvelope.com, so odds are he was doing some sort of marketing-related thing. Still. The pic implies that there's possibly something douchy in Denmark, no?)

I've received more than my fair share of complaint emails from students who feel I require too much of them in class (show up, show up on time, show up with the stuff that's due). My replies are more succinct than Galloway's. Yet mine don't typically display such ninja-like, ass-kicking artistry. Plus, I have yet to tell a student, in writing or in person, to "get his shit together." Although I'm often tempted.

Here's the article:

["NYU Business Professor Has Mastered the Art of Email Flaming."](#)

Appropriate? Inappropriate? Line crossed? Do students even learn from situations like this?

Thanks to Andrea H.W. for posting this. Andrea has been a friend of mine since high school. This is why I'm still on Facebook.

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Let's Friend Up, Yo.

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Posted by [Didactic Pirate](#) at 8:11 AM

5 comments:



Scott Galloway February 28, 2010 at 7:09 PM

Didactic Pirate:

Picture is from a charity fashion show (Dressed to Kilt) I did 3 years ago. Thought you should know.

Regards,

Scott Galloway

[Reply](#)



Didactic Pirate February 28, 2010 at 8:22 PM

Scott -- Thanks for the clarification. While I did poke fun at the photo, I applaud the email you sent to the student. And I think the writer of the original article on deadspin.com seemed pretty damn whiny about the whole thing. I say, when it's all tallied, you come out ahead on this one.

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Miss Joan March 1, 2010 at 8:01 AM

Sethro- With the "clean-cut" hairdo and the "healthily developed" arm muscles, I think he looks a bit like you!

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Janet March 1, 2010 at 12:22 PM

Sorry, I don't see how this is OK.

Setting boundaries and expecting students to respect them? Absolutely. But this letter just reeks of one-upmanship, in my opinion. And then to intentionally spread around the exchange to other students pushes it into petty revenge.

Anyone who's ever sent a scathing email, or responded in a flame war or even torn a telemarketer a new one knows that revenge of this sort feels good. You showed them. Who's got the power now? I defy you to find anyone who hasn't been guilty both of doing it and of enjoying it. But that doesn't make it OK.

Even if the original email from the student hadn't been respectful in tone (which I thought it was -- ridiculous in its content, but still respectful), I think when you're an educator, you have the responsibility to be the better person. If students aren't treated with respect (and again, I'm not saying they have to be coddled or be allowed to ignore boundaries), then how can we expect them to respect us?

I don't blame teachers for getting cranky with students, but that doesn't mean I think it's an admirable quality.

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