

The Master Butcher and the Suckling Pig

Hello new tutor,

Lend me your ear. Align yourself with the cosmos and prepare embark on the transformative journey that is tutoring at De Anza. Get into a comfortable position and let me show you the eternal beauty of the tutor center and the mystical wonder of the tutor/tutee relationship.

Firstly, put that cigarette out, there's no need to feel anxious about your first session. Plus we have designated areas for that, so stop it. Okay, so you may feel like you don't know what you're doing when it comes to tutoring—maybe you really don't—but Sandy and Victoria have a tendency to pick the best and brightest applicants to join the motley crew of De Anza tutors. So nip that anxiety right in the bud. Nip it hard. Because besides knowing the minute rules of English grammar, tutoring is a lot more intuitive than it seems. (However, do try to apply the things that you learn from the tutoring class). And if there ever is a grammatical rule that you can't figure out, fill out a DLA, they will help you transcend the path to heavenly, English enlightenment, or ask Sandy or Victoria, they are grammar gurus; titans of tense; crusaders of the clause. You can also ask a fellow tutee. Everyone that works in the WRC is really friendly, some maybe *too* friendly. No, you can never be too friendly, right?

Moving on. The tutor/tutee relationship is a mysterious and majestic being that transforms itself from tutee to tutee. Learn to tame it. As you will come to know, some tutees will be easier than others. When they don't fail to show up; not contacting you until 15 minutes into the allotted time to inform you of their absence, if they even call you at all, the two of you will be able to achieve wondrous feats of essay revision and build a strong, long lasting, mutually constructive relationship. When they're not unmotivated and only there because their class demands it, looking at the clock more than at you or at their essay, as you ask yourself what's the point, you'll be able to execute bouts of linguistic gymnastics with the gracefulness of a master butcher's blade through the gelatinous young joints of a suckling pig. But, if this stuff does happen, do not be discouraged. You are helping them more than you think. And chances are you'll get tutees that are motivated, engaged, and ask questions. It is with these tutees in which you will witness the "light bulb" moments (also referred to as "aha" moments), where you see in the tutee's face that they understand what you're explaining to them; where they learn something. The more "light bulb" moments you accumulate, the more the karma of the universe will work in your favor, and the more you can pat yourself on the back and think warm, self-assuring thoughts. But don't pat too hard! You wouldn't want to bruise yourself. Unless you're choking, in that case pat harder and disregard bruising, or use sign language to lobby for a nearby friend you pat for you. We lose enough tutors every year to the seductions of college transfers as it is, and we can't afford another to mere asphyxiation. It's also not a bad idea to get CPR certified.

If there is one thing that you should take away from my letter, it's that breathing is important. This is why don't smoke and learn CPR. And if tutoring ever becomes too much too handle, just breath. It is not something that should drain you, but something that should help you grow. So now that you're no more prepared than you were before you read this letter, its time to send you on your way. Hopefully, I have eased any trepidation you may have had. Go on young one; let your heart chakra blossom.

Namaste.