

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

THE WAY I SEE IT, A TEACHER HAS TO BE AN ENTERTAINER. YOU GOTTA HAVE EXPRESSION, BE EXCITED ABOUT YOUR SUBJECT- I MEAN, IF YOU SOUND BORED, THEY'LL BE BORED, SAVVY?

MOVE AROUND THE ROOM! EXPLAIN STUFF CLEARLY, IMAGINATIVELY, AN' WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR!

I LOVE THE GUYS WHO ARE KEEN AN' EXPRESSIVE, MAN, LIKE- I STAY AWAKE, I GET PUMPED! I GET INTO IT, AN' I REALLY WANNA **LEARN!**

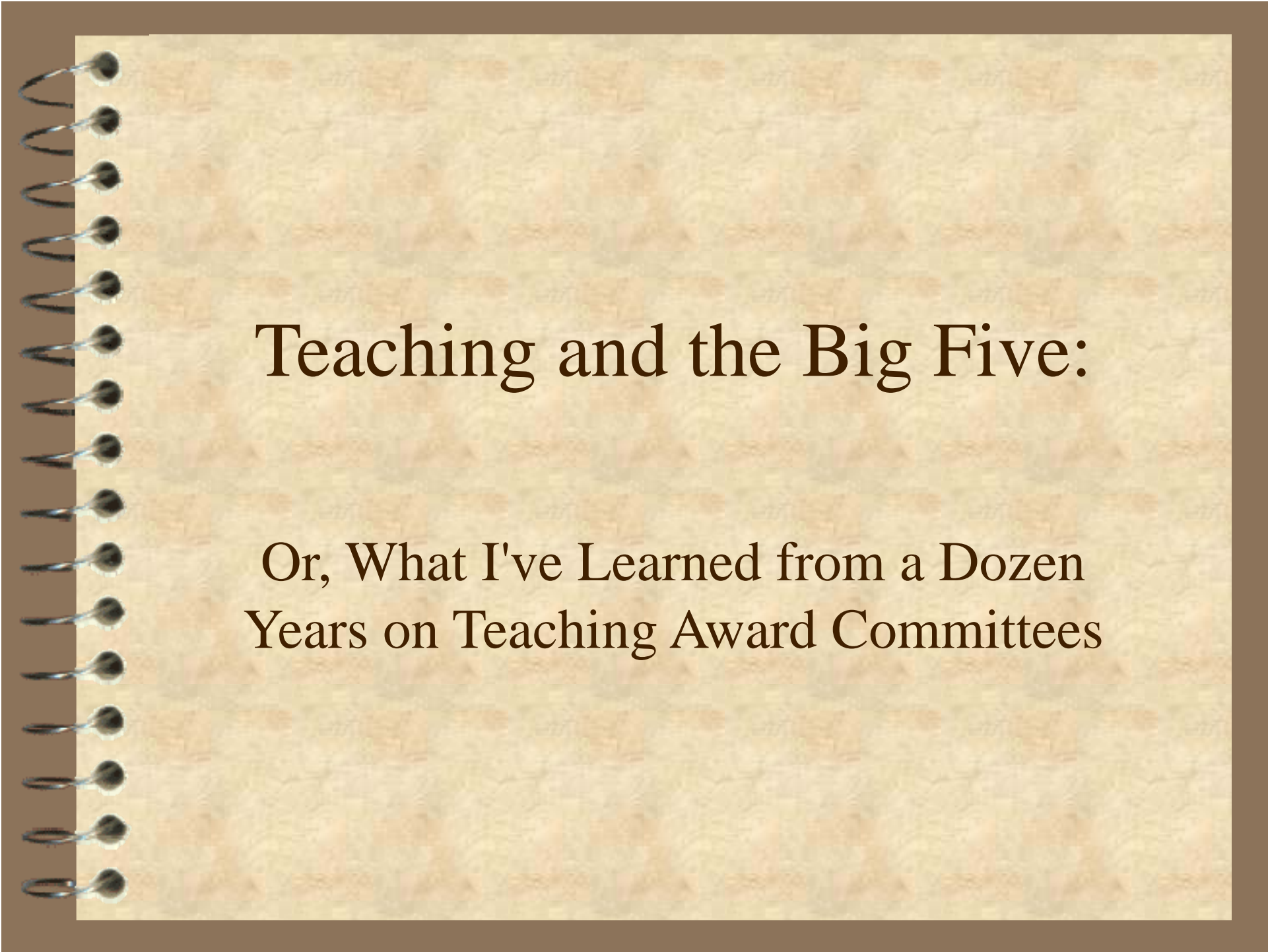
I HAD A PROF LIKE THAT, ONCE.



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LYNN


A spiral-bound notebook with a light brown, textured cover and a dark brown border. The spiral binding is on the left side. The text is centered on the page.

Teaching and the Big Five:

Or, What I've Learned from a Dozen
Years on Teaching Award Committees

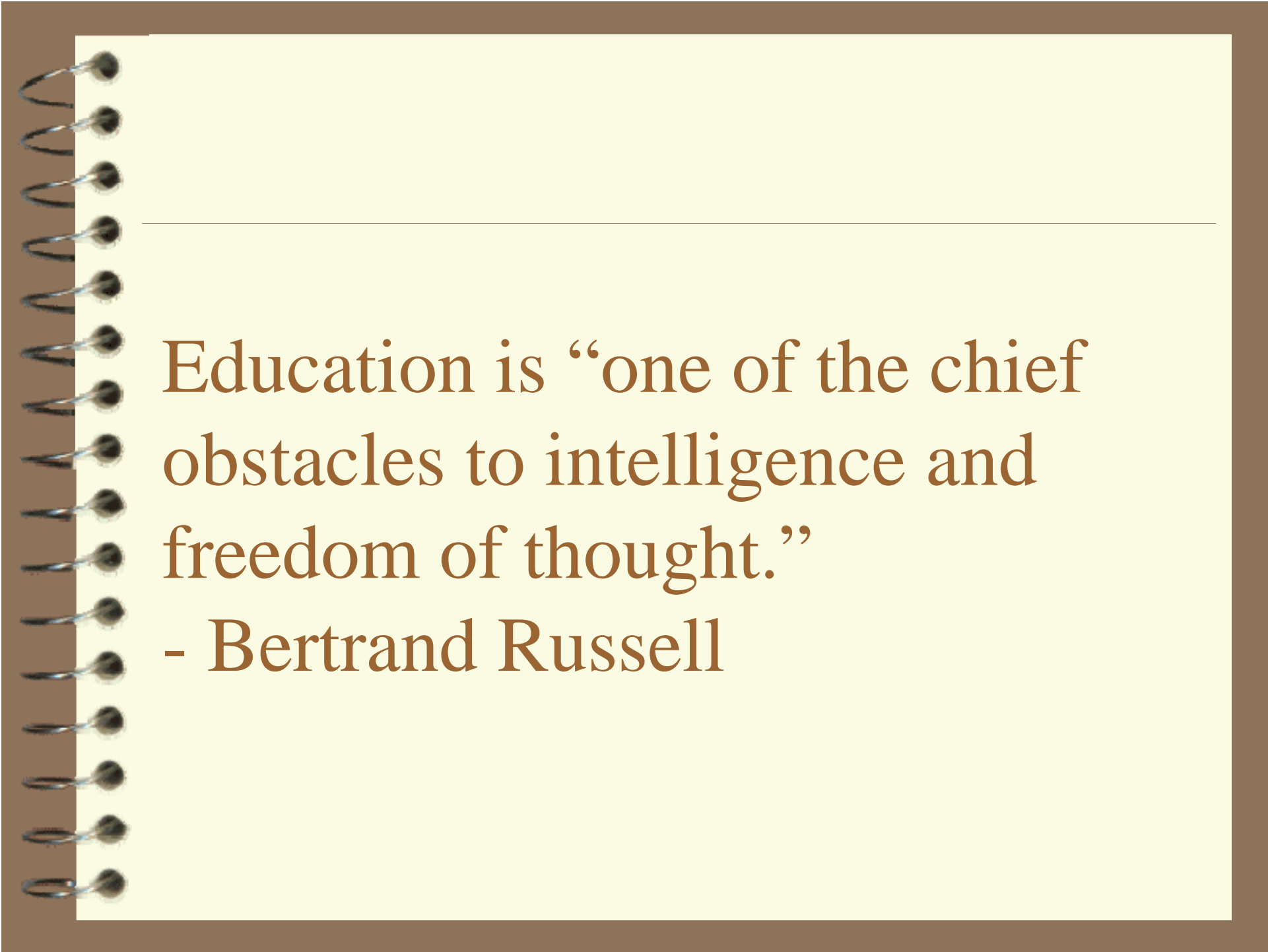
The Question:

Why are attitudes toward teaching and education often so negative?



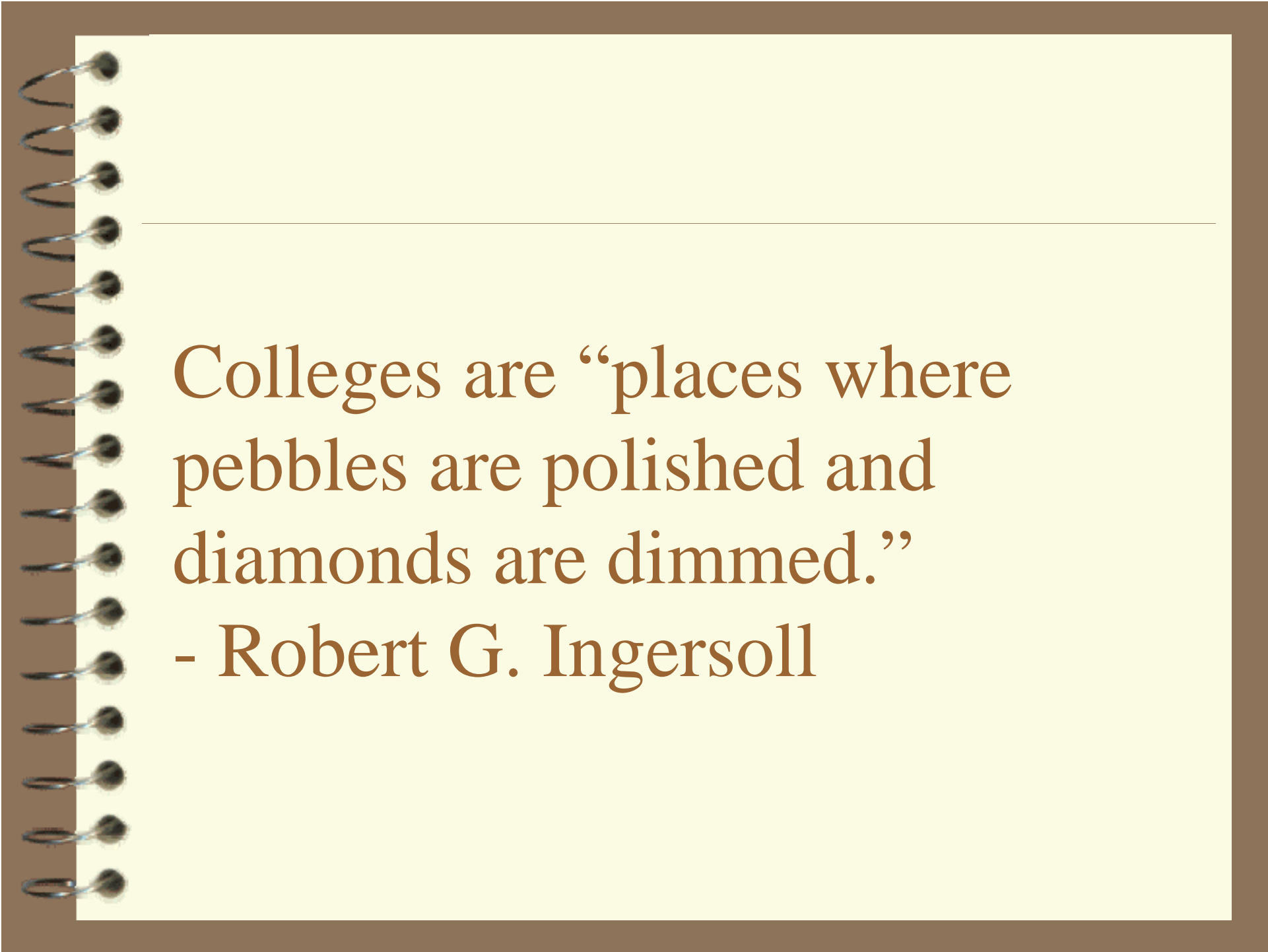
“Universities are full of knowledge; the freshmen bring a little in and the seniors take none away, and knowledge accumulates.”

- Abbott Lawrence Lowell

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover and a cream-colored page. The spiral binding is on the left side. A thin horizontal line is drawn across the page, positioned above the main text.

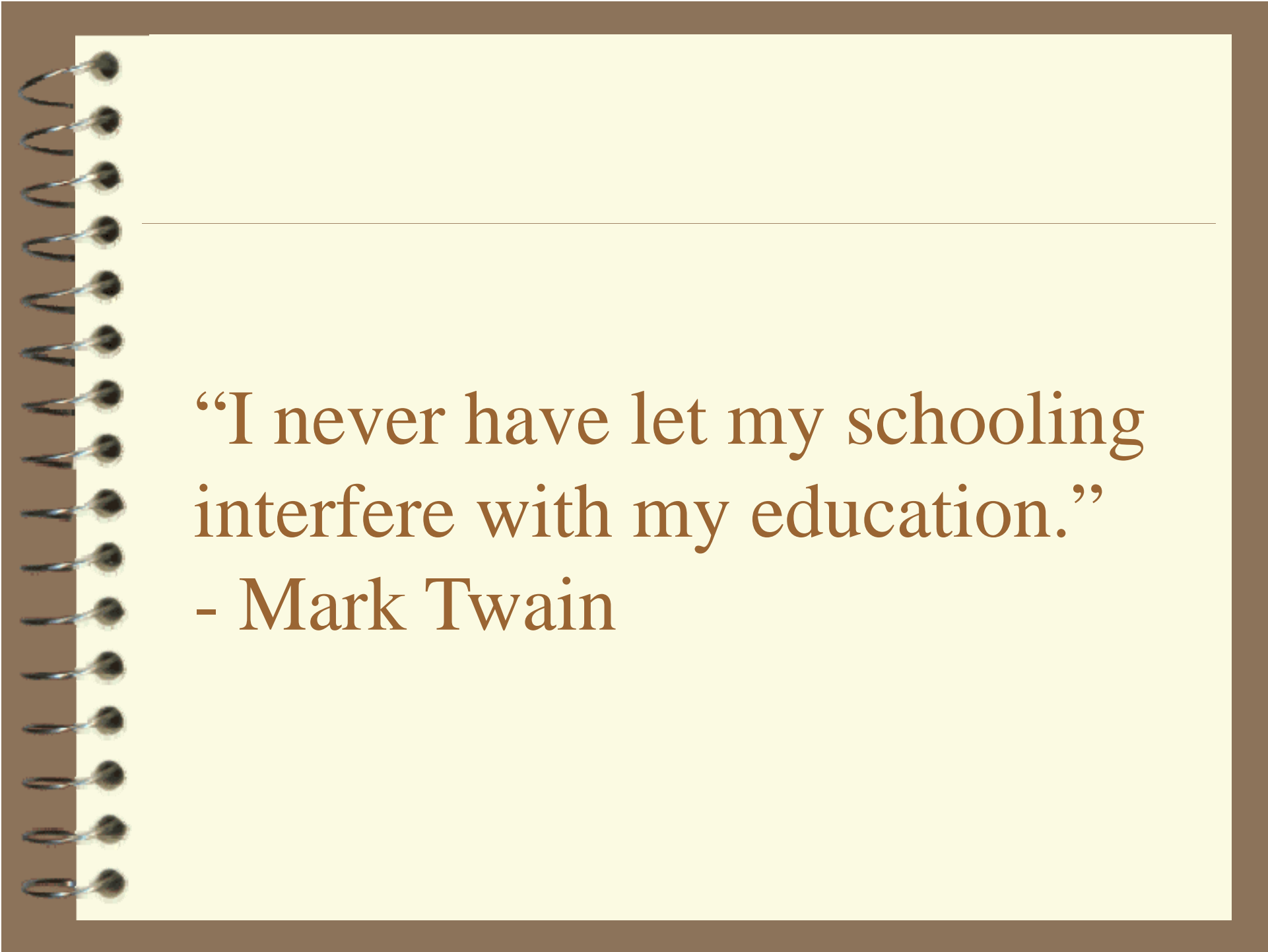
Education is “one of the chief
obstacles to intelligence and
freedom of thought.”

- Bertrand Russell

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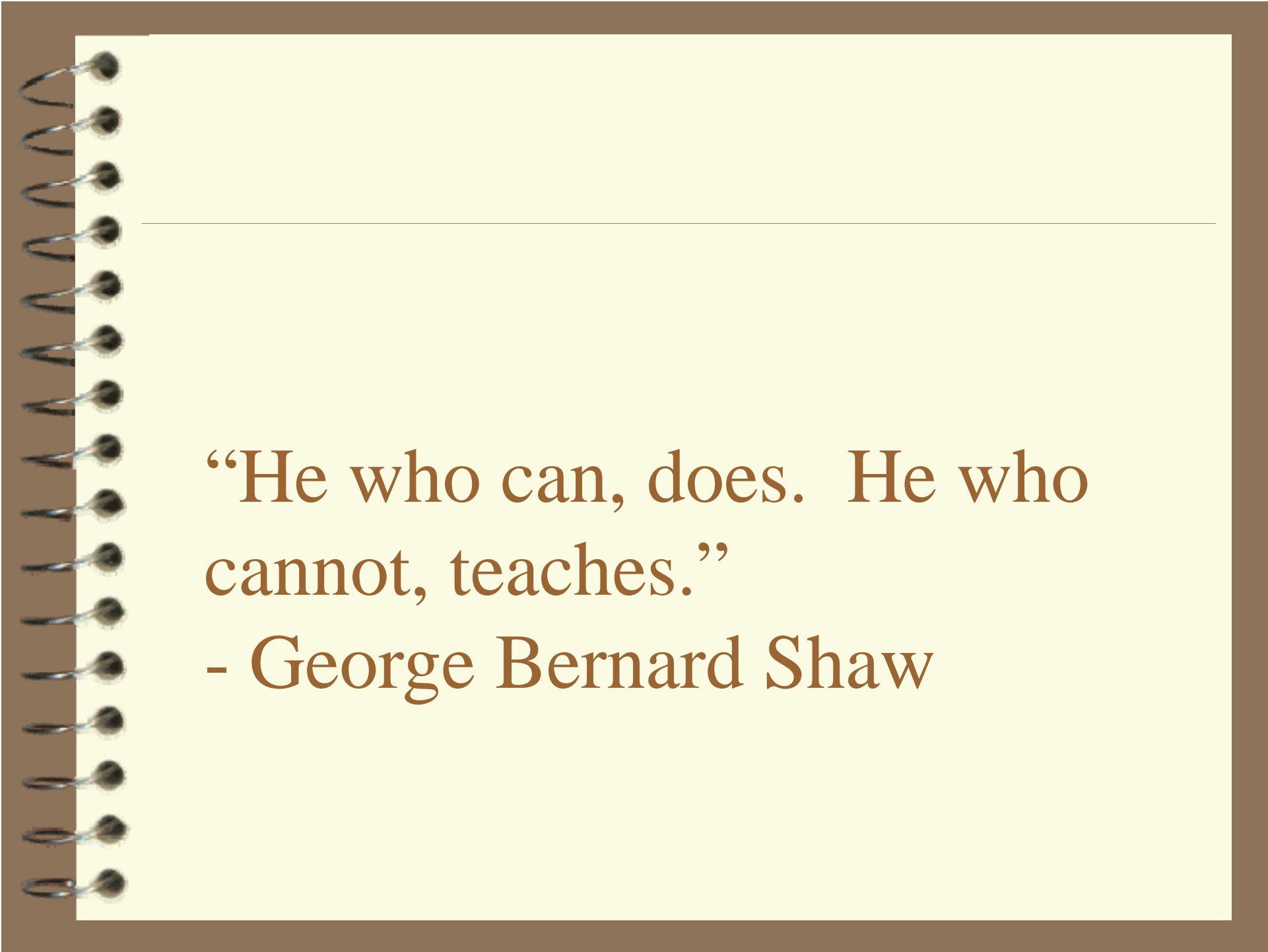
Colleges are “places where
pebbles are polished and
diamonds are dimmed.”

- Robert G. Ingersoll

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“I never have let my schooling
interfere with my education.”

- Mark Twain

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“He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches.”

- George Bernard Shaw

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-
- 📄 Yet these complaints are not totally justified
 - 📄 There are university teachers who make positive contributions to the education of their students
 - 📄 But what are they like?
 - 📄 How about a theory based on the Big Five personality factors!

The Big Five Personality Factors

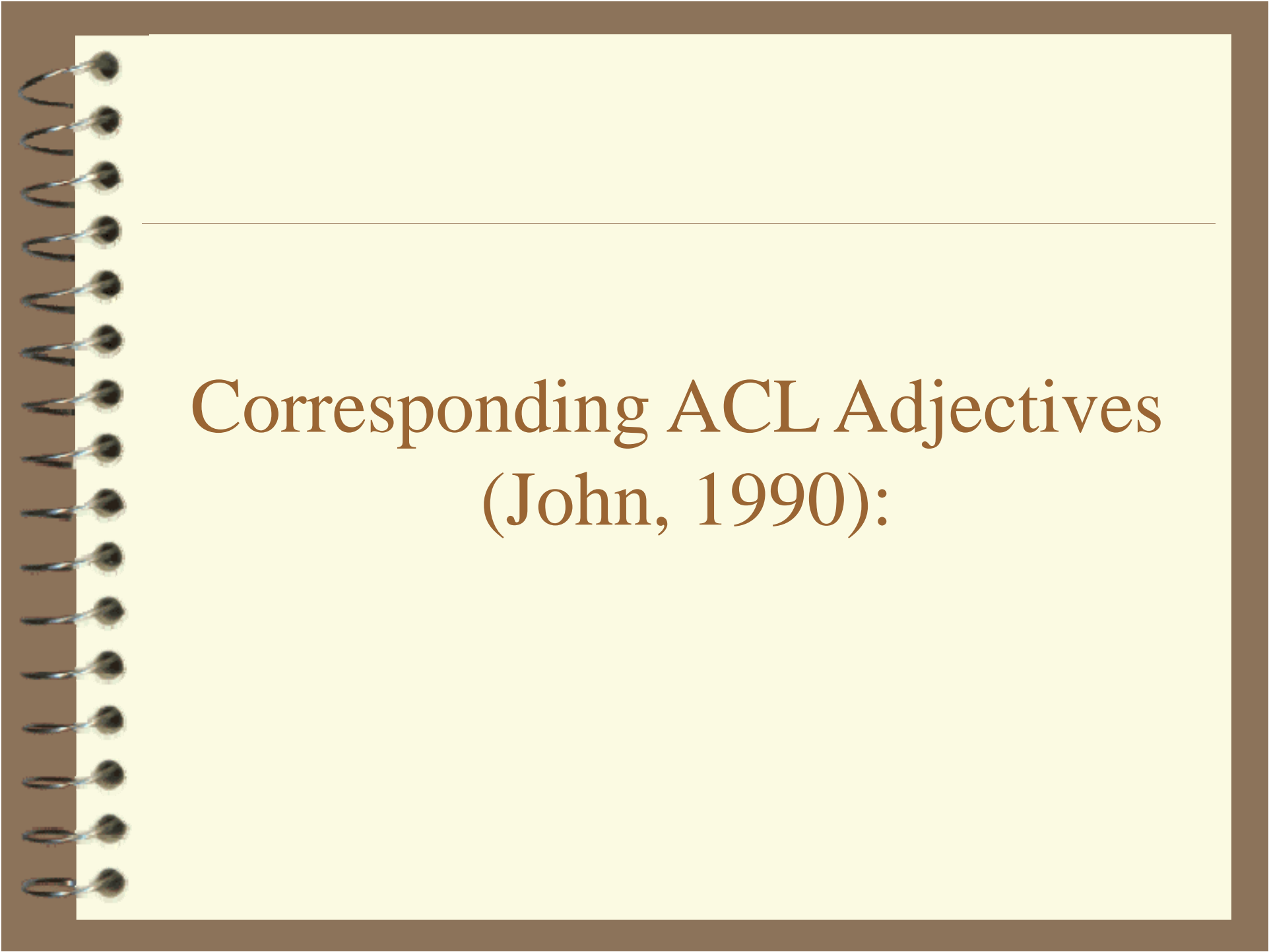
📄 I: Extraversion (Surgency, Power)

📄 II: Agreeableness (Likeability, Love)

📄 III: Conscientiousness (Task Interest/Work)

📄 IV: Neuroticism (Emotional Instability, Affect)

📄 V: Openness to Experience (Culture, Intellect)

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Corresponding ACL Adjectives
(John, 1990):

Factor I: Extraversion

☞ Talkative, Assertive, Active, Energetic, Outgoing, Outspoken, Dominant, Forceful, Enthusiastic, Show-off, Sociable, Spunky, Adventurous, Noisy, Bossy

☞ versus Quiet, Reserved, Shy, Silent, Withdrawn, Retiring

Factor II: Agreeableness

☞ Sympathetic, Kind, Appreciative, Affectionate, Soft-hearted, Warm, Generous, Trusting, Helpful, Forgiving, Pleasant, Good-natured, Friendly, Cooperative, Gentle, Unselfish, Praising, Sensitive

☞ versus Fault-finding, Cold, Unfriendly, Quarrelsome, Hard-hearted, Unkind, Cruel, Thankless

Factor III: Conscientiousness

Organized, Thorough, Planful, Efficient, Responsible, Reliable, Dependable, Conscientious, Precise, Practical, Deliberate, Painstaking

versus Careless, Disorderly, Frivolous, Irresponsible, Slipshod, Undependable, Forgetful

Factor IV: Neuroticism

- ☞ Tense, Anxious, Nervous, Moody, Worrying, Touchy, Fearful, High-strung, Self-pitying, Temperamental, Unstable, Self-punishing, Despondent, Emotional
- ☞ versus [Emotional stability, Emotional control, Ego strength]

Factor V: Openness to Experience

- Wide interests, Imaginative, Intelligent, Original, Insightful, Curious, Sophisticated, Artistic, Clever, Inventive, Sharp-witted, Ingenious, Wise
- versus Commonplace, Narrow interests, Simple, Shallow, Unintelligent

The Hypothesis:

📄 Teaching Excellence Associated with

- High Extraversion,
- High Agreeableness,
- High Conscientiousness, and
- High Openness, but
- Low Neuroticism

Testing the Hypothesis

 Psychometric

 Observational

Psychometric

📄 Correlate personality and student ratings

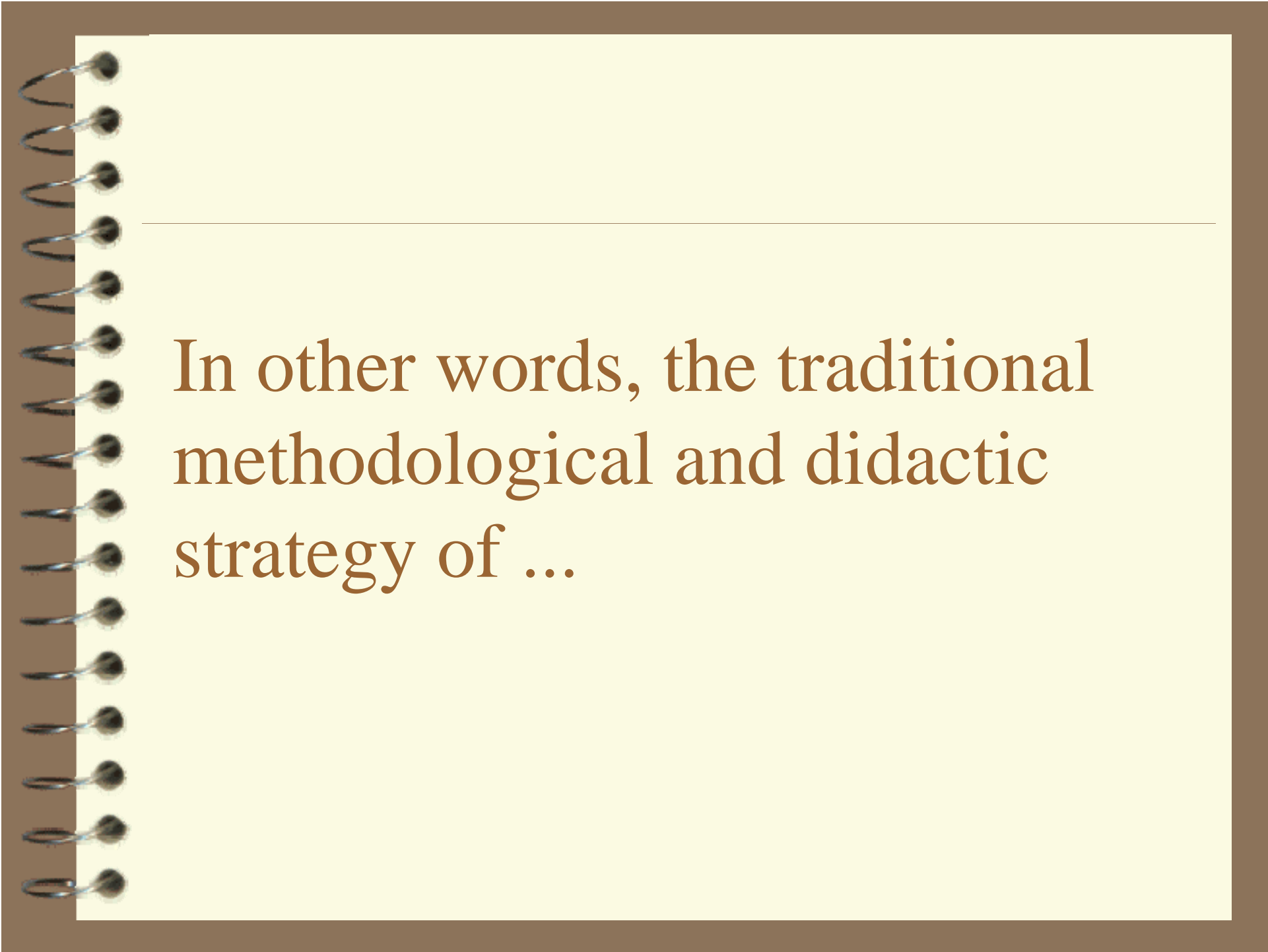
📄 e.g., Rushton, Murray, & Paunonen (1983):

📄 The effective teacher is

📄 liberal, sociable (I), showing leadership (I), extraverted (I), non-anxious (III), objective, supporting (II), non-authoritarian, non-defensive (III), intelligent (V), and aesthetically sensitive (V)

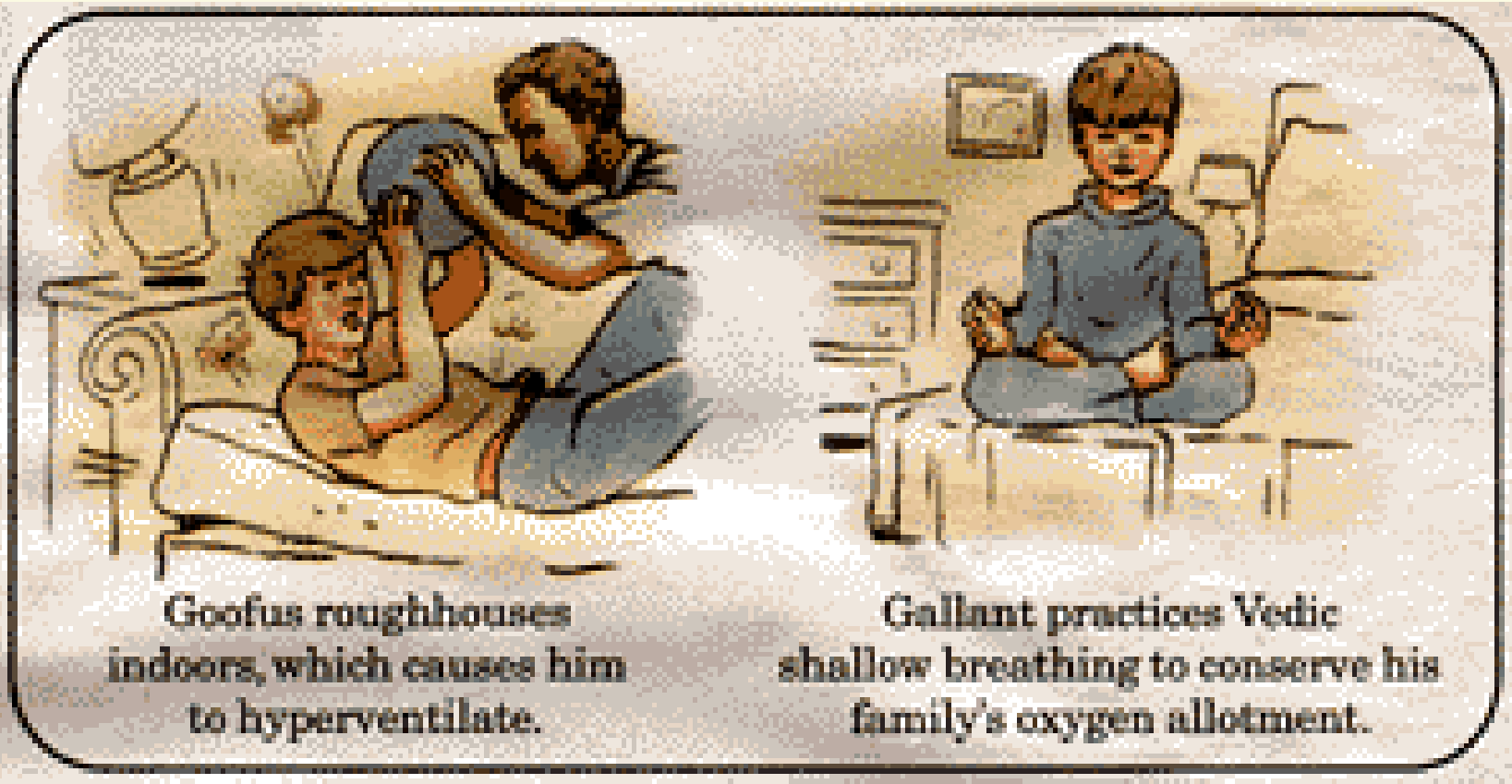
Observational

- 📄 Infer the traits from prototypical behaviors observed in highly successful (award winning) teachers
- 📄 However, because the Big Five consists of bipolar personality dimensions
- 📄 The inversion of the hypothesis can be tested by looking at notably unsuccessful teachers

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In other words, the traditional
methodological and didactic
strategy of ...

GOOFUS and GALLANT



Goofus roughhouses indoors, which causes him to hyperventilate.

Gallant practices Vedic shallow breathing to conserve his family's oxygen allotment.

Philosophical Question:

- ☞ Is Evil the absence of Good, like shadows in the light?
- ☞ Or, is Evil an active negative force?
- ☞ If the latter, then the average teacher might occupy the mean between extremes, i.e.,
- ☞ bad teachers have to do something to be considered bad,
- ☞ something like the Darwin Awards

The Three Teaching Types:

- 📄 *Professor Magnificent* (Outstanding, Excellent, Superb): Positive Teaching
- 📄 *Professor Ignominious* (Outrageous, Scandalous, Horrid, Horrible, Appalling, Terrible): Negative Teaching
- 📄 *Professor Quotidian* (Ordinary, Commonplace, Mediocre): Neutral Teaching



Data Sources:

 Positive Behaviors

 Negative Behaviors

Positive Behaviors: Committees

- 📄 Distinguished Teaching Award
- 📄 UC Davis Prize
- 📄 TEAM (Teaching Excellence and Merit)
- 📄 Chancellor's Teaching Fellowship
- 📄 Teaching Awards for Outstanding Graduate Students
- 📄 Academic Federation Distinguished Teaching Awards

Negative Behaviors:

Committees

- College Personnel
- Academic Personnel
- UCAP
- Ad Hoc Promotion

 Research: Perlman and McCann (1998)
study of “Student Pet Peeves about Teaching”

Will Emphasize the Positive

Why? Because ...

- 📄 Teaching excellence is what we all *should* aspire to (whether we do or not)
- 📄 The talk would become a real downer, causing depression or anger
- 📄 The really bad teachers form a more heterogeneous group: “All happy families resemble each other, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way” (Leo Tolstoy)

Disclaimer:

📄 To preserve the anonymity of the more infamous of my university colleagues, I will randomly change

- gender
- discipline

📄 whether they deserve it or not!

Factor I: Extraversion


The Best Teachers

- Initiate and maintain communication at every possible opportunity (e.g., before-class chats)
- Project a forceful, enthusiastic, persuasive style (e.g., “pep talks”)
- Stimulate active interaction during the lecture hour (e.g., “show of hands”)
- Display involvement in extracurricular activities on behalf of the students

Factor I: Extraversion

The Worst Teachers

- Minimize social interaction as much as possible (e.g., habitually arriving late and leaving early)
- Speak in a nearly inaudible monotone: “A professor is one who talks in someone else’s sleep” (W. H. Auden)
- Avoid eye-contact as much as possible
- Reduce the amount of in-class instruction by delivering abbreviated lectures or by “putting the lectures on the web”



Problem: High extraversion can be negative if it means that the professor is confrontational and domineering - the “in your face” instructor. Hence the need to couple it with the next factor:

Factor II: Agreeableness

The Best Teachers

- Develop welcoming course websites with an attractive look and interesting links
- Introduce themselves before the first day of class by sending a “warm and fuzzy” to everyone enrolled
- Learn students’ names and use them at every opportunity
- Hold liberal and flexible office hours, even adopting the “open door” policy

Factor II: Agreeableness


The Worst Teachers

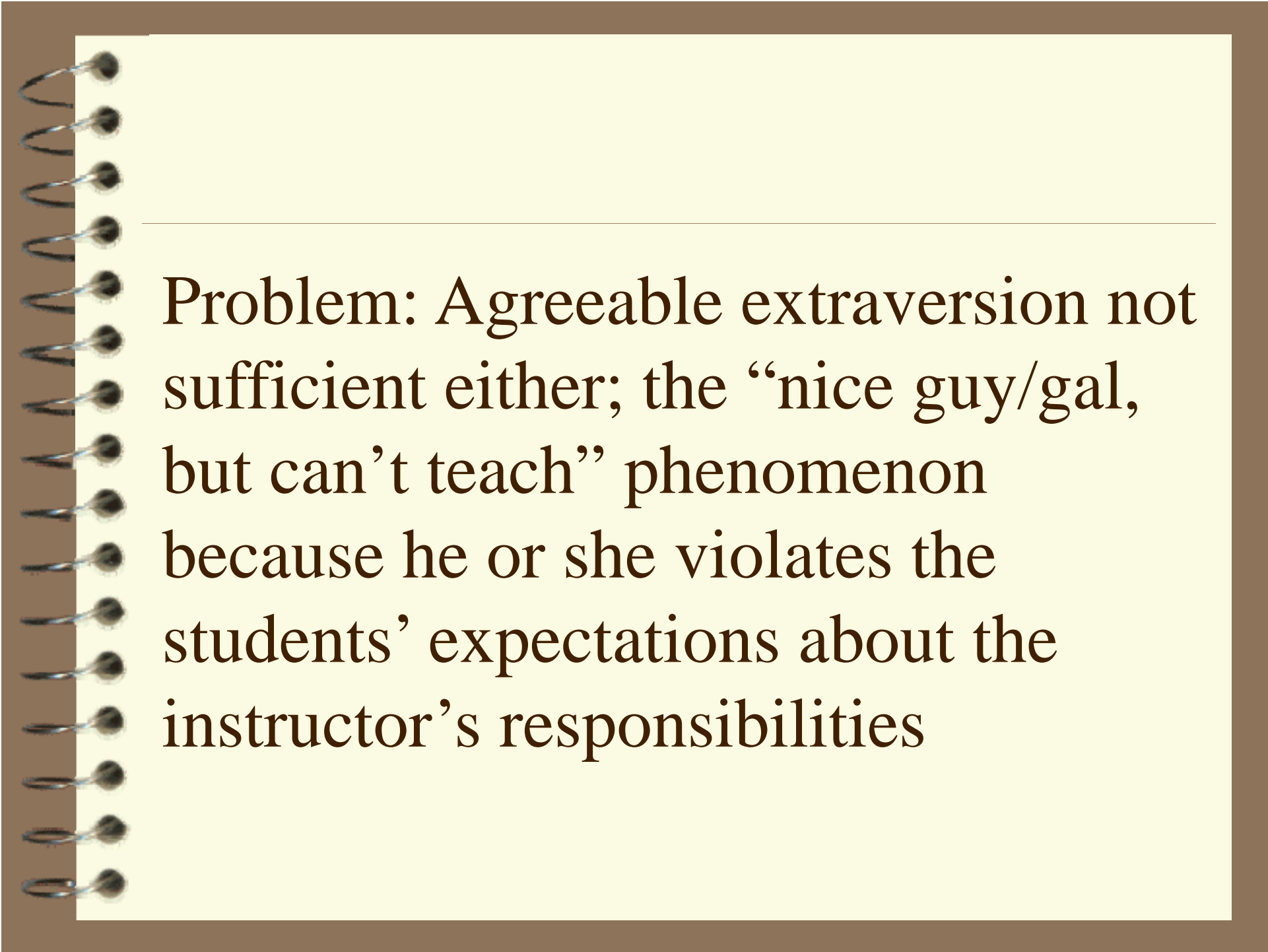
- Make it known early how much they hate teaching and would rather be making more constructive use of their valuable time
- Hold minimal office hours at inconvenient times that are often canceled without notice
- Respond to questions in a hostile, intimidating manner, both in class and during office hours (“What’s *your* problem? “Didn’t get it the first time?””)

Many “pet peeves” of this type (Perlman & McCann, 1998):

Representative complaints

- “Intellectual arrogance/talk down”
- “Don’t respect students”
- “Not approachable, unhelpful”
- “Intolerant of questions”
- “Forced class participation”
- “Insensitive to student’s time constraints”
- “Too much work”

 Hence, they can’t apply the “Golden” or “Silver” Rule

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Problem: Agreeable extraversion not sufficient either; the “nice guy/gal, but can’t teach” phenomenon because he or she violates the students’ expectations about the instructor’s responsibilities

Factor III: Conscientiousness

The Best Teachers

- Prepare the course well before the onset of classes (textbook, syllabus, website, etc.)
- Extensively plan and rehearse for each lecture (including audiovisuals)
- Are careful and methodical in the preparation of examination materials, even when using textbook-prepared questions

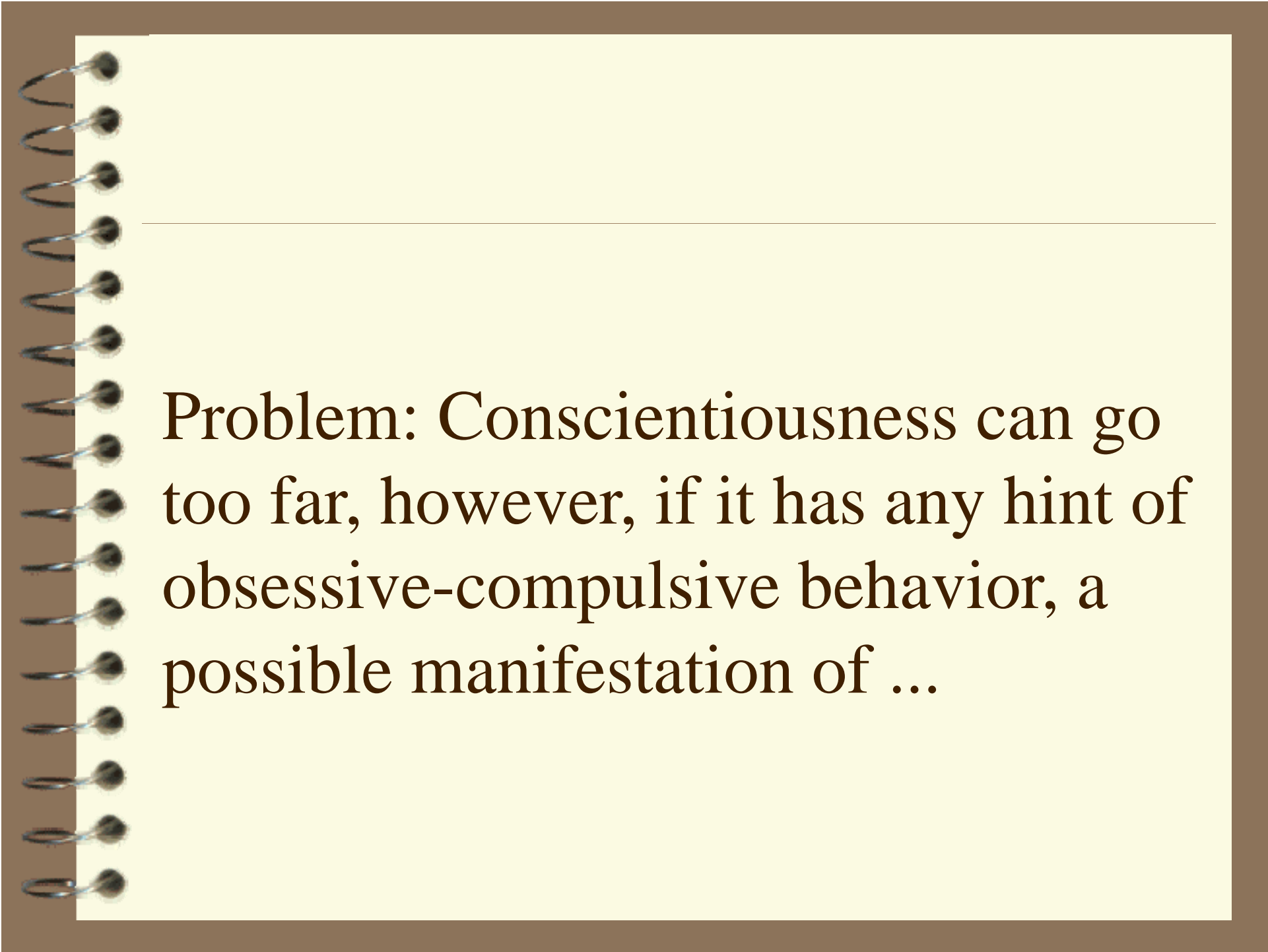
Factor III: Conscientiousness

The Worst Teachers

- Make woefully incompetent textbook choices
- Prepare horribly inadequate syllabi, if they do so at all
- Come totally unprepared for lectures
- Display the most minimal regard for test construction or the evaluation of test performance

Other “pet peeves” of this type (Perlman & McCann, 1998):

- 📄 “Poor organization/planning”
- 📄 “Poor testing procedures/exams”
- 📄 “Poor use of class time (coming late, stopping early)”
- 📄 “Poor syllabus”

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover and a cream-colored page. The spiral binding is on the left side. A horizontal line is drawn across the page, approximately one-third of the way down. The text is written in a dark brown, serif font.

Problem: Conscientiousness can go too far, however, if it has any hint of obsessive-compulsive behavior, a possible manifestation of ...

Factor IV: Neuroticism

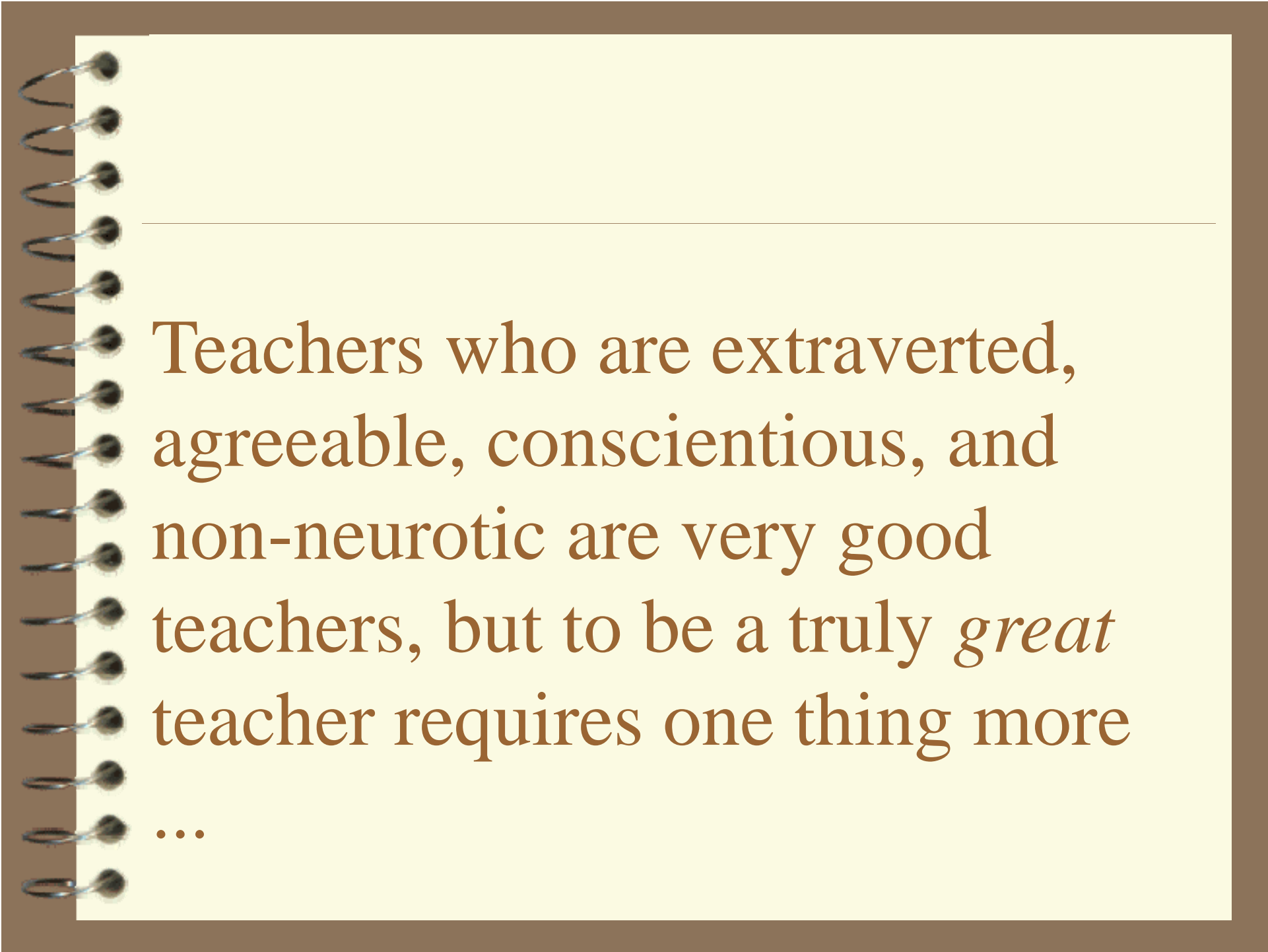
The Worst Teachers

- May display extreme anxiety, even to the point of incapacitating panic attacks
- May display hypochondria or various other obsessive complaints
- May display extreme ego-defensiveness so that the smallest question becomes a major personal challenge that must be nipped in the bud
- May display extremely inflexible and black-and-white attitudes and behavior

Factor IV: Neuroticism

The Best Teachers

- Relaxed, easy-going even under unexpected surprises or mistakes
- Not defensive, even in response to deliberately hostile students
- Flexible, within the limits of instructor responsibilities

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Teachers who are extraverted,
agreeable, conscientious, and
non-neurotic are very good
teachers, but to be a truly *great*
teacher requires one thing more

...

Factor V: Openness to Experience


The Worst Teachers

- Insist on an extremely narrow treatment of the subject with respect to the choice of textbook and lecture topics
- Respond negatively to student questions that try to make connections to the outside world



Another Pet Peeve (Perlman & McCann, 1998):

 “Don’t relate material to real life”

 “Control/impose views”

Factor V: Openness to Experience

The Best Teachers


- Make constant connections between course topics and ideas in other courses and disciplines
- Make ample use of cartoons, newspaper clippings, websites, movies, TV shows, songs, T-shirts, and ties to make connections to the world outside the classroom

A spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover and a cream-colored page. The page is divided into two sections by a horizontal line. The text "Q.E.D." is written in a large, brown, serif font in the lower section. The spiral binding is on the left side.

Q.E.D.


Final Issues

- How are these conclusions influenced by course type?
- How are these conclusions affected by the instructor's age?
- How are these conclusions affected by the instructor's research productivity?
- How are these conclusions influenced by the instructor's personal disposition?



How are these conclusions influenced by course type?

- 📄 Substantive versus methodological courses
- 📄 Large lecture versus seminar courses
- 📄 Graduate versus undergraduate courses



How are these conclusions affected by age?

 Age and teaching evaluations

 Age and administrative responsibilities

 Age and personal disposition

How are these conclusions affected by productivity?

Although teaching and research are antithetical in terms of

- Attitude
- Time

They are orthogonal with respect to

- Performance
- Personality

How are these conclusions influenced by disposition?

- 📄 Dispositional attributions
- 📄 Behavior > personality
- 📄 Conscientiousness as the key

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LYNN

Lawson



And so the bartender says,
"Hey! That's not a duck!"
(Wait for laughter)
Four score and sev
ago our forefat
a new nati
libert
tha