

### Chapter 1 : How long should you wait to re-take AAMC full lengths as a re-taker? : Mcat

*Advice for re-taker who used most materials Hello everyone, I took the December LSAT after studying for 4 months. I did a bunch of practice questions and tests. I did a bunch of practice questions and tests.*

In fact I find the opposite to be true. Many of these students are exceedingly bright, textured and unique people. For the purposes of the exam prep process, they are different simply because they have the indelible experience of not passing, sometimes a few times. When I get them, I often find that the wound is the chief characteristic leading the preparation for the next effort. Because the wound is leading and not the several other qualities that make up an accomplished student, re-takers often lose contact with their self-reference of competence and success. Re-takers are my people. Most of them come to me by referral from some other previously embattled student who has since taken and passed the bar under my tutelage. I have a reputation for my ability to nurture. I am a bit like the Statue of Liberty of bar tutors: Nearly every re-taker I have ever taught not only can pass, but can pass well. Because with little exception, every re-taker usually shows up to me for the February exam, singing the same refrain: Many of their friends are celebrating, and are really rather impressed with themselves. Without skipping a beat, passing bar takers assume an immediate air of superiority. And they march right in line with their forefathers. Nothing will divide a margin of passing and failing bar students like the deep exclusion one feels after not making it into the club. But I assure you, the margin is not as wide as you perceive. The first and most important discussion I have with re-taking bar students is that the small margin of failure is not really meaningful because the large majority of passers also passed by an equally small margin. Taking the standard scale of distribution, very few students totally bomb to the left of the scale and as many to the right rarely nail it. Instead, most students fall right in the middle and the margin that divides those who pass and those who fail is so small as to be without meaning. Which means that if those friends who passed knew the small number by which they achieved their greatness, they would be horrified and not so eager to rub their success in the faces of their less fortunate friends. Passing well has purpose to the vulnerable re-taker because they never want to skirt that center margin again. My goal is to get them far enough right of center to have ease about passing. Basically they did the wrong stuff. That comes as relief to all of my students. Doing the wrong stuff is much better to swallow than being a worthless human without a right to practice law. Refer back to the paragraph about small margins of success. So do not listen to them: Your spirit now is your primary concern because your spirit is the most injured part of you, and not your brain or your intellect. If a student does not reconcile the wound, the wound will lead the next effort. I never even enter into a discussion about the mechanics of bar prep with a re-taking student without tending to the pain of not passing. That work is pointless until the student settles the injured soul. Instead, submission or accepting a degree of powerlessness is ironically more empowering. For math and business types, this can be known as the Law of Diminishing Returns. And in our willingness to step into the unknown, the field of all possibilities, we surrender ourselves to the creative mind. It has unpredictable elements. It exploits weaknesses in the psych and the spirit. Knowing that is liberating. My advice to re-takers: Constantly checking how afraid you are that your efforts are not working or that you will not pass will not bring about better success odds and will create barriers to performance. Really, just have the feelings. It will happen in the process often. But that does not make those feelings true. Ascribing truth to fear is what elevates fear to something that affects your work. So many times a student will tell me, two weeks in: It does not matter that you did them before. You did them the wrong way. I am always so amazed at the erroneous but really harmful conclusion that students make about how they are progressing. MBE progress, and the bar exam process in general, is not a straight upward trajectory. It happens in layers. It evolves and devolves, and does not usually really get predictably better until the end. Fear of non-progress is natural, but not necessarily true. You can re-write the experience and have exactly the result you desire, but it takes discipline — not in toil, but in emotional clarity and a commitment to leaving the failed attempt behind. No successful renewed effort can be premised on a foundation of failure. You might be surprised that you are actually afraid to let that go, but you must. All of this leads me to an unexpected conclusion for re-takers: Allowing yourself to truly submit to this process and detach from your

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fears and expectations of results will bolster your results, and in many ways will make your struggle more meaningful. That extra layer of humanity is a gift you will be able to offer your clients when your "Congratulations" letter comes in.

**Chapter 2 : If you™re a bad test-taker**

*If you read this title and thought "Yeah, that's me" here's one instant way to start improving your test-taking skills stop labeling yourself a "bad test taker"!*

Leadership Content A colleague asks you for feedback on a report. A LinkedIn connection requests an introduction to one of your key contacts. A recent graduate would like an informational interview. New research from Wharton management professor Adam Grant reveals that how you respond to these requests may be a decisive indicator of where you will end up on the ladder of professional success. Grant recently spoke with Knowledge Wharton about his findings, which are explored in his new book, Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success. In this interview, he delineates the differences between givers, takers and matchers; explores who gets ahead and who falls behind, and reveals how we can identify our own style and adapt it for greater success. An edited transcript of the conversation follows. Adam, thank you so much for joining us today. You write in your book, Give and Take, that people differ in their preferences for reciprocity. You divide people into givers, takers and matchers. Could you begin by explaining the difference? You could anchor this at two extremes: These givers actually prefer to be on the contributing end of an interaction. Very few of us are purely takers or purely givers. Most of us hover somewhere in between. That brings us to the third group of people, who are matchers. A matcher is somebody who tries to maintain an even balance of give and take. If I help you, I expect you to help me in return. It seems logical enough, based on what you said, that research shows that in fields like engineering and medicine, givers end up at the bottom of the heap. But who ends up at the top of the heap, and why? That was one of the most fascinating questions that I got interested in when I started doing the research for the book. You look across a wide range of industries and even countries, and you find these three styles exist everywhere. Indeed, the givers are overrepresented at the bottom. Putting other people first, they often put themselves at risk for burning out or being exploited by takers. So, it must be the matchers who are more generous than takers, but also protect their own interests. Givers are overrepresented at the top as well as the bottom of most success metrics. A lot of that comes from the trust and the good will that they have built, but also, the reputations that they create. One of the ways that I would play this out is to say that the success of givers and the fall of takers is also driven by matchers. A matcher is somebody who really believes in a just world. Of course, a taker violates that belief in a just world. Matchers cannot stand to see takers get ahead by taking advantage of other people. The data on this suggests that matchers will often go around trying to punish them, often by gossiping and spreading negative reputational information. Just as matchers hate seeing takers get away with exploitation, they also hate to see people act really generously and not get rewarded for it. Matchers will often go out of their way to promote and help and support givers, to make sure they actually do get rewarded for their generosity. One of the things I found most fascinating about your book is the combination of very rigorous research with some really compelling stories of both givers and takers. Among the various stories you tell, there is one about a person called Peter Audet. Did being a giver help him or hurt him? What are some of the lessons to be learned? I would say yes to all of the above. Peter Audet is one of my favorite people who I met when I was doing research for the book. For years, he would interview job candidates, and he would only be able to hire one and have to turn everybody else down. A lot of times, this orientation toward helping others got him in trouble. In one particular case, he had a colleague who I ended up calling Brad in the book, who essentially was getting out of the business, and he needed somebody to buy his clients quickly. Then a couple months later, Peter started losing his clients. He did a little bit of homework and found out that Brad was back in the business. He was basically taking his clients back and not paying Peter a dime for them. It cost Peter a ton of money. He really got burned by a taker in that situation. Yet, Peter will tell you, if you talk to him, that he has been enormously successful in his career. And he will tell you that being a giver is how he has gotten ahead. Oftentimes givers put themselves at risk in the short run. You can see this play out in many, many different situations in his career. One of my favorites was when he actually drove out to visit a client in the scrap metal business, who was the tiniest of clients, worth very, very little money. The drive out there alone is not worth your hourly fee. I really want to

help in any way I can. He multiplies his fees by a factor of once he sees what a generous guy Peter is. Givers do, in the short run, sometimes lose. Peter has gotten better at protecting himself and screening. Yet, sometimes they do. Going out to see somebody who needed his help multiplied his business manifold. How do successful givers approach networking? How does their approach differ from, say, takers or matchers? Knowledge Wharton High School Grant: Takers tend to actually have incredibly broad networks. In part, because when they burn one bridge, they have to go and find new people to exploit, in order to keep the network going. Matchers tend to have much narrower networks. They will typically only exchange with people who have helped them in the past or who they expect to be able to help them in the future. They end up restricting their universe of opportunities. Givers tend to build much broader networks than matchers, but in a very different way than takers. Ah, that was one of my favorite bodies of research that I looked into in writing the book. There are a couple of powerful ways to spot a taker. They tried to figure out [if] you could identify the taker CEOs without ever meeting them. These analysts who knew the CEOs and interacted with them rated the extent to which they were entitled and narcissistic and self-serving. The first factor that really correlated highly with those ratings was the gap in compensation between the CEO and the next highest-paid executive. Typically, a computer industry CEO makes about two to two and a half times as much annual compensation as the next highest-paid executive in that company. The typical taker CEO had about seven times more annual compensation than the next highest-paid executive in that company. They literally [took] more in terms of compensation. The second cue was looking at their speech. I am the most important and central figure in this company. They were more likely to be pictured alone. What you just said reminds me of a story I read many years ago. When Mahatma Gandhi edited a magazine, he would receive all kinds of letters. One letter was from a young woman who was about to get engaged. She wanted to know how she could judge this person. Look at how he treats his servants. But a true sign of character is how you treat people who are vulnerable. Now, you also point out that givers and takers differ quite a bit in the way they approach collaboration and sharing credit. Can you give any examples of how this works out? This is one of the most interesting dynamics you could look at. In doing the research for the book, I use some historical examples here that I found fascinating. One was Frank Lloyd Wright, who at one point discovered, as an architect, that his draftsmen were essentially getting more commissions and more work than he was because customers and clients found them easier to work with and every bit as talented. He was offended by this and felt they should be subservient to him. He actually set a policy that they were not allowed to accept independent commissions. If while working in his studio they did any work, even if he never touched it, his name had to be signed first. That obviously cost him a lot of very, very talented drafts people. If you look at his legacy, he rarely mentored and championed far fewer great architects than most who achieved similar stature did. Salk never made a discovery that was nearly as influential again. This is one of the costs of appearing like a taker in a collaboration:

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*create barriers to performance.*

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