

How old are you?

If you are the typical reader of this website, you will probably respond somewhere between 17 and 20 years old. But I am not interested in asking after your physical age – I want to know how old you are *inside*.

A lot of the students I see strike me as being about 65 years old on the inside. They are deeply suspicious of change, and mistrustful of anyone who suggests that change is imperative. They are far more interested in putting their feet up and taking things easy than they are in working hard and achieving something. Their short termist attitudes – prioritising enjoyment here and now over investing now for greater enjoyment in the future – suggests that they don't think of themselves as having much of a future. Needless to say, these students tend not to do so well at university, just like actual 65 year olds wouldn't do that well.

So how old should you aim to be on the inside? I think 10 years old is a good age to be studying at university. There are a number of features that 10 year olds have that make them ideal students. First, they have no fear. They trust that if they do the right things and behave themselves, then everything will be okay. They don't waste their time worrying about things that are out of their control anyway. Secondly, they are extremely curious about just about everything. They ask lots of questions, and have an insatiable desire to *know*. Being ignorant about anything infuriates them, and they are always trying to make up any gaps in their knowledge. Thirdly, they have a very straightforward attitude to themselves and the world – life is to be enjoyed and it's stupid not to make the most of the time you have to enjoy it. They haven't yet entered the winding and confusing hall of mirrors in which people who worry about what other people think of them, and people who try to fit in with what everyone else is doing, spend so much time. Fourthly, they get enthusiastic about things, and aren't afraid to show that they are enthusiastic about things. They are enchanted with what the world has to offer them. They are not interested in being cool, or indifferent, or bored with life.

So ask yourself how old you are inside, and try to cultivate your inner 10-year-old.