After reading this book, no teacher in good conscience can blithely assign students to 'read Chapter X and answer the even-numbered questions on page 532.' We want to do right by our kids and our profession. So, how can teachers do better than what our textbooks offer? Loewen has a few suggestions:

- "Emotion is the glue that causes history to stick," (Loewen 342). "Another way to cause history to stick is to present it so that it touches students' lives," (Loewen 343). Loewen cites the teacher in Iowa who helped her students learn about racism by treating the blue-eyes and the brown-eyes differently, as documented in a 1985 PBS Frontline documentary, A Class Divided. Find ways to make history relevant to students' lives, encourage dissonant opinions and debate, and don’t shy from controversy or emotional issues.

- Be selective. Reject the notion you have to cover the entire textbook. Pick and choose. Focus on fewer topics so you have time to allow students to "delve into historical controversies," (Loewen 358).

- Adopt learner-centered rather than teacher-centered classrooms. Build a class culture that respects "I don't know" as an initial response, even from the teacher.

- Draw on families and local community as primary sources.

- Teach students how to access, read, and analyze secondary sources (current research papers) instead of relying on tertiary sources, such as the textbook.

- Encourage kids to critique their textbooks. A class of sixth graders were at first incredulous and then outraged to learn that most US presidents before Lincoln were slave owners. They wrote to the textbook publisher to complain that this fact was not mentioned. "If the students receive an intelligent reply that takes their point seriously, then they have helped to improve the book in its next edition. If they get a boilerplate reply like these Illinois sixth graders, then they realize no one is at home intellectually in this publishing enterprise, so they had better read critically from here on," (Loewen 360).

- To evaluate sources - including textbooks - Loewen provides another list of questions:
  - When and why was it written?
  - Whose viewpoint is presented?
  - Is the account believable?
  - Is the account backed up by other sources?
  - How is one "supposed" to feel about the America that has been presented?
"Readers who keep these five questions in mind will have learned how to learn history," (Loewen 361).

It is about time. For history is central to our ongoing understanding of ourselves and our society. We need to produce Americans of all social-class and racial backgrounds and of both genders who command the power of history - the ability to use one's understanding of the past to inspire and legitimize one's actions in the present. Then the past will seriously inform Americans as individuals and as a nation, instead of serving as a source of weary clichés. Products of successful American history courses know basic social facts about the United States and understand the historical processes that have shaped these facts. They can locate themselves in the social structure, and they know some of the societal and ideological forces that have influenced their lives. Such Americans are ready to become citizens, because they understand how to effect change in our society. They know how to check our historical assertions and are suspicious of archetypal 'truths.' They can rebut the charge that history is irrelevant, because they realize ways that the past influences the present, including their own present (Loewen 361).