

Chill'n Skills

MANAGING LIFE AND BUILDING RESILIENCE



BY MAGGIE DENT

This e-book is about much more than managing stress — it includes tips on how to manage LIFE.

Please take the time to read it (you don't have to read it all at once) — and you have my permission to share it with others.

We are all doing the best we can — and we can only do better when we know more. Enjoy the very bumpy ride from childhood to adulthood.

Maggie

WHAT IS STRESS?

Well, when we were cave people the only stress we probably experienced was hunger and the occasional wolf or cave bear attack. In today's competitive, fast-paced world, especially when we have deadlines to meet, exams to face and jobs to do, stress seems to be with us all the time. Even though there are no wolves or bears, we react to these pressures the same way. There is a hidden layer to stress too. The increased level of toxins and pollutants in our environment, including noise, means our body is always working under pressure to keep us healthy. What about the added electromagnetic stressors that are constantly being emitted from our appliances, gadgets and WiFi networks? Pollutants may be influencing our health without us being aware of it.

Thinking stress – Our sensory system can become overloaded without us noticing! Too many unfinished tasks, too much noise, visual over-stimulation, being too hot or too cold and not having enough sleep can all add to our stress levels.

Much stress is created by unhealthy thought patterns. If you are a worrier or someone who likes to tightly control your world, you will know what I mean!

Many people spend too much time concerned with what **might happen** or **what has already happened**, rather than focusing on what **is** happening. Also once you start to think a negative thought that is triggered by fear like "there may be a snake on the path" or "I will fail my final exam" it is easy to keep frightening yourself – and it's really just **your imagination that is frightening you!**

There is a "speediness" to our modern world where things seem to be done faster or even immediately, and this pressure of speed has increased stress especially for our young.

Hot Tip:

1. You do not need to sleep with your phone in case someone wants to call you.
2. You do not have to respond to text messages or emails instantly just because you can.
3. You don't have to constantly keep updated on your social media.
4. Leave your phone outside of your bedroom when you sleep. It will help you disconnect and sleep better. Suggest the same to your parents!

What are the symptoms of stress? How do you know if you are suffering stress? Check out the diagram over the page

STRESS - ILLNESS OF THE MODERN WORLD

Symptoms

**Short
tempered**

Sleeplessness

Crabbiness

Indigestion

Forgetfulness

**Overeating or
not eating**

Chest pains

**Irrational
emotions**

**Nail biting,
picking skin**

**Tiredness
and fatigue**

**Headaches or
anxiety**

Low libido

Depression

**Irresistible urge
to run away**

**Physical
illness**

Stressors

Stressors are the things that cause stress in your life. Some examples: an annoying little brother, noisy neighbours, being too busy, big exams, lost phone, no WiFi...got the idea?

Now list some of the stressors in your life at the moment.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.
17.
18.
19.
20.

Everyone will suffer from stress in this lifetime.

Being able to understand what causes you stress and what you can do to help reduce it, is a serious life skill.

ANXIETY – WHAT IS IT?

WHEN DO I WORRY?

Anxiety is a normal healthy emotion essential for our survival – best viewed on a continuum. It's a problem when it impairs our wellbeing.

Common symptoms of anxiety

- Complaints of stomach aches or headaches
- Sleep problems or difficulty concentrating
- Behavioural changes such as moodiness, a short temper or clinginess
- Development of a nervous habit, such as nail biting
- Refusal to go to school or getting into trouble at school
- Avoidance behaviours
- Arousal: heart rate, breathing, shaky and dizzy
- Fatigue and exhaustion.

MORE SIGNS...

- Tension in muscles and/or excessive perspiration
- A dry mouth
- Often feeling restless, apprehensive or on edge
- Panic attacks and shallow rapid breathing
- Difficulty concentrating and an inability to relax
- Pre-activity tension
- Feeling frightened for no obvious reason
- Morbid thoughts regarding people close to you
- Constant worry/apprehension about the future
- Suicidal thoughts* or a fear of dying.

If you are struggling with these symptoms please go and have a chat with your school psychologist or local GP.



***NB If you feel suicidal please seek help immediately from Lifeline (13 11 14) or the Suicide Call Back Service (1300 659 467). Call 000 if anyone is at immediate risk of harming themselves or others.**

THE EMOTIONAL BAROMETER

Our negative emotions from painful experiences in our lives stay in our nervous system. In adolescence the intensity of emotions is much stronger and so negative thoughts can seem to be attacking us. Nasty behaviour of other people and moments of challenge that make us feel useless or stupid can cause our nervous system to gradually overload like a barometer that keeps rising when the weather is getting worse.

The TIPPING POINT comes when everything gets too hard and a young person can explode with violence, hurt themselves, run away, do something really dangerous (because they don't care anymore) or take their life – can happen quite easily. It's often a small thing that pushes an adolescent past the TIPPING POINT. If your family, friends or 'lighthouses' know you are near your TIPPING POINT they can help you find your inner coach or 'spark'. It's a sign of strength to ask for HELP – it is your spark guiding you if you ask for help.



SELF-HARMING

- around 1 in 10 young people aged 12-17 report having self-harmed “at some point”, and around three quarters saying they’ve done so in the past year.
- around one quarter of teenage girls in the 16-17 year age range reported deliberately injuring themselves at some point in their lives.
- it’s been identified as a coping mechanism (which means you can train yourself to replace it with healthier coping strategies).

If you are self-harming, please seek help. Coping with the ‘big ugly feelings’ and intense emotions during adolescence can be really difficult and it’s ok to ask for help.

ADDICTIONS

The increase in dendrite production in your brain in early adolescence (especially under 16) means it is a wonderful time of potential where teens can learn faster than at any other stage of their life – other than when you’re under 5! Sadly this also means it is easier to develop addictions – often ones that will be harder to overcome. Be careful to keep healthy boundaries around the following so as not to become addicted.

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Cigarettes and vaping
- Other illegal drugs like ice, MDMA/ecstasy, cocaine, speed, heroin
- Synthetic drugs
- Porn
- Gaming
- Gambling
- Shoplifting
- Social media
- Texting
- Unhealthy food
- Softdrinks like Coke
- Energy drinks
- Medications available without scripts
- Self-harming



ADOLESCENT DEPRESSION

Adolescent depression is a very real problem for many young people. Mood swings are normal during the bumpy ride – so what is the difference between being moody and having depression?

You know you're depressed when...

So how do we know the difference between clinical depression and having a simple case of the blues? Sometimes symptoms are obvious but a lot of people can function in their normal life without really understanding what's wrong.

The government's Health Direct website has some great information on symptoms of depression symptoms at: www.healthdirect.gov.au/depression-symptoms

They write:

"To get a doctors' diagnosis of clinical depression you have to have at least five of the following symptoms, including number one or number two, for at least two weeks:

- Depressed mood (feeling sad or low).
- Loss of interest or pleasure (in activities you normally enjoy).
- Significant appetite or weight loss or gain.
- Insomnia or hypersomnia (sleeping too little or too much).
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation (being restless and jittery, or alternatively, slower than usual).
- Fatigue or loss of energy.
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt.
- Impaired thinking or concentration; indecisiveness.
- Suicidal thoughts/thoughts of death."

– From the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders, 4th ed. American Psychiatric Association (DSM-IV)"



Types of depression

Because depression is different from person to person, sub-categories of depression have been developed, including:

- **Non-melancholic depression or 'reactive' depression** — usually occurs in response to particular life events
- **Melancholia** — this is generally influenced by biology but can be triggered by life events and is often accompanied by lethargy, inability to concentrate and be cheered up.
- **Psychotic depression** — profound mood disturbances, hallucinations and delusions are often a feature of this depression, primarily influenced by biology.

— Source: www.healthdirect.gov.au/depression-types

More support...

Reach Out – <http://au.reachout.com>

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636 or www.youthbeyondblue.com

The Brave Program – <https://brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au/teen-program>

Orygen – <https://www.orygen.org.au/>



EMOTIONAL OVERWHELM – STRONG STRESSORS

This occurs when we feel overloaded by life: Some of the things that can overwhelm us are:

- Car accidents
- Bullying and harassment
- Nasty, malicious gossip
- Failing at school
- Depression
- Other mental illness
- Death of loved one
- Loss of job
- Abuse of any kind
- Teenage pregnancy
- Betrayal
- Criminal activity
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Gender confusion
- Discrimination
- Serious illness
- Personal injury
- Family disharmony
- Sudden unexpected life change
- Unresolved conflict
- Pressure of expectations
- Perceived failure
- Being late
- Living outside your honour code
- Living in a global pandemic
- Living through a natural disaster like flood or bush fire

A key resilience protective factor is to own your share of responsibility for the things that are causing you conflict and resolve them. Then shut the door and leave the past in the past. **It is very important to have someone to support you through any of the experiences listed above – they are difficult for adults to manage and that is one reason why a LIGHTHOUSE is an essential protective factor in your journey to adulthood.**



WORDS OF WISDOM



Inner Strength

(author unknown)

If you can start the day without caffeine or pep pills,
If you can be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
If you can resist from complaining and boring people with your troubles,
If you can eat the same food every day, and be grateful for it,
If you can understand when loved ones are too busy to give you time,
If you can overlook the occasions when people take their frustrations out on you,
through no fault of yours,
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
If you can face the world without lies and deceit,
If you can conquer tension without medical help,
If you can relax without liquor, If you can sleep without the aid of drugs, then....
you are probably a dog

Hot Tip: Always live with an animal or person you love and value.

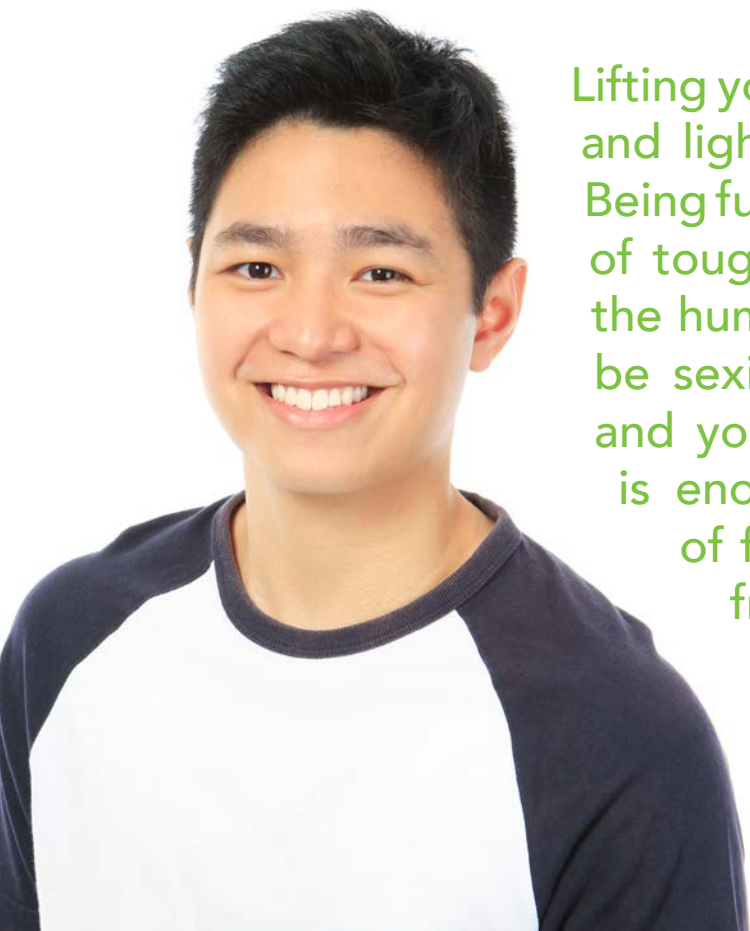
Pets are wonderful for reminding us how to live. Observe your dog. Your cat may be better because they don't waste any energy on anyone but themselves. Pets, especially dogs, can be the best friends. Then there are always teddy bears! They never leave crumbs in your bed. They never leave smelly socks or jocks or undies on the floor. They also never interrupt when you need to talk. They never change the subject by passing wind. They don't hog the doona. They never eat your lollies. What an unbelievable friend.

THE POWER OF LAUGHTER

- transforms emotional states
- creates endorphins of wellbeing
- increases the level of serotonin
- is a key coping skill – especially for boys
- is an anti-bullying strategy
- encourages lightening up for serious moments
- is a bonding experience when shared in groups
- builds inclusivity and connectedness
- releases tension and stress
- is a key element in effective communication – especially in close relationships
- is an anti-violence antidote.

“Humour also assists in accepting life’s imperfections, inevitabilities, difficulties, frustrations and disappointments. It helps us to realise what we cannot control, such as death, the behaviour of other people, incompetence, ageing, physical limitations and illness. Jokes and funny throw away lines can also communicate messages that help us understand what is normal and typical. In knowing that others share some of the same feelings, perceptions and troubles, we feel more empowered to deal with these troubles.”

— Helen McGrath and Toni Noble, Bounce Back Teacher’s Handbook, Kids Matter



Lifting your friend’s moods with laughter and lightness can be really important! Being funny, acting silly and making light of tough moments can work however the humour needs to be careful not to be sexist, racist or gender biased — and you need to know when enough is enough. Thankfully there are lots of funny clips on YouTube that are free and fun!

WHAT PROTECTS AND NURTURES YOU?

There are positive ways and there are life-negating ways to overcome the effects of major stress and emotional overwhelm. Please try the positive ones often so that you can avoid getting used to the quick fixes like pills or lots of chocolate!

Safe stress busters:

- get active – especially outside, and preferably doing something you enjoy (e.g. walking, riding, gym, yoga or Tai Chi)
- call a friend – especially one you can trust
- do a guided relaxation
- play uplifting music you enjoy
- play calming music you enjoy
- go read a book that is pure escapism from life
- drink four glasses of water
- make a fresh juice with fresh fruit
- do something creative – paint, draw, play music, take photos
- get out family albums with your baby photos
- watch an old positive film like *The Lion King*, *Shrek*, or *Forrest Gump*
- share your emotional state with a family member who loves you
- cook something for the family like melting moments
- go to the park or the beach
- go to your special place in nature
- read a great kids' picture book or cartoon book
- read a joke book
- write in a journal
- go and do something for someone who needs help
- arrange to speak to the school chaplain or counsellor
- use a calming app like [Smiling Mind](#) or [Headspace](#) to soothe your mind
- have a long bath or shower and wash everything really clean
- try some energy-releasing techniques
- get as many hugs as you can
- write a letter to someone special
- go and watch ants doing what ants do
- go find a butterfly

- go look at the stars and count them all
- pretend you have just fallen in love with your fantasy
- wash your sheets and clean the windows in your room
- light a candle and pray for help
- when all else fails, walk at least 3 kilometres/miles to buy a small bar of chocolate that has fruit and nuts in it (surely that makes it a health food?) Eat this very slowly. Then walk home.

All of these will disempower your NO VOICE and strengthen your YES VOICE.

MAGGIE'S MELTING MOMENTS – COOKIES FROM THE HEART

NB: I never measure things ... so approx

250gms soft butter (margarine)

½-¾ cup icing sugar

½ teaspoon vanilla

Beat together until soft and creamy

Add ¾ cup cornflour stir in

Then add 1 ½-2 cups plain flour

(Should not be sticky to touch)

Take by spoonful roll in ball

Flatten a little with fork

Put on greased tray

Cook in a moderate oven (180 degrees) approx 20 mins

Ice with small dab of vanilla icing

Vanilla Icing

1 cup icing sugar..

1 tablespoon butter soft

Vanilla to taste

Add boiling water a little at a time until at spreading consistency.

Dab on top of biscuits.....

Enjoy!!!!



MANAGING BIG UGLY EMOTIONAL STATES

1. Colour/ breath clearing
2. Staying in the moment – is it really happening?
3. Get grounded
4. Creative visualisation (see the section on this later in the book)
5. Allow nature to nurture you
6. Energy Therapy Techniques
7. [Tapping acupressure points](#)
8. Avoid sleep deprivation
9. NLP techniques to reframe or hide the painful experience
10. Ask “what would love do right now?”
11. Be mindful of “awfulising”
12. Artistic effort – dance, paint, draw, sing
13. Make another choice
14. Find resolution through some action e.g. write a truth letter or venom letter (that you never send)
15. Practise honesty
16. Safe reassuring touch like a massage or reflexology
17. Reduce other stressors in life
18. Build sense of humour and learn to laugh
19. Keep sowing seeds of hope!



SOCIAL MEDIA, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

A survey by the Australian Psychological Society (conducted in 2015) has raised some very real concerns about the impact social media is having on behaviour and wellbeing.

While social media can be a great tool for connecting people up in real life, it can also be problematic.

Half of the teenagers surveyed experienced fear of missing out (FOMO) on the “seemingly perfect lives that others portray through social media” ([ABC News](#)). Experts are concerned that FOMO is actually leading to more worrying feelings like anxiety and depression.

Some of the study’s key findings were summarised on the ABC news website.

- 66% of the teens wanted to share details online when they were having a good time (e.g. updating a Facebook status).
- 60% said they felt worried when they found out their friends were having fun without them.
- 51% said they felt anxious if they did not know what their friends were doing.
- 78% said it was important that they understood their friends’ “in jokes”.

There is a link between time spent on social media and depression and anxiety so it’s important that you be aware of how you are using social media, how often you are using it and if it is making you feel good about yourself.

It is really important to remember that the life people live on social media is not their real life... it can look perfect but behind every ‘perfect’ image for example, there are probably dozens that weren’t quite right! Remember most photos shared have been enhanced with filters. Things are not always what they seem!



THE IMPORTANCE OF PEERS AND DEEPENING FRIENDSHIPS

“Just hangin’ and talkin’ is healthy teenage behaviour and actually has an important purpose in an adolescent’s development.”

Sheryl Feinstein, *Parenting the Teenage Brain* (2007)

Friendships are a very important protective factor for adolescents. From 16-18 there is a maturity that occurs that allows for a deepening of friendships that will often continue for life. This means being there for our friends – the good times and the tough times.

Being connected to friends and peers has the added advantage that an adolescent will be in touch with the parents of those friends. These friendships help develop social skills, help modify the “dark moods” of adolescence and enhance moral development.

Pleasurable activities – both real and imagined – can help you to feel better on both the inner and outer world. This can help you take the high road, rather than succumbing to automatic negative thoughts.

THE VOICES IN YOUR HEAD

Pausing and listening from time to time will give you more influence over the inner voice you choose to listen to. If you have read the *Brain Power* e-book you will have read about the three voices! The YES, the NO and the Saboteur (I don’t know) voice. Too much of the NO and the I Don’t Know will see you struggling with how you see yourself, your abilities, your confidence and ultimately how you behave.

Tips to strengthen your YES voice.

- Ask your best friends AND your parents to list the five things they like about you. (See the Letter To Someone Special In My Life at the end of this booklet – feel free to print it off!).
- Have a motto or life-affirming saying to silently repeat to yourself to drown out your negative voice. Try some of these:
 - » I am more than this
 - » I am, I can, I will
 - » I can do this
 - » Every day I get better and better
 - » I believe in me
 - » I am lovable and capable

- » Bring it on!
- » If I think I can, I will.

For girls, check out Dannielle Miller's site (www.daniellemiller.com). Also Michelle Mitchell has some great resources at <https://michellemitchell.org/>

- Be the best friend anyone could ever have.
- Know that you are on a journey up a stairway and each step will see you grow and get better at life.
- Surround yourself with positive people.
- Use life-enhancing language to yourself and others.
- Use positive visioning everyday.
- Be grateful for the good in your life.
- Make a positive difference to the world everyday – no matter how small, how un-noticed, how seemingly unimportant – just do it!
- Surround yourself with positive posters, sayings, books and photos – they feed the unconscious mind.
- Spend moments in quietness and stillness every day just being YOU – this means taking some time out from our crazy world and switching all your devices off!
- Choose a positive life metaphor to live by.
- Feed your own dreams and help feed others.
- Honour your mind and body with good food, exercise, plenty of water and sleep.
- Look for the good in others.
- Know that you are not the mask you sometimes wear.
- Treat others how you would like to be treated.
- Try practising random acts of kindness.
- Nurture your sense of humour and learn to laugh at yourself.



REALLY LISTENING TO SOMEONE WHO NEEDS A FRIEND

The First Duty of Love is to Listen

– an edited version of 'Please Listen' by Leo Buscaglia

When I ask you to listen to me, and you give me advice

You have not heard what I asked of you.

When I ask you to listen and you tell me why I shouldn't feel as I do,

You are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen and you feel you have to find solutions to my problems I feel let down, strange as it may seem.

Please listen. All I ask is that you listen – not talk or do or advise – just LISTEN.

Advice is cheap. I can get that anywhere. I can do for myself.

I'm not helpless – Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and reinforce my weaknesses.

When you accept as a simple fact, that I feel what I feel however irrational it may sound to you, then I can quit trying to convince you and I can then explore this irrational feeling.

When that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.

My irrational fears make sense when I can discover what's behind them.

If you listen and understand I can work things out for myself.

So I ask again. Just listen – and if you too have something to say be patient, Then I'll listen to you.

Really non-judgemental listening is the greatest gift you can give someone.

**We have two ears, two shoulders and one mouth
– use them in that proportion.**

CREATIVE VISUALISATION (MENTAL REHEARSAL)

Elite athletes have been using this for years!

The human psyche needs times of quiet for the development of a positive inner world, for time to reflect on current reality, and for the nurturing of a healthy emotional intelligence.

Creative visualisation (CV) is important in the development of the imagination, giving the brain time to rest and renew and it is also helpful when settling group energy. In the long-term the use of creative visualisation will help in managing stress, building self-esteem and self-worth and the creation of safer, more caring environments especially in our homes, schools and institutions.

Jack Canfield, originator of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul*® series and creator of the [Success Principles for Peak Performance](#) believes creative visualisation can:

- Enhance self-esteem
- Expand awareness
- Facilitate psychological growth and integration
- Evoke inner wisdom
- Increase empathy
- Increase memory
- Facilitate optimal performance
- Evoke a more positive attitude
- Accelerate the learning of subject matter
- Stimulate whole brain integration.

With regular use 2-3 times a week research has clearly shown that students who use visualisation exhibit:

- increased attentiveness
- increased involvement with the lessons being taught
- increase in positive social interactions among students
- increase in supportive responses to teacher
- increase in self-esteem
- improvement in emotional breaks in behaviour.

Perhaps you should give it a go!



I am gifting you a free download of my visualisation track RELAX AND ESCAPE to help you relax and improve your sleep. [DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

Hot Tip: The more we focus on WHAT WE WANT TO EXPERIENCE rather than what we don't, the better chance we have of creating the success we desire.

Not only can you increase your intention by doing visualisations, you can strengthen your focus by having visual reminders of goals on your phone or your bedroom wall.

Be your own best champion.

RESILIENCY AND POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

We have a mental health crisis happening in our society so just as we look after our bodies, we need to spend time looking after our mental health. Here are some factors identified that help teens be resilient and able to bounce back when life knocks them flat!

1. Connectedness
2. Relationship with caring adult – adult ally
3. Support, belonging, role models
4. Positive sense of self
5. Belief in own ability to cope
6. Handling the demands of school
7. Sense of control
8. Sense of humour
9. A sense of mastery at something in their life.

The strongest oak of the forest is not the one that is protected from the storm and hidden from the sun. It's the one that stands in the open where it is compelled to struggle for its existence against the winds and rains and the scorching sun.

Napoleon Hill (1883-1970)

Hot tip: The people who experience most success in their lives are the ones who have clear goals. In other words they know where they are going and what they wish to achieve. Spend time at least monthly keeping a check on your direction. That is why a journal is so important.

MAGIC MOMENTS JOURNAL

Keeping a journal of achievements and successes is really useful. This can include photos of special moments and high points in your life.

You may feel stuck, or uninspired... however, if you check your journal you will notice and be reminded of things you have already achieved.

Always have long-term goals as well as short-term goals – and try to stay focused on **TODAY** not tomorrow, or yesterday.

As Dan Millman says in a couple of his fantastic books:

“there are no ordinary moments, every moment is special”

The gift of life is sacred and we need to remember to cherish it, no matter what.

Positive visioning and clarity of intention are essential to creating success in your life.

One of the key things to remember is that you only have to focus on the **WHAT and not the HOW. This may sound too good to be true.**

If you read the biographies of elite athletes or world leaders you will read about their dreams and goals.

Nothing happens without first being imagined.



WHAT ARE MY INTENTIONS??

My name..... Age.....

My Intentions as of TODAY. Date

My short-term goals: for the next two weeks

1.....

2.....

3.....

For the rest of this year

1.....

2.....

3.....

Next year's goals

1.....

2.....

3.....

In five years

1.....

2.....

3.....

By 25 I will

1.....

2.....

3.....

Signed.....

Witnessed.....

Goal setting is a very important tool to help you realise your full potential...

Tips for goal setting.

1. Be specific and conceivable
2. Let the goal be measurable
3. Express it in the present tense
4. Be believable
5. Achievable
6. Stay focused

Never let anyone steal your dreams

DO YOU EVER SUFFER FROM... SIGNIFICANT FAILURE TO PLEASE?

Event: For many reasons your parents or carers were not completely consistent in their behaviour. At some time in your childhood you may have wanted to express yourself in a way they may not have noticed or appreciated. They did not receive what you were giving and thus your attempt to please them failed in your eyes. You were not successful in your attempt to please them.

Decision: I CAN'T WIN When something like the above experience happens you may make a decision that it doesn't matter what you do because you can't win.

Problem: How do I avoid losing in the future?

Solutions:

- DON'T PLAY
- QUIT
- DON'T COMMIT 100% (I wasn't really trying!)
- KEEP THE GAME GOING FOREVER
- DESTROY THE GAME
- KEEP OTHERS FROM WINNING
- BECOME A PROBLEM (Mental/physical illness, drug/alcohol addiction)
- BE NICE / TRY
- BE THE JUDGE / CRITIC
- DON'T COMPLETE THINGS
- BE PERFECT OR TRY TOO HARD

Have you done any of these things?

Sadly, the only person you are really hurting is yourself!

WHY DO WE STOP LIVING OUR DREAMS?

The answer lies in the fact that as we get older we get more concerned about what other people think and less about what we really feel inside. Your ego-mask determines the way you want to be seen by others in the outside world. The need to be accepted often works against our need to be me.

Ego vs spirit

This is the internal war that we all struggle with in our lives. Your spirit is the part inside you that knows what is right, and it gives you the inner strength to take on challenges. The ego, the home of the inner critic, is usually behind your inappropriate behaviours and it is what holds you back from following your dreams.

The need to be yourself, unique and worthwhile is the most important need in the world. To do that you have to **be honest with yourself**.

**Own your fears
And your doubts
And then you can really own your
DREAMS**

The point is that who you are has nothing to do with how you look and everything to do with what's inside of you...

What's really inside of you?



INSTRUCTIONS FOR LIFE

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three Rs:- Respect for self, - Respect for others and - Responsibility for all your actions.
4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great relationship.
7. When you realise you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
8. Spend some time alone every day.
9. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
11. Live a good, honourable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.
12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life.
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.
14. Share your knowledge. It is a way to achieve immortality.
15. Be gentle with the earth.
16. Once a year, go someplace you've never been before.
17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.
19. If you want others to be happy, practice compassion.
20. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

I have seen a version of this that also included these two additions which I quite like:

- Call your mother
- Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

* These instructions have been widely attributed to His Holiness the Dalai Lama but I've also read they are from H Jackson Browne Jr.'s "[Life's Little Instruction Book](#)" (2000) ... either way they are great!

HATING PEOPLE IS A BAD IDEA – ESPECIALLY IF IT’S YOUR PARENTS OR TEACHERS

Why?

Because when you hate someone you always want to prove they are wrong or you don’t want to do what they think is good for you. This often means that instead of doing things like trying at school, or doing your homework you deliberately mess up!

YOU think you are winning.

BUT it’s your life you are messing up!

How crazy is that?

You can change how you feel.

Rather than hate, or really dislike, think again.

You can

1. choose to feel differently
2. choose to act differently
3. choose to see a difficult situation as a challenge.

Remember Microsoft founder Bill Gates’ advice to young people...“Try to get on with everyone, even the geeks, because one day you may have to work for one”.

Know that inside people that you don’t like there is something good or wise.

Keep looking. You don’t always show that part of yourself and some people have really had to keep looking to find that within you.

JUST GET ON WITH LIFE ...

Assertive people tend:

- To tell people what they want or would prefer in such a way as to appear neither threatening, nor punishing, nor in putting down the other person
- To behave appropriately in social situations
- To speak honestly
- To expect to be treated with respect and to treat others the same
- To like themselves and to appreciate themselves
- To stand up for and take good care of themselves
- To be a friend to themselves and others

- To keep their cool and to handle things smoothly
- To keep a good sense of humour
- To be true to their self.

Assertiveness vs passivity and aggression

Passive people:

- Hope that they will get what they want
- Sad face, often appear shy or frightened
- Avoid eye contact
- Shoulders droop, look at the floor a lot
- Voice is soft and wobbly
- Do nothing, say nothing, wait for others to make decisions
- Never ask for help
- Prefer to withdraw from difficult situations
- Lack commitment and drive.

Aggressive people:

- Try to get what you want
- Stern angry expression
- Eyes that stare you down
- Tense body structure
- Raised or loud voice
- Bold gestures
- Invade your personal space
- Like to dominate conversation and make decisions.

Passive aggressive people have

- Stored up anger
- Get even in subtle or underhand ways
- Fake smile
- Wide eyed innocent look "Who me?"
- High pitch voice
- Gestures do not match words
- Appear anxious/uneasy in social settings.

Try to be assertive and communicate honestly.



LIFE SKILLS

There are lots of skills that you need in your kit bag so that you can cope with life. Check out the [Life Skills Checklists](#) to make sure you are developing the skills that will help you:

- Live with others
- Live in a rental property
- Own and/or drive a car
- Conduct yourself appropriately (etiquette)
- Communicate well
- Handle money
- And other handy skills that will get you far in life.



WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH IN LIFE...

Things can happen in life that will really challenge you. These challenges can last for ages and the stress they can create can cause you much emotional turmoil or overwhelm.

If this happens to you **know that you will need someone to share your story.** This is where an adult ally comes in really handy or someone who loves and cares about you – maybe a family member. If you don't have an adult ally please try a chaplain at school, a special teacher or school psychologist who is a really good listener. If this is still too difficult, there are many help lines and online counselling spaces that have trained "listeners" who will give their time to share the journey.

Grief especially takes time to heal and unresolved grief can cause emotional and mental disabilities that can challenge you for the rest of your life. **Healthy grieving does take lots of talking, sharing and crying – that is just how it is.** Unresolved grief can also cause you to feel fatigued and exhausted because it does drain your energy supplies.

It is a sign of strength to reach out for help when you are struggling – and being there for our friends is important too. Be careful not to carry them, when they need professional help or you will end up exhausted. Also remember to be a good friend, or listener you must be confidential. Never repeat anything that has been said to you **EXCEPT:**

You must inform a person of authority if a friend is expressing feelings of being suicidal. You have a duty of care to tell someone like a parent, teacher, counsellor or chaplain.

Remember if someone's life is in immediate danger you should call the emergency number 000 (in Australia – if you are overseas please dial appropriate number). Otherwise, you can call Lifeline or other suicide support services to get help.

If you need someone to help you feel safe, accepted and heard, please call or visit:

Lifeline: 131 11 44

Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800

Suicide Callback Service: 1300 65 94 67

www.kidshelp.com.au

au.reachout.com.au

www.headspace.org.au

www.youthbeyondblue.com

Some of these services also offer email or web counselling and live chat.

Hot Tip: No problem is ever too big when it is shared.

FINAL WORDS

Life is a journey that has valleys and mountains and you are human and that means that you were meant to share the journey with others.

“The matters of the heart are meant to come before the matters of the head.”

– Maggie Dent, *Nurturing Kids’ Hearts and Souls* (2005)

Strive to build connections to yourself and others so that you can really enjoy the ride... where ever it may take you.

It is, quite simply, up to you.

Believe in yourself and strive for happiness and contentment, and to make the world a better place because you lived.

Be the best you that you can be.

Check out my TedX talk for more inspiration! <https://youtu.be/2JTEdCSK68E>



21 STEPS

TO SUCCESS, ASSERTIVENESS AND WELLBEING

1. Learn to love, respect and appreciate yourself
2. Be responsible for your own thoughts, words and actions
3. Ask for what you want
4. Say no without feeling guilty
5. Breathe deeply and often
6. Use your personal power positively
7. Give and receive compliments
8. Avoid being manipulated
9. Show anger honestly (but safely)
10. Have, keep and nurture friendships
11. Avoid toxic, negative people
12. Focus on the now, not tomorrow or the past
13. Stretch your comfort zone
14. Appreciate the natural beauty of our world
15. Read widely and often
16. Develop a gratitude attitude
17. Learn to detach and distance yourself from painful experiences
18. Train your sense of humour and your smile muscles
19. Have a clear intention of where you are going!
20. Model yourself on a healthy, happy, positive adult
21. Remember, you are here for an important purpose



TRUTH LETTER PROCESS

Sometimes we can resolve issues with people by writing an honest letter to them. Sometimes we do not even need to give them the letter, but the mere process of acknowledging what troubles you is enough to resolve it inside yourself. It is often better to burn the letter.

Dear

I am writing this letter to release my resentment and negative emotions and to discover and express any positive feelings that I might have towards you.

Anger

I don't like...
I feel angry...
I hate it when...
I can't stand...
I resent...

Hurt

It hurt me when...
I feel hurt that...
I feel sad when...
I feel awful about...
I feel disappointed about...

Fear

I'm afraid that... I feel scared when... I'm afraid ... I get afraid of you when...

Remorse, Regret, Accountability

I'm sorry that...
I didn't mean to...
Please forgive me for...
I'm sorry for ...

Wants

All I ever wanted...
I want...
I want you to...
I deserve...

Love, Compassion, Forgiveness, Appreciation

I understand that...
Thank you for...
I appreciate...
I forgive you for...
I love you becaus...
I love you when...

— Adapted from 1997 Self Esteem Seminars, Santa Barbara, US with permission from Jack Canfield

LETTER TO SOMEONE SPECIAL IN MY LIFE

I am writing this to show you how valuable you are in my life. Firstly I want to list five things that I love about you:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Then I want to tell you about something I will always remember about you — a memory that I want you to know that I have that is kept where I keep special memories.

.....
.....
.....
.....

I also want to thank you for:

.....
.....
.....
.....

You really matter in my life and I want you to know that if you ever need a safe person to be a friend or to share a heavy load, think of me.

And finally

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Yours,

Date

AND REMEMBER AGAIN IF YOU NEED HELP...

Lifeline: 131 11 44

Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800

Suicide Callback Service: 1300 65 94 67

www.kidshelp.com.au

au.reachout.com.au

www.headspace.org.au

www.youthbeyondblue.com

Some of these services also offer email or web counselling and live chat.



TAMING THE STRESS MONSTER IN ADOLESCENCE

Everyone experiences stress. It's our brain's way of letting us know we are under threat and need to act. When we were cave people, this was pretty useful for fighting off saber tooth tigers. Our brains release chemicals like cortisol and noradrenaline to help us to

FIGHT, FLIGHT or FREEZE

These days, there aren't many tigers about but lots of other things make us feel under threat and STRESSED.



SYMPTOMS OF STRESS



WAYS TO STRESS LESS



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