

Life HACKS

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I would not be a teacher if I was able resist the urge to try to teach you something today. Here are my three top life hacks.

1. My first piece of advice comes from the well-known words of Maya Angelou, American poet, author, and civil rights activist. She said: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

I could not agree more. It is so important to make others feel validated.

We are all together in this madness called **LIFE** and you will have to rely on other people in your life.

You never know what struggles others are going through, so make people feel valued: Look them in the eye, greet them, give them a smile, pay them attention by putting away your cell phone, listen attentively to understand and not only to respond, because ... people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

2. My second piece of advice might be old news to most of you, but it took me a long time to really get this.

Mark Twain, the American writer, humourist, entrepreneur, publisher, and lecturer, said: “The secret to getting ahead is getting started.”

Whenever you are stuck with a task or project or have a chore that you just cannot get yourself to do, start with something small. Tell yourself: “I will only check to see if I have all the notes I need to start studying” or “I will only sort the information needed for the project” or “I will only get up and make my bed and then I can lie down again”.

In my experience, once you have made even a small start, you build confidence and momentum. Once you have taken that first small step, all the others start to seem possible. Once you get up and make your bed, you will be motivated to get out of your pyjamas and face the day. So, in future, whether you have to write your first university essay or do your own laundry for the first time, just start small.

3. My last piece of advice originated in the writings of the medieval Persian Sufi poets and you might know it well: “This too shall pass.”

Apparently, it was the American president, Abraham Lincoln, who made the saying famous. He used the expression as a mantra to help him through the stress of troubled times.

I would like you to also consider another interpretation of this saying. Yes, the words can help you to understand that difficult and stressful times do come to an end, but more importantly, they can remind you that happy times, valuable experiences and great opportunities also come to an end and should therefore be treasured.

Savour the good times, relish conversations with your family and friends, cherish long walks in nature or a day at the beach, appreciate the privilege of university lectures and do not bunk!

My advice is not a new insight; it won't guarantee instant success or bring you fame and fortune, but it will hopefully assist you with the life outside these school gates. So, to summarise my three points:

1. *Be kind to others.*
2. *Start small.*
3. *Enjoy the good times.*