



YOUR GUIDE TO

HACKING THE LIFE MACHINE



TRANSFORM YOUR
LIFE WITH THESE
SIMPLE STEPS

Hope Cook



1 TO-DO LISTS ARE YOUR NEW BFF

I'm not talking lists to induce shame when you don't get your items done; I'm talking **strategic list-making**.

Mental Clutter Dump



Brain dump on Sunday for the week ahead. Jot down things you **MUST** do (parent-teacher Zoom conference Tues 9 am). Go back and fill in things you'd like to do.



Make it Stick

Use an oversized index card for the week's to-do list and a sticky note for the day's to-do list (placed on your keyboard, steering wheel, vent hood, or on top of the index card list).

Must Do > Can Do

Don't over-do it. Put things on the list you know you **MUST** do and things you **CAN** do. If it's not a must, or if it's not all that likely you *can* do it, don't put it on the list.

Power of an Hour



Make sure the item isn't too big and general (like "design a website"). Only put to-do items requiring less than an hour (contact web designer and send her my Pinterest pics). If the to-do is likely to take a few hours, break it down into small chunks of 1-hour duties.

2

DELEGATE DELEGATE DELEGATE

Value of Time

If you're working outside the home, you get a paycheck. Use it. **Outsource** the heck out of those tasks that:

 take forever

 you despise

Opportunity Cost

Identify all tasks requiring an hour or more of your time. If you're running errands, dropping off kids, and then spending three hours cleaning, consider which you might hire out?



Help at Home



Delegate at home (any kid over age 5 gets assigned little chores; older kids can clean the bathroom, make supper once a week, mow the grass, etc.).

Use chores as "consequences," aka punishment. If my 8-year-old is sassing me, my response is: "By acting this way, you're making a choice. You're choosing to sweep the floor when you speak to me like that," and tah-dah! The floor chore is no longer mine.



Distribute Energy

To figure out what you should delegate, spend 30 seconds reviewing the most energy-sucking activities at the end of each day.

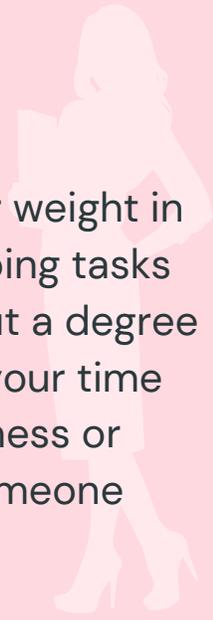
After two weeks, I had an epiphany about how much I hated cleaning the kitchen after supper. My husband felt the same about laundry. We simply switched tasks, which has been a game-changer for my evening mood.



Work Smarter

A good assistant is worth her weight in gold. Ask yourself if you're doing tasks at work that someone without a degree could do. Are you spending your time earning money for your business or wasting time doing things someone with less pay could do?

Our office pays three nurses to return patient phone calls, call patients with results, and schedule surgeries. If I spent my time doing this, I'd be wasting hours when I could be seeing patients and making money for the practice.



3 BE OKAY WITH "GOOD ENOUGH"

Perfectionism is a huge time suck. Ask yourself how different your life would look if you accepted doing "B" work instead of your usual A+ work. Years of your life will be saved by letting go of perfectionism. This goes for housework, cooking, your job, etc.

This will do - check!
Ok, next!



Meet Good Enough Gale

DO YOU OWN THE DAY?

OR

DOES THE DAY OWN YOU?



I WILL OWN MY DAY BY

fill in the blank 

4 GET EFFICIENT

Get efficient as hell. Time is money.

Look at where you waste the most time. Seriously, jot down for several days what you're doing every 30 minutes. Might you be wasting hours on Netflix, online shopping, primping, cooking three different meals at night for picky eaters, going to 3 grocery stores a week?

No Slack(ing)

Tighten up the schedule. If you're bringing your work home every night, could you chat less and get more done at work? Could you batch similar tasks (signing off on labs, answering work emails) at work and do them all at once to be more efficient?



5 REVERSE ENGINEER

Notice & Note

Think about how you want to feel by the end of the week and reverse engineer. You can also do this with the month. Do you want to feel energized, excited, joyful? Start noticing the things that give you joy and energy. Jot these down before bedtime. Do more of these things. We know this intuitively, but by writing them down, you'll start looking for more ways to do those energy-boosting things in your life.

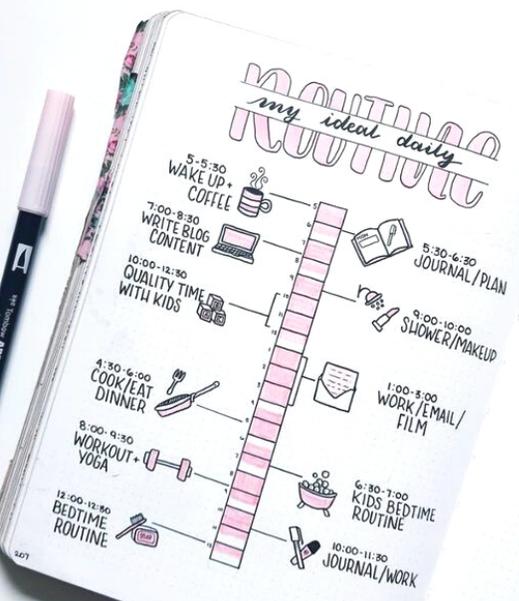
This week I want to feel...

rejuvenated

accomplished

determined

encouraged



Tip

Make lists and planning fun!
Create your personal

Bullet Journal

click here to learn more

6

CUT THE CRAP

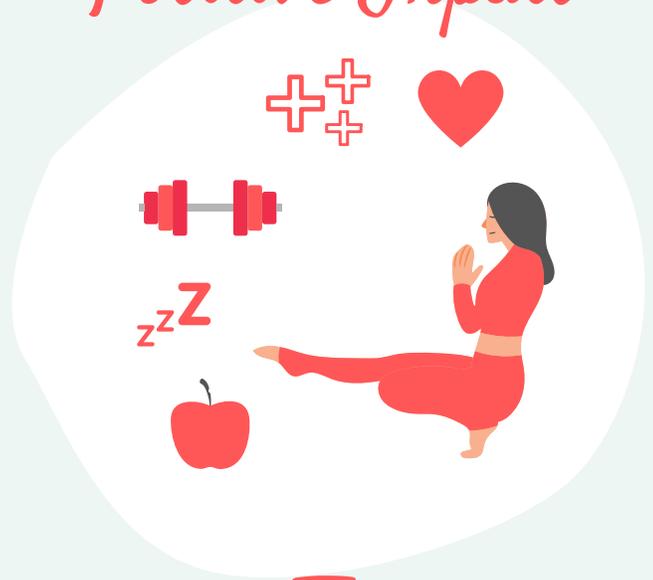
If you feel like crap, you aren't winning at life. Where in your life do you feel the crappiest? Sleep? Diet? Physical exercise? Mental health? Be honest. Get help where needed. You already know what you need to do.

Is it **anxiety**, alcohol, or because of being keyed up from staring at the TV or doing work in bed?

Physical exercise? Set the bar low and start walking. Walk for 5 minutes a day the first week, 10 the next. Save your favorite podcast for your walks. No walking=no podcast.

Mental health? Hire a coach or a therapist. No need to be embarrassed; everyone has a therapist or two. It's worth it and cheaper than nutting up and getting fired from your job or paying for a divorce.

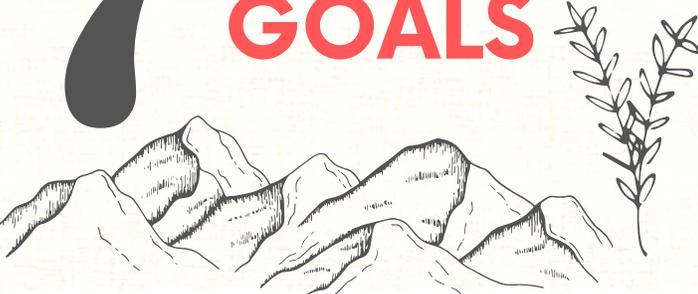
Positive Inputs



Positive Outputs

Nutrition? Get the processed food out of your house. Don't tell yourself you can't have it. Instead, tell yourself you're the type of person who puts healthy food in her body. This shifts the focus from "I can't eat it" to "I choose not to eat it." I have a sticky note on my desk that says, "I choose to avoid sugar."

7 VISUALIZE GOALS



Keep a running list of dream things and places, like a vision board. This can be on your phone. I have one list for quarterly stuff I want to try or do and one that's more of a lifelong bucket list. Without having things to spark your interest or work towards, your life becomes dull and monotonous.

Examples

Fall-pick apples, make a pumpkin pie, decorate for Halloween (for the first time), pick out a new lipstick, start a writing group with friends from FB, have an outdoor fire, camp in the mountains, backpack camp with husband, teach yoga in my front yard for neighbors.

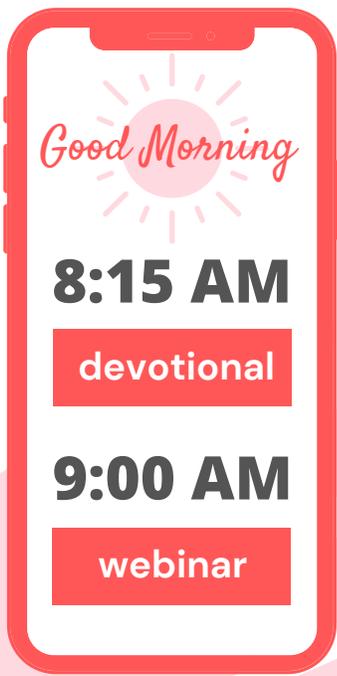
Walk the Camino de Santiago, hit a million downloads with my podcast, live overseas for a year, meet Oprah, write a book, canopy/trapeze, host a yoga retreat in Costa Rico, charter a boat, and island-hop, go on an overnight train trip.

jot a few ideas for yourself



take a tai chi class
foster kittens renew vows
learn grandma's dumpling recipe
plant an herb garden
salsa dance with Sam





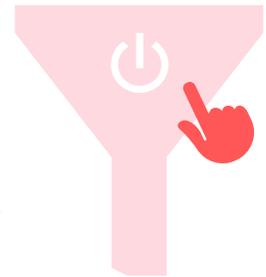
8

KEEP YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE

Use your phone or Alexa for reminders. I even set our home Alexa to go off every morning after I'm at work. She says, "It's time for the kids to brush their teeth." Use Google Calendar or Outlook to combine calendars with your spouse.

9

ACTIVATE YOUR "YES/NO" FILTER



If someone needs something from you, have them email you, even your kids (if they're old enough.) It's so much easier to remember to do things if they're written down. This also buys you time to consider if you want to say "yes." Ask yourself if the event/task were tomorrow, would you say yes? We're inclined to say yes to things if they're scheduled out weeks or months from now. We optimistically assume our future selves will be enthusiastic about the event in question. Instead, we find ourselves saying, "What the heck was I thinking?"

THE "ASK"



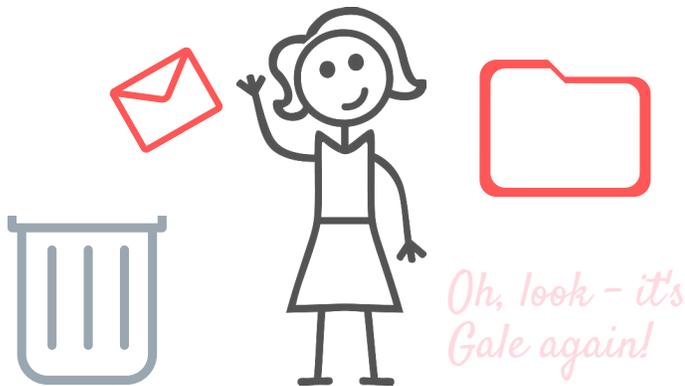
Ask yourself WHY you're saying yes. Do you genuinely want to do it, or is it out of guilt?

10

CLEAN INBOX



Keep your inbox tidy. Just like a clean kitchen inspires you to cook a lovely meal, a clean inbox will have a significant impact on your productivity.



Delete, Repeat

Delete anything that's been sitting in your inbox for more than a week. If it's important enough to keep, put it in a folder. Check this folder daily and pull out things that need to be done that day. Empty it by the end of the week.

Take 2 seconds to unsubscribe from anything you don't want to read.



Tidy up your house. Each time you leave a room, do it. If it's someone else's stuff, drop it in a pile by their door. Make your kids start doing the same thing. Before my daughter runs off to play with the neighbors, I scan the room and say, "grab your brush, your book, and your bunny and put them in your room!"

11 CLEAN HOME

Clean Space = Clean Mind



Don't go to bed with a messy kitchen. It sets the mood for the morning. It's worth staying up 15 extra minutes to clean the kitchen.



Who is at your table?

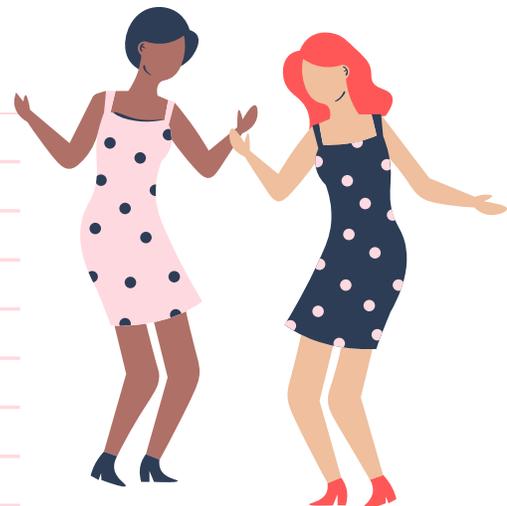
Surround yourself with people who inspire you and whom you admire.

We're the average of the 5 people we spend the most time with. Are your people life-giving or life-sucking? Are they living their best lives (or at least trying)? Make it a point to spend more time with people you'd like your future self to be like. I want to do more writing, so I joined a writing group. I want to travel more, so I hang out with friends who do that sort of thing.

I will surround myself with those who

volunteer in the community
practice faith daily
encourage healthy eating

your turn ↗



13 YOU TIME



Do I even need to put this one as a life hack? By now, we know we need to put our own oxygen mask on first. So what's stopping you? It's all the mundane things like grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning. Get up early. This is the new you time. Already get up early? Good! Now, what are you doing during this time? This is your time to write, paint, exercise (quietly), etc. This is a gift to yourself that will literally change who you are a year from now. 30 minutes a day. That's all it takes. That equates to 22 eight-hour days in a year. Isn't that crazy? Can you imagine if you devoted 22 extra days to something just for you every year?

Happy Hacking!

There you have it, friends! 13 simple life hacks to take back ownership and control of your life machine. But, this guide is just a launch pad. I'd love the opportunity to connect with you personally to learn more about where you feel stuck, where you want to go, and together develop a playbook for mapping your goals.

Hope Cook

www.coachhopecook.com

