

How to Become a *Happy Student of Life*



What's the coolest thing you've learned recently?

Are you an intentional learner?

It's common to stop reading and learning once we leave school, but at some level we know that's not the approach we should have.

As the author of *The Happy Student* and in my role as an education excellence coach, I've had the privilege of speaking to and working with thousands of students.

Sadly, I realize that there are very few happy students around!

In many ways, we're all students, because there are always new things to learn, new skills to acquire, and new viewpoints to understand.

You might be a reluctant or miserable student, but you're a student nonetheless, no matter how old you are.

So you might as well choose to be a happy one, right?

In this post, I'd like to share with you five tips to help you become a happy student—of life.

And just to be clear, when I mention "happiness," I'm not referring to a temporary emotion. Instead, I'm talking about long-lasting fulfillment.

Being a happy student of life will make your life more interesting, fun and purposeful.

But, at the end of the day, it's not mainly about your own happiness. It's about sharing your happiness with others, and it's about learning more so that you can make more of a difference in other people's lives.

Here are the five tips:

1. Decide to run your own race

When you were in school, you probably saw it as a competition. After all, your teacher could only give out so many A's each semester, and there were only so many students who could be admitted to the best schools.

As a student, I tried to outperform my peers and finish the race first.

I didn't understand that finishing well is far more important than finishing first.

Neither did I realize that I was running the race that other people wanted me to run, instead of running my own race.

I worked hard in order to gain the approval of my parents and teachers, not because I saw the real purpose of education.

Tip #1 is to run your own race. If you're running a race that's not meant for you, it's impossible to find happiness and fulfillment. This applies to every area of your life, including your career, family life and social life.

When you give up your need for the approval of others, you'll begin to find new freedom and peace.

2. "Be" before you "know" and "do"

When you're in school, you're assessed based on what you know.

In order to be a happy student of life, however, it's important to realize that "being" should come before "knowing" and "doing."

Who do you want to become? What principles and values mean the most to you? What kind of legacy do you want to leave behind? What does success mean to you, personally?

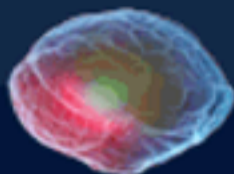
These are the kinds of questions that all of us need to periodically ask ourselves.

It's only when we have clear answers to these questions that we can learn the right things, set the right goals, and make the right decisions.

If we don't remind ourselves to put the "being" before the "knowing" and "doing," we might just rack up countless accomplishments, but discover that we didn't lead a meaningful life.

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3. Learn something new every day.

In this Information Age we live in, there's so much content available online. If you have the desire and the discipline, you can become knowledgeable about pretty much any subject.

Becoming an expert is now more about will than it is about skill.

So let's make the most of the power of the Internet and learn something new every single day. You could even learn something random or weird!

4. Set aside time for reflection every day.

The deepest learning takes place when we consciously reflect on our experiences.

As the Greek philosopher Socrates once said, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

Set aside 10 minutes a day to think about the following questions:

What did I do well today?

What *didn't* I do well today?

What is one area I can improve on, starting tomorrow?

What is one thing I'm thankful for?

These are four simple questions that make a big difference when it comes to your long-term happiness.

5. Do something you're afraid of.

To be a happy student of life, you need to embrace all of life, not just the fun or exciting parts.

A lot of the meaning in life comes from facing your fears and obstacles, and in overcoming them.

Most of the time, the things we fear most are the things we simply must do.

Is there a conversation you're afraid of initiating? Is there a project you're afraid of taking on? Is there a conflict you're afraid of resolving?

Face your fears head on and take the action you know you ought to. You won't regret it.

In closing...

Happiness isn't just something you feel. It's something you work for.

Let's get down to business!

Daniel Wong is the author of [The Happy Student: 5 Steps to Academic Fulfillment and Success](#). He is also an [education excellence coach](#) and [speaker](#). He writes regularly about topics related to education, career and personal development at [Living Large](#).

When you subscribe at Living Large, you'll receive a free copy of Daniel's e-book, [The Unhappiness Manifesto: Don't Do These 150 Things If You Want To Be Happy](#).