**20 Self Improvement Tips That Will Change Your Life**

By Jon Dulin, 2018

I say all of the time that if you aren’t focusing on self-development, you are just sitting on the sidelines of life.

So the question becomes, are you happy with your life? Regardless of how you answered, **you have the power to make your life better than it is today**.

The power to do so lies within each of us. All you need is a little nudge to get started. Because of this, I have compiled a list of 20 self-improvement tips for you to start making a part of your everyday life.

Why 20 self improvement tips and not 3 or 5? The reason is because everyone will start with what they feel most comfortable with first. If I were to only list 3 tips, some people might not be interested in trying any of them.

But with 20 self growth tips, chances are you will find something to start with to improve your life. From there you can move on to another tip and another, and so on.

The great thing about this list is that all of the tips I list to better your life are easy to start doing. It won’t take you weeks or months to begin applying them into your daily routines.

So what are you waiting for? The first step to your best life begins now!

**#1. Love Yourself**

The first self improvement tip is learning to love yourself. Unfortunately for many, this is easier said than done. You have to learn to accept who you are and that you are beautiful just the way you are. You’re not supposed to look like Brad Pitt or sing like Adele. **You are supposed to simply be you**.

All throughout our daily lives we have others put us down for who we are, what we wear, or what we believe in. They are against you. You need to be for you. If you are against you, there is no hope of living an amazing life. **Learn to become your own ally and not your worst enemy.**

Tell yourself how special you are every day. It may be hard at first, but as time goes on, it will become easier. Learn to recognize what talents and qualities you have that are special and believe me, we are all special in our own way.

For me, this tip was tough. I started out looking in the mirror and telling myself how great I was. It felt weird. I didn’t believe it. But a funny thing happened. After doing this day after day, I did begin to believe it. It felt good to say and soon I was excited to do this step.

It has had a major impact on how I see myself and carry myself. I encourage you to follow through on this tip and experience the power of it.

**#2. Exercise**

I make it a point to exercise a few times a week. When I do, I feel great. Working up a sweat and lifting weights makes me feel good about myself and improves my mood. Not surprisingly, when I am busy and can’t make it to the gym, I find I am less motivated in general and my mood sours.

If you go to the gym and don’t feel anything, I encourage you to lift heavier weights, to put yourself beyond your comfort zone. Many people “go light” either because they don’t think they can lift as much as they really can or because they fear they will get big and bulky.

I am here to tell you that you can lift more than you think and you won’t get big and bulky, unless it is in your genes or you are taking some artificial supplement. I’ve been lifting heavy weights for 15 years. I am nowhere near big and bulky.

When you lift heavy weights, your body exerts more effort and you release more endorphins into your system. This is what makes you feel better and improves your mood. When you just go through the motions, you body doesn’t respond because it isn’t being worked.

With this said, if you are brand new to lifting weights, definitely go light to start so that you don’t injure yourself.

**#3. Eat Better**

If you are going to work out, you might as well eat well too, right? I find when I am working out, I eat better. When I stop working out, I eat poorly. It’s a simple cycle really. I lift weights, I feel good about myself, I eat well and the cycle repeats.

Most times you are feeling like crap because you are eating highly processed, sugary foods. [**Try to eat healthy**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/go/paleo-diet) just for a week. Limit your sugar intake and eat more natural foods like fruits and vegetables.

The first day or so might be hard, but give your body time to adjust and you will be amazed how much better your life will be. That drop off of energy in the afternoon you always experience will no longer happen. You won’t wake up tired any longer. You just have to give yourself a few days to adjust.

For me, I started out with a goal of just eating more fruits and vegetables. I didn’t have a set goal, other than to figure out how to increase my consumption of these foods.

I added a banana to my breakfast and I put some shredded spinach into my eggs. I was scared at first, but you really can’t taste the spinach.

For snacks, I would eat an apple. At lunch and dinner, I would add in more vegetables. I don’t think I am anywhere need what the food pyramid calls for with these food groups, but this strategy works for me.

Just play around with it and figure out what routine works best for you. Even if you just make it a point to drink water instead of soda and skip out on a doughnut for an apple you will be doing yourself a world of good.

**#4. Change Your Habits**

We are all creatures of habit. We follow the same routines, day in, day out. This makes life easier for us, but also makes us lazy. To spice things up, you need to change your habits. I’m not talking about refraining from brushing your teeth, but maybe brush with the opposite hand.

Instead of taking the same way to work every day, try a new way. Make Tuesday nights family night. [**Find simple ways to change things**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/tiny-habits-massive-personal-growth)up in life.

The more you can do this, the more you keep your mind and body on its toes and it has to keep learning. Going back to the exercise point above, it’s the same idea. If you never increase the weight you lift, your body adapts to the exercise and is no longer being challenged and not growing.

Another great way to change your habits is to start your days off right. [**Learn how to master your mornings**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/go/morning-mastery) and you will see a positive impact on the rest of your day.

Little daily self improvement goes a long way towards achieving success in life. It doesn’t seem like it at the time, but these small changes compound and add up over time.

**#5. Set Goals**

While you change your habits, you should also [**focus on setting goals for yourself**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/how-to-achieve-your-goals). Where do you want to be in one year, or three or five years? Don’t just write them down, but [**visualize these goals**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/power-visualizing-your-goals). Make the goals a part of you.

I have some long term goals for myself. I’ve gotten so good at visualizing them that I can see specific details. For example, when I was visualizing my dream house, I could see blades of grass when I closed my eyes and thought of the house and yard I wanted to own.

Don’t get upset if you can’t do this right away. Start small and just begin to visualize.

The key to setting goals is making them manageable. I used to set annual goals and would fail miserably. I started to break them down into smaller, monthly goals instead.

For example, if my goal was to save 25% of my income this year, I would divide this amount by 12 and my monthly goal would be to save this amount.

If I were trying to [**pay off my debt**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/how-to-get-out-of-debt-forever-5-step-plan), then I would have an amount I would want to pay off each month to hit my annual goal.

By focusing on the shorter time frame, my goal never got lost in the day to day of life.

**#6. Accept Failure**

Newsflash you are going to fail. You are going to fail many times in life. [**Failing is OK**](http://www.breathofoptimism.com/the-importance-of-failing/). In fact, you should embrace failure. When you stretch beyond your comfort zone, you are growing as a person. It is only natural that you will fail. Don’t fall for the lie that failing is bad.

Think about failing when you were little. As a toddler, we have to learn to walk. If you ever watch a toddler learning to walk, she falls down many, many times. In other words, she fails countless times. Why is a child failing to learn to walk OK but you failing to learn a new skill as an adult a bad thing? At the end of the day it is still failure.

Don’t believe the lie that failure is a bad thing. It is only a bad thing if you never learn from it.

Be willing to try new things, give it your best shot and if you fail, take the time to step back. Reflect on the reasons that led you to fail and try again. As you progress, you are growing as a person.

**#7. Create A Mission Statement**

This is my favorite of the tips to improve yourself. You need to know who you are and what you stand for. In other words, you need to create a personal mission statement. Don’t mull over creating the perfect mission statement here. Just come up with something that identifies who you are and what you are about. As time goes on, you can modify it.

My mission statement talks about being a healthy person that always looking for the positive in life. Again, nothing complicated and there is room for improvement, just like with life.

If you need help with creating your personal mission statement, [**click here**](http://www.franklincovey.com/msb/).

**#8. Be Thankful**

The next of the self improvement tips is that you need to be thankful for all that you have. Why are so many people living in debt? Because they are chasing happiness. They think that happiness comes from things. They don’t realize that happiness comes from within.

It’s the same with the quote “success leads to happiness”. It doesn’t. Happiness leads to success. Be happy with all that you have. Odds are you have it better than the majority of people.

Try to take a few minutes at the end of each day and think back on what happened and acknowledge the positive things in your life and be thankful for them.

They don’t need to be important events either like scoring a raise at work. They could be as simple as getting to run around outside with your kids. Whatever it is, large or small, important or seemingly unimportant, be thankful for it all.

The more you do this, the easier they will be to identify.

**#9. Learn A New Skill**

Learning a new skill breeds confidence in ourselves. When we learn something new, we get excited and are eager to learn more. This increases our self confidence and we grow and want to learn more. It’s a cycle that fuels itself.

So what is it that you have always wanted to learn but always put off? Write a short list of things and then start working on learning those new skills.

Don’t be fearful of how difficult it may be. You can easily learn new skills on the internet watching videos, taking free courses or workshops at community colleges and stores, or by reading some books.

If you are an introverted person, challenge yourself to be more social. I’m not suggesting you try to change yourself from being an introvert, but [**having social confidence**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/go/social-confidence) is a great skill to have.

Challenging yourself is a great tool when it comes to self development. By learning new things, you grow as a person.

**#10. Stop Wasting Time**

How will you find time to learn those news skills you wrote about above? Easy, stop wasting time. I bet you could easily carve out a few hours in your day to learn a new skill. It’s all about shifting things around. Most notably, stop watching so much TV! Studies show that [**too much TV watching is harmful to our health**](http://www.cnn.com/2011/HEALTH/06/14/tv.watching.unhealthy/).

How do you stop watching so much TV? For some, you will have to take drastic measures, like canceling your cable. For others, delaying the show works. Delaying is what works for me.

My wife and I have a DVR. We set up the DVR to record all of the shows we want to watch. Surprisingly, we never watch half of the shows on the DVR. Not because we watch other shows, but because we really aren’t that interested in watching them.

Take some time to understand how you waste time and become more productive with your time. Read more. Learn about something new. Spend more time with loved ones. These are self growth activities that will lead to happiness and success.

**#11. Read**

Reading stimulates the mind. Do you know how many books I read two years ago? Zero. That falls in line with the numbers from 2015 that show [**27% of Americans didn’t read a single book**](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/10/19/slightly-fewer-americans-are-reading-print-books-new-survey-finds/).

This year so far, I’ve read 5. How do I find the time to read? Simple. I turn off the TV 30 minutes before bed and read. I don’t miss anything important on TV and it helps me to [**prepare for a good night’s sleep**](http://www.breathofoptimism.com/5-ways-to-help-you-sleep/).

To get started reading and to stick with it pick out some books in niches that interest you. If you like mystery novels, then search out some short books in that niche. You can also [**check out my resources section**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/recommended-resources) for a list of my personal favorites.

The goal isn’t to read as many books as you can, but rather to get into the habit of reading. If it takes you two months to read a book, then so be it. The goal is more about reading than the number of books you can complete.

**#12. Meditate**

Along with learning new skills and reading, you should fill up your new found free time by meditating for 10 minutes per day. Some may think that meditating is a waste of time, but I find that clearing my head of all of my thoughts and just being present has a huge effect on my mood and happiness.

There are [**various forms of mediation**](http://www.breathofoptimism.com/discovering-different-types-meditation-will-work-best/), so you are sure to find one that is right for you. As you start out with meditation, take things slow. For some people (myself included) it took some time before I was able to clear my mind and really get good at meditating.

What ended up sticking for me was starting off very slowly with a short amount of mediation time and making my sessions longer as I improved.

For more tips for beginning meditation, [**check out this post**](http://www.breathofoptimism.com/13-tips-start-meditating-for-beginners/).

Once you get the basics down regarding meditation, you will be amazed at the positive impact it has to improve your life. It quickly resets your mind and emotions and you come out of a mediation session feeling fresh and revived.

**#13. Deal With Negative Thoughts And Emotions**

I mentioned in a previous tip about learning to love yourself. You will always have critics, including yourself. You need to learn to deal with any negative thoughts and emotions you have.

At first, you may find this difficult to do. But over time, controlling your thoughts will become easier.

Understand that negative thoughts will always be with us. They create a problem when we allow them to fester inside and ruin our day. So there was bad traffic this morning. Instead of letting it fester inside and taking that anger out on others, learn to brush it off. Don’t allow it to ruin your entire day. It’s a day you will never get back.

The same idea applies when others are rude or short to you. You don’t know what is happening in their life. Maybe they got into a car accident. Maybe they are getting divorced.

Most times that aren’t angry at you, they just take it out on you because they haven’t dealt with the issue effectively enough. Don’t let their actions ruin your day.

**#14. Push Through Tough Times**

You will fail. You will struggle. Life will be hard sometimes. But **you have to keep pushing through**. This builds character. When you push through a hard time, the next hard time you encounter will be easier to get through. Why? Because you proved to yourself that you can get through anything.

That belief is a huge part of daily self improvement.

Another tip to help push through tough times is to take it one day at a time. Too many times we go through a rough patch and think this is what our life will be from now on. This isn’t the case.

Take things one day at a time, and try to focus on the positive things from that day. In time, the tough times will pass.

**#15. Accept Change**

As mentioned above, part of pushing through tough times is all about accepting change. Nothing in life is forever. Things are constantly changing. We age every day, the seasons change every 3 months. It’s part of life. The sooner you can accept that change happens, the sooner you can begin to be the best you possible.

While it isn’t always easy to accept change, the sooner you do, the happier you will be.

**#16. Accept The Past**

Along the same lines of accepting change is also learning to accept the past. What is done is done. Nothing you can do now will ever change the past. It’s part of history. The only thing you can do is learn from the experience and move on, push forward. Forgive and move forward.

If you can’t learn to do that, you will never become the best person you can be. You will be focusing on the wrong things, the things you can’t change instead of the things you can change.

Let go of the past and focus on the good things you have now and the great things in store for your future. Your past made you who you are today, but it doesn’t have to define who you will be in the future.

**#17. Give Needlessly**

Part of self improvement is giving without obligation. When you give, be it food, time, your money, you show that the world is a decent place. You also increase your self-esteem and feel good about yourself and the world in general. Learn to pay it forward.

Note that I mentioned giving your time in addition to money. Volunteers are always needed to help out. Don’t think for a second that you can’t afford to give. You have the most valuable asset of all to give, your time.

**#18. Find A Mentor**

We all have those we look up to. Find a mentor who is successful at what you want to do and learn from them. Many successful people are more than willing to help out those who ask for help and are happy to take you under their wing.

By doing this, you will get great insight into what [**traits and habits make a person successful**](https://www.moneysmartguides.com/16-habits-wealthy-people) and what things you might be doing now that are holding you back.

Just be certain you work hard. While many people are willing to mentor, they don’t want to feel like you aren’t trying. So be sure to give all you can so you can learn everything you can.

**#19. Surround Yourself With Positive People**

Of all the tips to improve yourself I list, this is the one that is the toughest to begin using.

The old saying, you are the company that you keep, is true. If you are always hanging around with unmotivated people, you too will be unmotivated to succeed in life. On the other hand, if you hang around with successful people, [**you too will find success**](http://www.breathofoptimism.com/rules-for-success-succeeded/).

I have personal experience with this. I knew of a person in college. When I visited them over the summer, they were lifeless and uninterested in doing anything. It turns out all of her close friends at home were just skating by in life. Many of them dropped out of high school.

But when she was in college, with people that were motivated to become something in life, she was inspired, successful, and the life of the party. After college, she moved back home, isn’t using her degree and is just skating by.

The theme was her friends. The company she kept dictated how she was as a person. She finally got the courage to move away from home and her life changed. She got a great job in her field, met a great man, and now is Vice President of the company and has an amazing family.

Are there people in your life you would be better off no longer spending time with? I understand that pushing people out of your life is hard, but it is your life and you need to do what it best for you, regardless of how difficult it may be.

**#20. Reflect**

At the end of the day, reflect on what happened. Was it a good day? Even if bad things happened, find ways to spin them into something positive. In other words, don’t let the negative thoughts take root in your mind. Be thankful for all that happened to you today and vow to be an even better person tomorrow.

Start out noticing big things that happened since they will be the things in the front of your mind. But don’t overlook the little things like the amazing weather, the person that let you go ahead of them in line, etc. All of these things are things to be thankful for.

When you do this, you remember things that happened, that in the moment seemed insignificant. But these events had an impact on your overall day. By reflecting on them, you keep them in the front of your mind and can use them to improve yourself.

**Final Thoughts**

If you can follow these 20 self improvement tips, I am confident that you will become a better, more confident person in life. What have you got to lose other than how your life is now? Isn’t a better life worth the risk?

As I mentioned at the start of this article, take your time with these tips and cherry pick a few here and there to start with. Don’t overwhelm yourself by trying to tackle every tip at once. That is a recipe for failure.

Start small and slow and build other tips into your daily life as the weeks progress. Before you know it, you will start to see a change for the better. This will motivate you to keep pushing forward, improving yourself and improving your life each and every day.

You’ll come to find you have more energy, are happier and are more successful, all thanks to a few self improvement tips.