

SMILE in 2022

As 2021 draws to a close, **Grace Lordan** offers six life lessons rooted in the behavioural sciences that will make you SMILE.

This year I wrote a book called Think Big Take Small Steps and Build the Future you Want. The high levels of sales, translations into a dozen languages I will never learn to speak, and excellent reviews have given me an inflated sense of ego. I have now started giving life advice. Do not worry: it is rooted in lessons from the behavioural science literature, so it's quality assured.

As 2021 draws to a close, I offer six life lessons that will make you SMILE.

S: Stop and celebrate small and large events in your life

Pause. Spend time with loved ones, with your friends and on your own and acknowledge what you have achieved. It's a habit that will serve you well, and make you resilient when things aren't going your way

M: Make a life goal that you find purposeful

When you make the goal don't let fear, worry or constraints stand in the way of your goal. Next, figure out the small steps that will allow you get to your dream goal that you can do weekly. What is the experience you need to get? What additional skills will get you there? Map the experience and skills required to your small steps. Make these small steps part of your daily life and set off on the journey to achieve your goal. Just get on with it. Work hard, be tenacious and never let anyone tell you that you cannot get there. I am a great judge of character and know that you can and will get to where you want to go.

I: Integrity

Figure out your values and live your life in accordance to them. If you want to be happy at work – don't focus on happiness. Focus on working with integrity. If you want to be happy in life – don't focus on happiness. Focus on living with integrity.

If you invest in one skill in 2022 make it critical thinking. Use this new skill to scrutinise your own beliefs, and don't be afraid to change your mind on opinions, notions or ways of thinking that do not serve you or the better society you are trying to make.

Pay attention to the integrity of others. I personally pay attention to how the people around me treat the cleaner, the UBER driver and the wait staff. Trust me, if you ever have a coffee or a drink with me, I am much more interested in how you treat our server than me. If you too start insisting that respect is warranted to all persons regardless of personal characteristics, job position, backgrounds or political persuasion, provided they too are respecting others, this world would be a better place.

L: Luck

You are here today because of sustained effort and luck. Always remember that. Any outcome in life is a product of what we put in and the luck we have along the way. If you want to be successful start making your own luck. After all, the stories we tell about luck are usually rooted in opportunities born out of the people that we know or the places we find ourselves at. Get to know lots of different people, from lots of different backgrounds with views the same and different to yours. Be generous to the people in your network and they will be generous to you.

E: Enable others

I started The Inclusion Initiative one year ago at LSE because I know (in the spirit of LSE's understanding the causes of things) that the inclusion of different perspectives is good for business. It is not just the right thing to do for society. It absolutely impacts positively a firm's bottom line. You will have success in your life. On your journey enable others to do the same. Enable people who have different demographic characteristics, backgrounds and disciplines to yourself. Enable those that you see are being held back despite their skills, talent and ability for reasons that are unfair or discriminatory. Avoid at all times being in a silo and enable yourself by embracing 'the Latticework of Mental Models': learn all the big ideas and how they interrelate and more rational thinking will follow. This is all the easier if you already have people with different thinking styles and disciplines challenging you in your network.

So far, I have written about

S: Stopping and celebrating

M: Making a goal

I: Integrity

L: Luck

E: Enabling others

SMILE, of course, spells smile. My 6th life lesson I give to you is learn to lighten up. There is a rather compelling literature to suggest we are born smiling and laughing, and the amount we do so goes off a cliff when we enter the labour force. Yes, we get very serious when we get a job. And we don't see substantial increases in laughter, humour and smiling until we retire. Paradoxically, a light heart and working with humour has been shown to enhance productivity. Right now, the world has serious challenges to reckon with – a post-COVID recovery, fourth industrial revolution, discrimination, populism ... it's important you allow time for levity once in a while.

Wishing you happy holidays and lots of time to SMILE in 2022

Grace Jordan



Notes:

- *This blog post represents the views of the author(s), not the position of LSE Business Review or the London School of Economics.*
- *Featured [image](#) by [Avelino Calvar Martinez](#), under a [Burst](#) licence*
- *When you leave a comment, you're agreeing to our [Comment Policy](#).*