

The way to start creating a better life for yourself is to start using your mindset to your advantage. Strengthening it, fortifying it and working on it. And personally? I think mornings are the best time of day to do this. Why mornings? Let me count the ways . . .

1. You could die tomorrow, yo

I know with every fibre of my being that life is way too short for most of us. That we're only here for a short, finite period of time and *we are all going to be dead at some point in the (hope-fully) distant future.*

Yes, I know, I'm super fun to be around! But the whole 'life is short' shebang – this is firsthand shit. Maybe you know it firsthand, too. Maybe you've lost someone important to you, had a close call with cancer, or been through an awful divorce that made you reassess your life. Or maybe you know this *intellectually*, but the idea that 'you could get hit by a bus tomorrow' doesn't feel real to you.

Now, look, I don't necessarily think it's healthy to walk around with thoughts of our imminent mortality front and centre of our minds. That would be a terrible (and um, rather stressful) way to live. But I do think it's a good idea, on occasion, to hit pause, slow down, and view each day as an extraordinary opportunity in your life.

Mornings are *perfect for this*. Think about it: each morning is like a whiteboard that's been expunged of all the whiteboard marker, fresh and clean and beseeching you to scribble all over it.

In the words of Maya Angelou: 'This is a beautiful day. I've never seen this one before.'

2. Mornings are sacred

Early in the morning, the world is quiet. The only living things awake other than you are the kookaburras in the gum trees (and on Mondays, the garbage men). Mornings provide you with a rare, precious gift. No, not frankincense or myrrh.

Time.

If you don't have small delightful children, it might even be 'me time'. Selfish time. Fill-up-your-bucket-first time. Time to do something just for you, whether that's creating a delicious breakfast. Writing. Working out. Spending time with your partner.

For those of you who do have small delightful children. . . you may need to shift your mentality on your mornings. I used to exercise and write and 'set my intentions' and make wholesome smoothies for myself in the early morning. That's not possible anymore.

So I changed how I see my mornings. Now mornings are uninterrupted time with my family. I can drink my coffee as I watch Hakavai play with his blocks; I can read to him; I can watch his dad push him around the house on his balance bike; we can water the garden.

If you wait until the end of the day to do stuff that's important to you (exercise, read, give your family your uninterrupted attention, wash your Tahitian hair) it's highly likely *not* to happen. As the end of the day approaches, plans to go to the gym will get replaced by a glass of wine on the couch; your boss will decide another round of changes to that presentation is vital to the company's success; your mum will call you for one of her impromptu chats (read: hour-long monologue).

If it has to happen, it has to happen first.

3. You've got a full tank

Hopefully of petrol (or a fully charged solar-powered battery), but also of willpower! If you've had a good sleep and you're well rested, your willpower tank is refreshed, renewed and raring to go.

Roy Baumeister is one of the world's most influential and prolific psychologists (I mean, the man has published more than thirty books and authored hundreds of scientific papers). He researches willpower and self-control, and points out that the 'age-old adage "things will seem better in the morning" has nothing to do with daylight and everything to do with depletion. A rested will is a stronger will'.¹

Deciding which caviar to eat for breakfast, navigating the traffic on your tricycle, listening to your boss drone on about his new drone, sitting in a two-hour sales meeting, forcing yourself to order a salad rather than hot chips with gravy at lunch. All of these seemingly inconsequential decisions weaken your willpower. Think about how you usually feel at the end of the day. Does your willpower tank overflow to the level where you could challenge *Dodgeball's* White Goodman and taunt yourself with doughnuts?^{*} Or are you completely wrecked, and incapable of making a choice between Indian from Uber Eats or Italian from Deliveroo?[†]

I talk a lot about willpower and how to make the most of it in my digital course, School of Champions. Since this is a

^{*} You know – that scene where Ben Stiller's character White Goodman is hooked up to the electrocution machine, and every time he reaches for a doughnut, he electrocutes himself?

[†] This is me. Not implying it's you.

book ostensibly about happiness, and not willpower, I'll save you the lecture and succinctly say this:

You need a good night's sleep for a full tank of willpower.

Your willpower is strongest in the morning.

Decision-making weakens your willpower.

4. Research says so

Research has shown that how we start our day has a massive impact on how the rest of our day flows. You run the day or the day runs you, yeah? Morning people have been shown to be happier, more productive and more content with their lives.² It seems even our brains are bigger when we first wake up.³



The gist of all that? Mornings are good. Enjoying a serene morning in whatever way you see fit (exercising, spending time with progeny, tweezing toe hairs) correlates with a happier and more productive life.