



The Green Hub Project for Teens

Life Skills for Teens

Chapter 8

In this session we will be talking about how being playful can make a difference to our mood.

We also discuss the concept of being in a state of flow and what this means to us. Then we will talk about the concept called Savouring, and how this can help us keep a good feeling inside us for a while.

We also talk about the unexpected positive benefits by volunteering. Then we will touch on perfectionism and the concept called impostor syndrome.

Finally, we add a few words about the power our devices have over us and how we can hack this feeling and claim some more time back.

Bringing playfulness into your daily life.

Scientist Catherine Price who is the author of ‘The power of fun’, did a study of 900 students. She found that when playfulness was added to tasks the students experienced less stress and also had better coping strategies.

She also found that what she called ‘true fun’ materializes when we experience the combination of three psychological states, playfulness, connection and flow. Fun feels good, and it is good for us. Playfulness is a quality of light heartedness that allows you to do things in everyday life just for the pleasure of it.

Connection

Connection refers to the feeling of having a special shared experience with another person.

Flow

The state of flow describes the state of being **fully engaged and focused**, often to the point that you **lose track of time**.

The other state she talks about is what she calls ‘fake fun’, this could for instance be mindful binge watching on Netflix or scrolling on social media. This is not flow.

Fake fun is her term for activities that take our time, but they don’t inspired playfulness or connection.





What are true fun and fake fun activities for you?

The following points are often associated with flow activities

- ✓ Some effort.
- ✓ Concentration.
- ✓ Rewarding task.
- ✓ Serenity and calm.
- ✓ Lose sense of time and space.
- ✓ Forget what is going on around you.
- ✓ Fun, joyful and playful.

Reflections for you:

- **When did you last experience flow? How did this feel?**
- Which activities usually give you the flow state?
- How could you make sure you do these more often in your weekly life?
- How could you bring in more sense of humour and playfulness to studying and revision?

The brain wakes up from humour, so it will remember things more when it has been fun!





Savouring (Fred Bryant)

This is a techie term from positive psychology where you use the thoughts and actions to increase intensity, duration and appreciation of a positive experience and emotion. The opposite to savouring is dampening. It kind of speaks for itself.

Simply put, if you are seeing a beautiful view, hearing a great song, or having a great experience, stay still and pay attention, keep it in your mind, or just savour the experience inside you to keep the feeling longer. It is a way to be mindfully engaged and aware of your feelings during positive events.

Reflections for you:

- **When did you last have a moment when you could do savouring?**
- Next time you are in a moment like that, stop and pause and kind of take a mental picture in your head.
- It can really make a difference on your emotional state.

Can volunteering help us to feel better?

- ✓ Volunteering **releases helpful Dopamine**, which is the hormone that can increase motivation.
- ✓ When you volunteer you also **meet new people and make new friends**.
- ✓ Volunteering can help you **feel less stressed and calmer**.
- ✓ It **takes you out of yourself** and focuses on others or something else.
- ✓ Did you know that studies have also shown that people who volunteer **have a better immune system?**

Finding chances to do volunteering in your life.

Look at the examples we gave and see if there is any way you can bring volunteering into your life. Not only is it good for your CV, but you will meet like-minded people, grow your confidence and increase your purpose in life.





Reflections for you:

- **Where could you try to volunteer?**
- Why not start a list and see if there is somewhere you could help out once a week?

Perfectionism

This is such an important topic and almost too big to talk about here, but if you struggle with all your work having to be perfect, then you might have perfectionism tendencies.

When we have perfectionism tendencies, we spend so much time making our work, just so, just perfect, and it can really consume us. We can get really absorbed in this process, and only think about this and nothing else.

Perfection tendency individuals can also struggle with the prospect of exam results, and can get really anxious and worried about them.

Top tip

The tip here is to first recognise it. Then to start observing how it make you feel, and become aware of it. How much energy is this taking from you? Is it worth it? Could you spend time doing something else instead?

It is important to know that perfectionism isn't a weakness or failure, but we can learn how to manage it so it doesn't consume us.

Reflections for you

- If you recognize this in yourself, write it down and reflect on when and where this happens to you.
- Become aware of how this impacts you, but also those around you.
- Can you find someone to reflect on this with?





Imposter syndrome.

This is a state of mind which many, many people struggle with around the world and of all ages.

Imposter syndrome can really hold us back as we can think that we are not worthy to be somewhere, that someone, one day will find out that we are not who we are, or that we are a fraud.

Many adults and professional people feel like this, and in doing so, can let others take their place at work or whilst studying. This is such a shame, but imposter syndrome can do this.

By learning about yourself, and truly finding your inner strength you can claim your place at the table, and feel absolutely fine about being there. It might take a while, but hang in there. You are as worthy as anyone else to be where you are.

It can really help to find a mentor, or someone to help you find out about yourself.

Your devices

What influence do our electronic devices have on us?

And how can we manage any negative effect on us?

Studies show that devices can actually reduce our enjoyment when we do an activity. Isn't that amazing and a kind of shame?

- **This is about whether if it's on, or not.**
- **And whether you look at it or not.**

We can therefore miss out on good experiences in life when we are glued to our phones.

Did you know that a 2017 study showed that 91% of students were never without their phones and 46% said they could not live without it.

That is a lot of power to give to a device!





Top Tips for managing your device

- ✓ **Take control** of the settings.
- ✓ Try to put it on **silent**.
- ✓ Shift the colour setting to **Black and White** to reduce the false dopamine effect.
- ✓ **Reduce the notifications** from your various apps as much as possible.
- ✓ Use apps to **turn off social media and WhatsApp** when you need to study or focus.
- ✓ **Put it in another room** when you study.
- ✓ **Talk to your friends about you all turning your phones off at the same time** so you get 8-9 hours sleep and will not suffer from FOMO. (Fear of missing out)

Reflections for you:

- **Could you give yourself a screen detox, or a screen break? Maybe leave it at home when you go for a walk?**
- Turn down the notifications when you are with other people. If you can, write down how this felt, how hard it was, and that you achieved it.
- It is hard to fight the screen, so give yourself a pat on the back when you do!

IMPORTANT: Your feedback is really helpful to us...

We'd love to hear more from you about how you think this course was for you?

- Have you got something and help from it, and anything we can do to make the course even better?
- Please click on the link below and tell us what you think – It won't take more than a few minutes.
- **The link is here:** <https://bit.ly/4aKjkd0>
- **THANK YOU!**





Final words from Tone

Thank you so much for studying with me. I do hope you have found these sessions of help, and remember, keep them with you. You might go back to them again in the future, just like the man who had an accident did when he used his mindfulness techniques from sixth form.

**Remember, you are brilliant, you are unique
and nobody else can be like you.**

I'd also like to remind you that we would be very grateful if you could let us know how you found this course, what worked for you and what could we improve on.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to Professor Laurie Santos at Yale University and her team for inspiring me to do this course for you all.

I would also like to thank my young evaluators, Abbey, Katie, Tilda and Isla for critiquing this course as well as Jess and Karin who both work in Psychology. Your input has been invaluable.

Best wishes to you all and remember you can contact me about any questions you may have on what we've talked about over the last 8 weeks.

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