

10 Life Tweaks I've Been Enjoying Lately

I'm skeptical of "simple tricks to get a better life."

If you aren't working on the core stuff (integrity, productivity, courage, kindness, etc), all the modifications and habits and gear in the world won't work to improve your core sense of well-being.

But when you are working on yourself, there are some real "life tweaks" that can help you down the very, very long path to "the good life":

1. Roll your windows down. This has made my morning and evening commutes much more refreshing. Letting in the outside air invigorates me. I get to soak up the sights, sounds, smells, and feeling of travel in a richer way.

2. Go for walks in sunlight. Winter sucks. The days are too short, and if you're not careful, you could spend all of your week days in darkness. I've become more intentional about incorporating walks outside into my schedule, whether during a break in the action at work or immediately after getting home (and beating traffic to do just that).

3. Do indoor activities outside. I've become a big fan of taking my reading outdoors. There's no reason not to, if you have good weather and a nice hillside. You can soak up vitamin D and other healthy nature stuff while engaging your mind.

4. Make private activities social. Instead of re-watching *Lord of the Rings* alone, I hosted three viewing parties by showing the movie with my movie projector. We didn't finish all the films, but we did have great conversations over pizza. I got to introduce great people to each other. And I got to experience some of my favorite movies with some of my favorite people.

5. Get rustic. I've been burning candles a bit more lately. Natural fire is a nice, soothing nighttime and morning alternative to harsh electric light. I've also been loving how my fake wood stove fireplace gives my apartment a peaceful country home vibe.

6. Use a sleeping mask. This really does help to block out the elements better. And the feeling of smooth, soft fabric on your face is a calming aid to sleep.

7. Get a roommate. There's nothing like having a roommate to shame you/force you into getting up a decent time and being a responsible, decent, clean human being.

8. Keep your word. Not much of what you'd call a life hack, but coming through on an obligation gives you a nice kick of good feelings (the pro-social chemical oxytocin,

probably). Others will trust you more, but more importantly, you'll trust yourself more.

9. Prepare for your week on Sunday night. I've begun to not only scope out my week's work on Sunday nights, but to break it up day by day. I do this for my direct report as well. It lets us both get started on the workweek with confidence in our plan of attack and some certainty about how we'll be spending time each day.

10. Enjoy other peoples' pets. When I need a fix of dog time, I'll go down to Piedmont Park, particularly its dog park. There I get to watch dogs at play (they get into wolf mode around other dogs). I get all the laughs and all the good feeling of watching dogs and their masters. And I don't have to do any of the work of pet ownership.