

Good morning Ms Cheng, teachers and students,

It's a casual Tuesday, and you dash back home after school. After hours of lessons, of course you deserve a short break. That usually involves just a few hours of 'Youtubing', 'Instagramming' and 'Spotifying'. Before you realize it, it's already 6. However, you can only pay full attention with a full stomach, so it only makes sense for you to put off your work until after dinner. Having eaten, you feel more energized, but it's 9:31. That seems incomplete, so you have no choice but to finally start working at 10:00. At that moment, you start to regret because it is impossible to finish English Builder, Homework A, and History Workbook with the time left. Does what I've mentioned just now ring a bell? If it does, it's probably time for you to start building new work habits.

When it comes to building good work habits, we often talk the talk, but we seldom walk the walk. We know the SMART principle; we know the correct ways to draft a timetable; we know 100 apps for us to monitor ourselves, but let's be frank, we seldom use them to cultivate useful habits. Why? That's because we lack the motivation to do so. That's why in my sharing today, I will focus on how we can motivate ourselves to nurture good habits.

First, think in future tense instead of present tense. Living in the age of technology, we have the propensity to be satisfied promptly. We want to feel less bored immediately, so we browse Instagram; we desire instant visual gratification, so we watch Youtube videos. We try to entertain our present selves but not our future selves. Therefore, if you want to cultivate useful habits, try to have your future self's best interest at heart and think about how your action can benefit him or her. For example, when you are struggling to make a decision between the latest movie and revision, take a second to think about which one can help your future self suffer less. Then, you'll know which way to go.

Apart from having your future self in mind, it is also important to make it easier to cultivate useful habits. Let's face it. Useful habits, be that reading for 30 minutes daily or revising for 2 hours a day, can be strenuous, but you can make the start of these activities easier. A study by Harvard University shows that for procrastinators, it's not the task itself but starting the task that is the most difficult. As soon as they have started, they will usually be able to get going. For example, lately, I have been trying to nurture this habit of listening to audiobooks every morning. For that purpose, I have especially downloaded the audiobooks because I know my sleepy self in the morning will find even opening Google, accessing an audiobook website and logging in difficult. You can do this as well. If you want to make reading or revision habitual, try to put your books or the materials you need as close to you as possible so that you do not need to make an extra effort to unzip your bag or get the books from your bookshelf. That way, it will be a lot easier for you to incorporate reading or revision into your routine.

Lastly, remember Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither are your habits. Don't get too frustrated if you cannot commit yourself to doing something regularly right away. Keep reflecting, evaluating and improving, and you are one step closer to building good work habits.