

Life truths

With social-media inspo quotes at saturation point, **Kara Byers** thought it was time to look at #lyf and learn to make the most of it. If your future self had a message, it might look like this.

TO KNOW

1 Let them say no

It's simple: you don't ask, you don't get. You have to ask for what you want – an ice-cream, a pay rise or an orgasm. The people that we truly admire are those courageous enough to let their desires be known. If you communicate what you want directly, constructively and with an open heart, no-one will get offended. Holding yourself back and being cool are emotional straitjackets. You're not going to miss out on the next rung of the career ladder or your future husband just because you asked. Being cautious does little to protect you from heartbreak.

2 Social media updates aren't reality

Of course, we all know it. The image we curate for social media isn't totally real (oh, you don't take 10 crap selfies before you strike gold and post? Liar!), but it doesn't hurt to remember that everyone else is playing the same game – especially when you're 47 weeks deep into stalking the Instagram account of the ex-girlfriend of a guy you just went on a Tinder date with. If you can't channel social-media hero Kurt Coleman and own that selfie-obsessed space while remaining true to yourself, step away from the screen.

3 Sex is easy, love starts with you

Ain't nothing wrong with going out and gettin' yours, but if what you really want is a relationship, forget settling for FWB. Yes, you have that friend whose f*ck buddy became Boyfriend of the Year, but that's such a rarity it could even have its own *Mythbusters* episode. If you want a boyfriend who will spoon you all night, hold your hair while you barf and who watches Netflix and chills with you, you have to love and value yourself first. Don't settle, don't stoop, know your worth and seek out your male equivalent. He is out there – we promise!

4 The five-year plan is a scam

Ah, the interview favourite: "Where do you see yourself in five years?" (Er, working for someone with a bit more imagination, TBH.) Goals are great – they give us direction, and with the right work ethic, ambition and sheer grit, we can achieve anything. But don't hold on to them too tightly; pursuing dreams should never be a fixed plan. If we stick too rigidly to our aims, our experience can be dominated by a sense of failure or a loss of motivation. As girlboss Amy Poehler wisely put it: "Surf your life, don't plant your feet."

5 Say something nice to your body every day

The body you have is what you'll be living in for your entire life, so just quit hating it already. When you look in the mirror, hone in on what you like, not what you dislike. As you age, your body will change – just go with it. In 10 years you will look back on pictures of yourself now and think "Man, I was such a babe". Start living that now.

8 Sometimes you're the problem

Next time you find yourself in a conflict, step back and have a rational look at the situation. Are you creating the drama? Is the way you're behaving provoking the problem? It takes humility to accept that we might be part of the issue facing us, even when we're working on being our best selves. The good news is that if you are the problem, you are also the solution. So Yoda, right?

7 Guilt, anger and regret are useless emotions

Shoulda, woulda, coulda... whatever. Life is full of *Sliding Doors* moments, paths we could have taken and things we wish we'd done differently – but it's done. Forget regret and worry. No-one looks back and says "I wish I'd spent more time worrying". If you must apologise, do it graciously, and only look back to find lessons that will help you grow and stop you repeating that mistake.

6 Tell someone to f*ck off, and mean it

Putting yourself first isn't selfish, it's vital. Surround yourself with positive people and ditch the ones – lovers, friends, colleagues and even family – who bring you down. If you're habitually bored, angry, insecure, anxious or depressed in their presence, find your nearest exit. If they keep contacting you, tell them to f*ck off. You can do it politely, but don't rationalise. Everyone has the right to seek happiness; yours is just where they're not. It's no-one's fault. Remember, you are the company that you keep, so choose wisely.

9 Don't get it perfect, get it going

If you're a musician, do it every day. If you're an actor, do it every day. If you're a writer, do it every day. A rollerskater... every day. Whatever you like doing, do it every day. Whose permission do you need? Your mum's? Your best friend's? That of colleagues? It's not their life, it's yours. Do what you love. Don't be paralysed by the quest for perfection – you will fall, but you'll gradually get better with each and every stumble.

10 Heartbreak is actually a wonderful thing

Yes, rejection hurts, but it really is only temporary. Love doesn't exist to make us happy – its purpose is to make us grow. When we love somebody, we give them the power to hurt us. Loving someone means handing over your heart and saying "do your worst". They might be a douchebag, but your heart isn't. It might seem a little silly and illogical, but it's infallible at one thing: knowing exactly what will make you flourish. Go forth and get your heart broken. Wear that fragility on your sleeve, offer it to the people you care for. If an affair ends, shed a tear, move on and know that your next foray into love will be better than the last. #

Advice is great and should be **gratefully received**, but it's always based on someone else's experience. It should only act as a basis from which you make decisions. There's more **power** and **freedom** in owning your life completely than there is in making a 'mistake'. Own your own life and the fact you can **improve** or **rewrite** your story.

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"Don't be afraid if you don't like what everyone else pretends to love." —Emma Watson

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