

Eyes Wide Shut?

7 skills you can teach your kids to stop them sleepwalking into their future.

Hello and welcome to [lifehacksforkids](http://lifehacksforkids.co.uk).

Our mission is to help you to teach your children the vital 'Life Skills' they are going to need to be successful in the modern world.

If you're serious about preparing your kids to be successful adults is relying solely on education and an interesting CV good enough or...

are your kids sleepwalking into their future?

Both parenting and the education system play a dual role in preparing our children to become independent and successful adults.

The education system has a clearly defined role. But what about parenting? How much is expected of us in terms of helping our children to realise their full potential?

Of course we all do our best to encourage and support our children in their day to day lives, but is that enough?

Not for what lies ahead.

so what questions should we be asking?

How can we give our kids the best possible start in life if we haven't understood what the world will look like when they enter adulthood? It's a bit like preparing them for an Olympic event, without having any idea which one it's going to be.

In order to stop our kids sleepwalking into the future, we first need to wake up ourselves.

There are 3 vital questions we need to ask ourselves:

1. What sort of future do our children need preparing for?
2. What skills will they need?
3. What is our plan to help our children develop these skills?

Sadly we don't have a crystal ball to tell us what the future holds, but there are certain future themes that are abundantly clear.

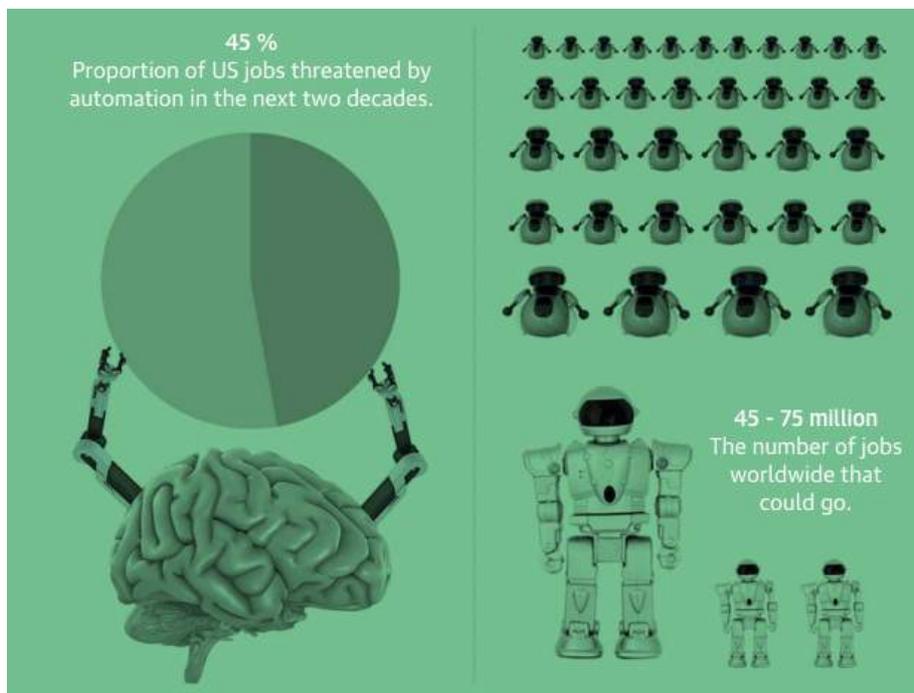
a peek into the future

The world is changing fast, at a seemingly unrelenting pace. [The Future of Work: jobs and skills in 2030](#), a fantastic piece of research by The UK Commission for Employment and Skills highlights themes and potential scenarios that will affect our children in 2030 when the job market beckons.

From that study we have highlighted 4 key themes that we believe will have the biggest impact on our children.

1. automation and technology

The automation of processes and services means that more and more jobs will be done by machines. In this excellent piece in the [Guardian](#) they cite a report by McKinsey that suggests that between 40 and 75m jobs will disappear worldwide in the next 10 years.



*image source: The Guardian; 'Five Ways Work will Change

So what's new? The big difference is that this will now include the so called white collar jobs. As algorithms become more adept and "intelligent" when analysing and interpreting information, well paid jobs that were traditionally the preserve of the educated middle class, Accountancy, Law, Banking and Medicine are next in the firing line.

However, with threat comes opportunity. As our lives, our work and the means of production become more digitised, the creative thinkers who demonstrate the entrepreneurial attitude required to work out how to add value and make things happen will be the masters of this new universe.

2. a networked & educated global job market

Within the next 10 years 40% of all young people with a degree will come from China and India. The EU and the USA will only contribute 25%.

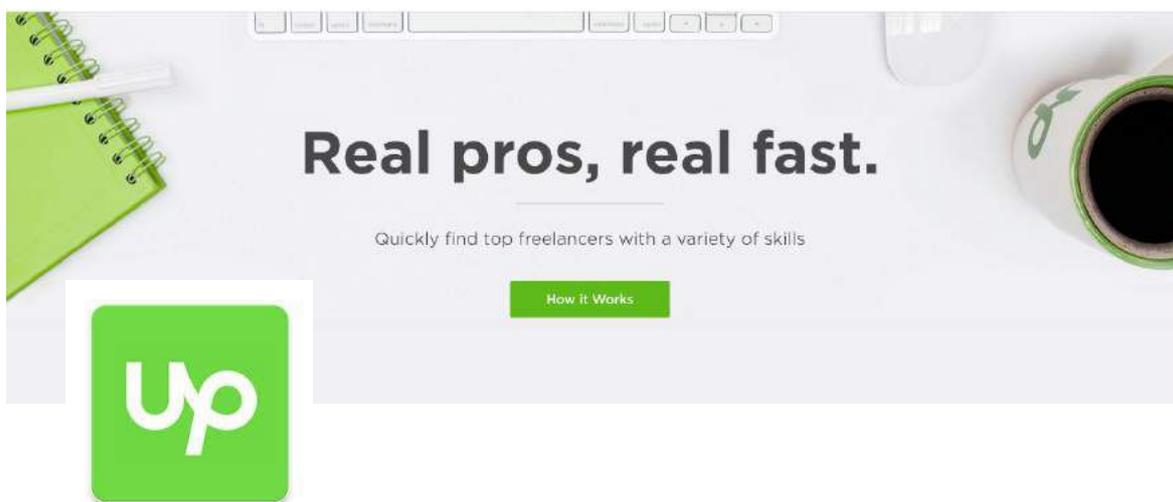
Employers will be able to connect with and choose from a well-educated global talent pool, which means that our children will face more competition for jobs than any generation before them.

And that's not just the big employers either. Platforms like 'Upwork' enable businesses of any size to outsource work to a cheaper, often more qualified labour market within a few mouse clicks.

So in the face of this overwhelming competition, our kids will need a different set of skills to stand out.

As parents we already recognise that it's a competitive world out there, and so we want to give our kids the edge. In the UK alone, parents spend more than £6bn each year on private after-school tuition.

But this is money spent on getting better grades or adding sports or musical accomplishments to their CVs-which as we've just highlighted, is kind of missing the point.



3. new ways of working

Employers are shrinking their full-time workforce to a minimum. Project-based employment is becoming more prevalent, with workers forming part of a “global team” set up to solve a particular problem or work task. Employers can pick a team from a global pool of talent to work on specific projects.

It’s predicted that Millennials- those born between 1980 and 2000- will have more than 15 different jobs throughout their working lives. You can read more about this new gig economy in the previously cited [Guardian](#) piece.

For the first time there will also be four different generations working together- as the over 65’s become a growing part of a multi-generational workforce. Not only that, our children will also need to work with people from diverse cultures.

So our kids will need confidence, and collaboration and communication skills to be able to work with people of diverse ages, experience, backgrounds, values and beliefs.



4. transference of risk to the individual

All of the above places more onus and more risk on the individual than ever before. But this has been the direction of travel for a while.

Whereas the state used to provide your education for free, you now have to weigh up the benefit of a degree vs. being thousands of pounds in debt. As for providing you with a pension in retirement- well you have to fund that yourself too.

Once again though, threat becomes opportunity- if you are prepared that is. Those who are adaptable in the face of uncertainty, flexible in thought and deed, who can spot opportunities and create value, will thrive.

So, what can we do about it?

The aforementioned report into the '[Future of the workplace in 2030](#)' states that workers (our kids) should:

“Focus on development of key skills & attributes that will be at a premium in the future, including resilience, adaptability, resourcefulness, enterprise, cognitive skills (such as problem solving), and the core business skills for project based employment.”

The bad news is that there is no white knight riding to the rescue. There's no room to teach this stuff in our schools, our teachers are stretched and stressed enough as it is. So it's down to us.

With this in mind [lifeforforkids](#) has done the research, sought out the expertise, and created an easy to follow guide to help parents teach their kids these vital skills.

A plan of action

7 key life skills to teach your kids and the
lifehacks to help you do it.

1. adaptability

Our children will need to be adaptable and flexible particularly in the work environment- so why not use real life situations to teach them these skills?

ask for help

Often we don't ask for help for quite personal reasons, but it is sometimes the quickest and most effective solution. A new person brings a fresh perspective, new ideas and an extra pair of hands if required- a very valuable lesson to pass on.

re-frame the situation

Re-framing helps you to choose what to focus on. It can turn a negative into a positive, or simply change the way you look at the world. Questions you can ask your child that may help them re-frame a situation are:

- ✓ How is this change useful?
- ✓ How would X react? (X being someone that your child admires)

what's the worst that could happen?

We like the idea that Tim Ferriss talks about in his book, the '[4 Hour Work Week](#),' when faced with a difficult situation, you ask...

what's the worst that could happen?

Once you have defined the nightmare worst case scenario and can understand and accept it, you can move forward. It is no longer an unknown quantity and is consequently less scary.

Defining it (make sure to write it down) also gives your mind the opportunity to look for solutions, which immediately transforms how you feel about it.

2. entrepreneurial mindset

Forged from a combination of spotting & solving problems and then having the confidence & motivation to do something about it. A vital skill for our children to learn, whether they want to start their own business or make progress inside one.

ask the right questions

Opportunity spotting often comes about as a result of asking the right questions. Questions that begin with 'How can...' are the right type of question, their structure is designed to help you to come up with solutions.

So ask your kids lots of 'How can...' questions, as often as you can to help train them to think like this.

- ✓ How can we... feed the family and spend 20% less money?
- ✓ How can we... get you ready for school in half the time?
- ✓ How can we... save enough money to have a weekend away?
- ✓ How can we... make sure that you guys do your homework every night

necessity is the mother of invention

Next time when your child asks for something that they want, say 'Yes- but you need to find a way to pay for it.' This will force your child to work out if they really want it and if they do, come up with ideas and ways that they can pay for it. This enforced creativity will help them to develop the mindset of an entrepreneur. The [TedTalk](#) below describes this process and how it works.



TED

3. problem solving & creative thinking

Our brains have a tendency to put things in neat little boxes. The ability to resist boundaries and connect the dots that others cannot see will be one of the key ways that your child can stand out against the competition.

think like a grandmaster

The key to helping your child develop the problem solving skill is to teach them to give their brains lots and lots of options. They could ask for help (see Adaptability hack), but if they want to solve problems themselves, we like the way that James Altucher does it, he thinks like a [Chess Grandmaster](#).

Ask them to write down the problem at the top of a blank page and then start writing down ALL of the solutions that are possible (even if they sound ridiculous). They must think of at least 20 options, as this will make their brain sweat, and will ensure that they produce some great material to work with- not just what was in the little box at the start.

4. teamwork and collaboration

Teamwork is all about recognising that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The younger your child is the more self-orientated they'll be so getting them to recognise this can be challenging.

playing computer games together

There are some great family games out there that foster creative thinking, logic, imagination and teamwork. Playing these games together develops all of these skills. To make sure these lessons are crystallised in our children's minds, it is important to ask our 'growth mindset' learning questions afterwards. Below is a list of great games that can be played together as a family and will help to develop teamwork and collaboration with your kids. The games can all be bought and played on a platform called [Steam](#).



5. effective communication

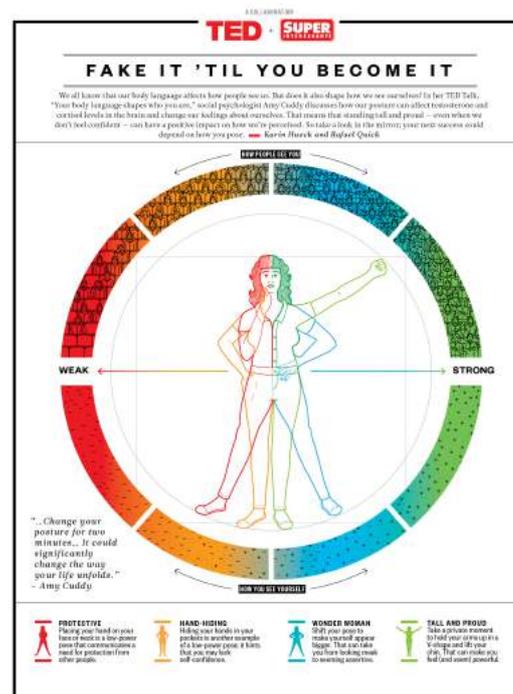
Communication is more than just what is said and how you say it. Research shows the importance of body-language, or non-verbal communication, and the relationship between your body, mind, behaviour and the outcomes that you get.

the power pose

Social Psychologist Amy Cuddy really gets to the heart of this effective body language in her [TedTalk](#) and provides your kids (and you) with a fantastic technique you can use to feel more confident in any given situation.

It's really important for your kids to make the connection that how you position your body has an influence over how you feel and how you feel influences your thoughts and behaviour.

So practice your Amy Cuddy power pose for 2 minutes one morning with the kids and then check back with them in the evening, see how the day went and share your experiences.



6. resilience

Research across different industries, schools, social groups and nationalities has shown that the most critical determinant of success is not talent or ability, but rather how much grit, determination and resilience you have.

These qualities are often forged out of hardship, or overcoming a difficult experience. Without wishing to artificially create one of these for your child we can instead turn to the work of Stanford University Psychologist Carol Dweck.

Dweck talks about having a growth (as opposed to a fixed) mindset and says that resilience comes about by recognising that failure is not an absolute outcome, but instead, a stepping stone on the learning curve towards achieving your goal. So how do we encourage this mindset in our kids?

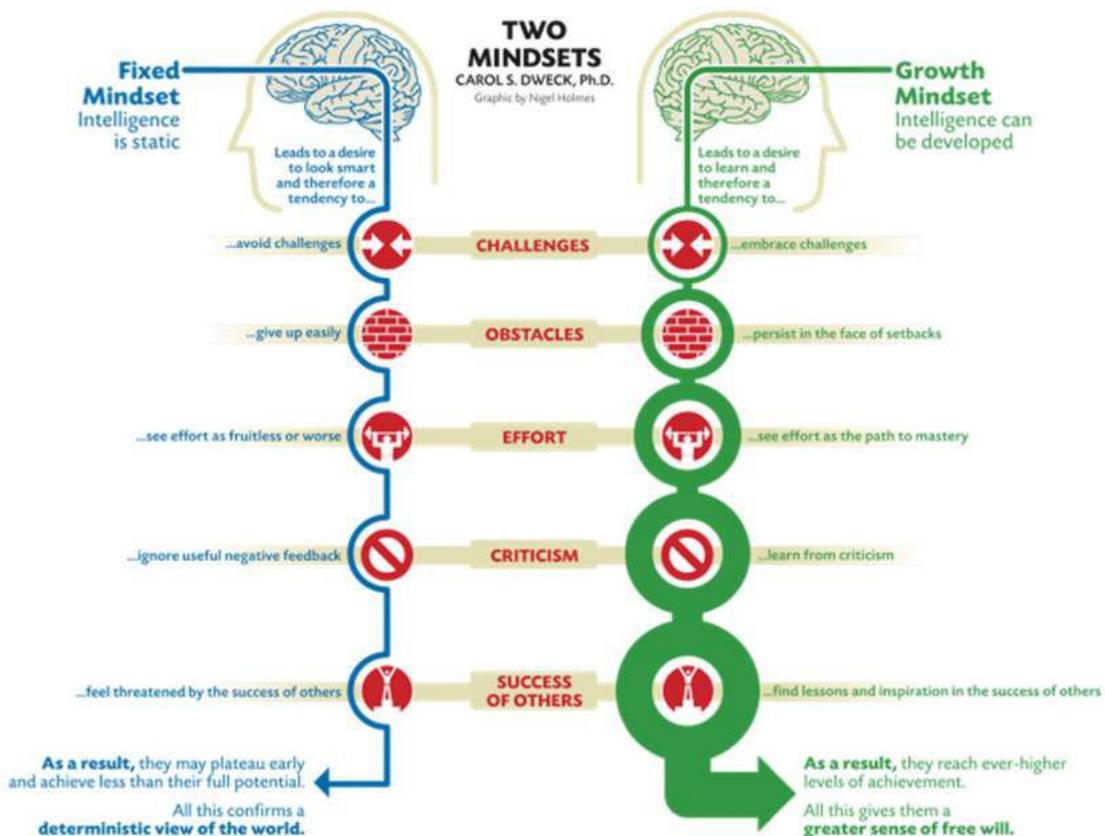
praise your kids for their efforts not their results

In the quest to raise confident kids with high self-esteem we seem to have developed a modern affliction of praising our children continually for their results.

How often have you heard yourself say “That’s amazing/ you’re so clever/ you’re really talented”, even over a few random squiggles on a page.

Unfortunately when reality bites and your child realises that they are not in fact Leonardo Da Vinci, they are going to wind up very disappointed. It turns out that we are praising them for the wrong things. Try praising them instead for their actions, their effort and behaviour:

- ✓ You worked really hard at that, well done!
- ✓ I’m impressed with the way that you didn’t give up there.
- ✓ I like the way that you went for it, even though you weren’t sure



*image source: <http://nigelholmes.com/>

7. creative thinking and imagination

In order to develop the creative muscle it needs to be used on a regular basis. Hello six pack...

James Altucher has a daily practice where he comes up with at least 10 ideas on a random subject EVERY SINGLE DAY- an example of both regular practice and an artificial constraint.

Explain to your child that they don't have to worry about having terrible ideas, in fact most of them will be, but in order to have good ideas, you need to have lots of bad ones.

So create a time for creative thinking. Take 10 minutes after dinner, before bedtime or during a car journey to try out the following two hacks with your children.

10 ideas

Take any family topic, where to go on holiday, what to do for the weekend, family dinners- and get the whole family to come up with a list of ideas. Do 10 ideas per family member. Have prizes for the best and worst ideas, the person who came up with the most and the silliest.

hack 11: imagination

Randomly think of 4 objects or things, then create a story that has to include them in some way. Everybody around the table has to have a go.

Thank you for reading this booklet.

If you found it useful please feel free to share. If you and your family test out any of the activities above we would love to hear from you.

Why not tweet us your favourite from the list, or tag a friend on Facebook with the activity you think their family would most enjoy?

Likewise, if you have any great ideas that you would like to share or you want more content like this please visit www.lifeforhackforkids.co.uk or find us on Twitter or Facebook.