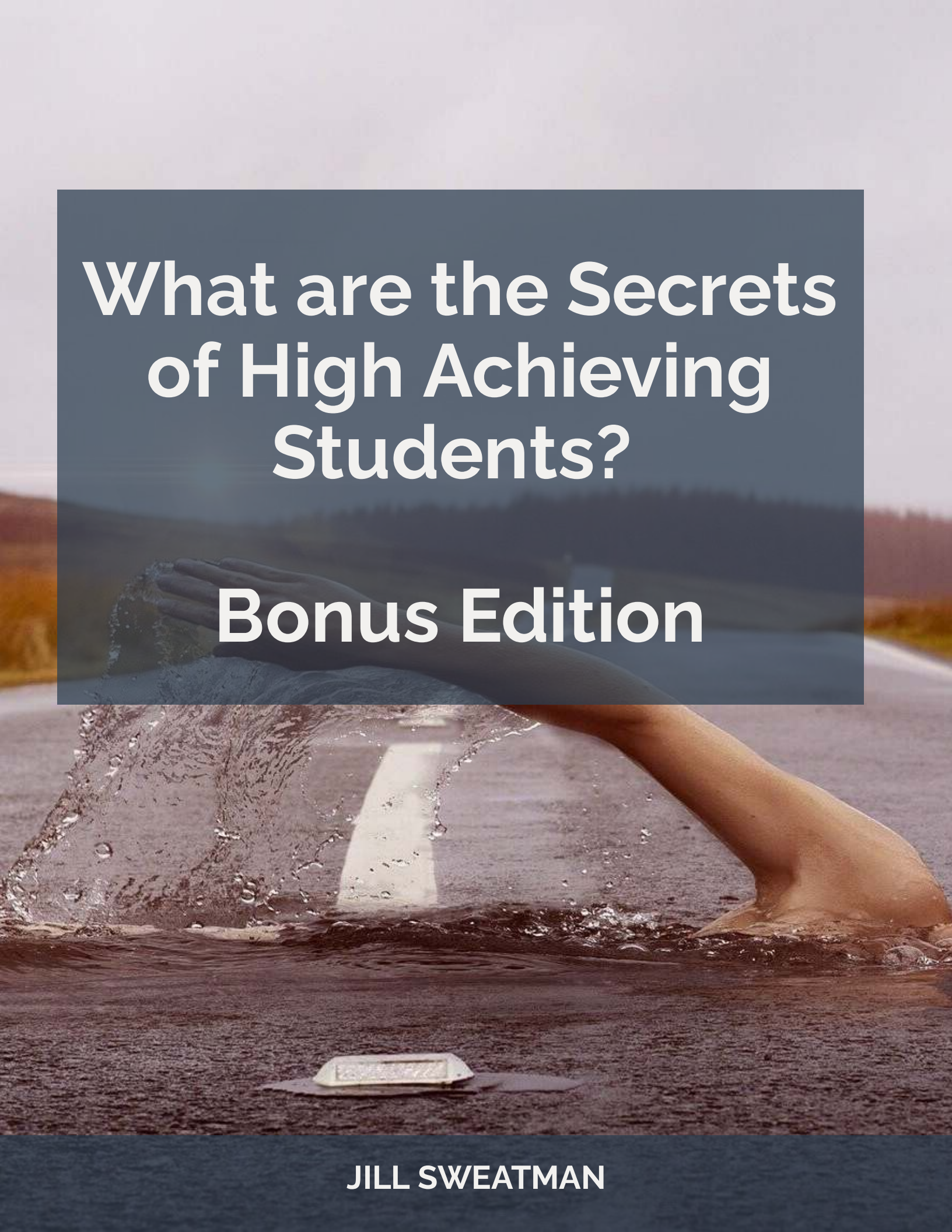


The background image shows a person's arm and hand splashing into a body of water. The water is dark and rippling, with many droplets visible in the air. A small, light-colored object, possibly a piece of paper or a small toy, is floating on the water's surface in the foreground. The overall scene suggests a moment of discovery or achievement.

# What are the Secrets of High Achieving Students?

## Bonus Edition

JILL SWEATMAN

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Table Of Contents

|                                                                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| About Jill Sweatman                                                                                     | 3  |
| What are the Secrets of High Achieving Students?                                                        | 4  |
| Brain Whisper Tip #1: Ask Questions.                                                                    | 6  |
| Brain Whisper Tip #2: Volunteer.                                                                        | 8  |
| Brain Whisper Tip #3: Take Notes. Always.                                                               | 10 |
| Brain Whisper Tip #4: Keep a Paper Diary.                                                               | 13 |
| Brain Whisper Tip #5: Sit at the Front of the Class.                                                    | 14 |
| Brain Whisper Tip #6: Be on Time. In fact, be head of time.                                             | 16 |
| Brain Whisper Tip #7: Change Your Approach to Every Lesson.                                             | 17 |
| Brain Whisper Tip #8: Make an Effort to Develop a Cooperative Relationship with your Teachers & Tutors. | 19 |
| Brain Whisper Tip #9: Use your Initiative. Seek Opportunities to Apply Your Learning.                   | 20 |
| Brain Whisper Tip #10: Work Smarter. Make Time Work for You.                                            | 21 |
| Further Information                                                                                     | 23 |

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## About Jill Sweatman

**The BRAIN WHISPERER™**, Jill Sweatman is a Neuroscience Specialist in Education, Learning & Development. She is a keen researcher of internet use and is a committee member of the Network for Internet Investigation & Research Australia and G100 Country Chair for Child Care & Protection.

She has been a guest lecturer at the University of New South Wales for over two decades with a background as a classroom teacher in Australia, and the last 10+ years as a parent coach and private tutor, Jill Sweatman has worked at the coalface of education continuing with her work as a parent coach and private tutor.



With studies in family therapy with the PACT Institute, US, she holds a unique insight into family home dynamics and what it takes to enable children and teenagers to be successful independent learners in any environment.

Jill's early childhood was spent in South Korea where she experienced home schooling and has travelled and worked extensively around the globe with government and corporate organisations.

Today she is drawing on her vast neuroscience knowledge combined with her years of teaching, coaching and getting results. Her speciality areas are Mathematics and English and she aims to instil in every student the ability to ***learn how to learn***, so that they can be independent students for life.

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

Jill Sweatman is available for keynotes, presentations, private student tutoring and parent coaching.

There are many free resources at [www.jillsweatman.com](http://www.jillsweatman.com).

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## What are the Secrets of High Achieving Students?

**Strategic Success Study Hacks from The BRAIN WHISPERER™  
– BONUS EDITION.**

**Parents, carers and educators** – may I invite you to share this eBook with the children or students in your life? Encourage them to design and maintain solid study habits that will support them throughout the year and beyond.

**Students** – How do you make EVERY lesson count this year when every week matters – especially if you are in senior high school Year 11 or Year 12 or early university?

Every week matters and helps you to form solid study habits. Do not waste any week to capture learning, revise and give yourself the absolute best chance to recall information when it counts. There are sound neuroscience reasons for the following strategies and tips to ensure you attain the results you deserve.

**In fact, every class matters.** The secret is how to make each class and lesson count for YOU. This article includes the top ten tips from the collated research I have gathered over the last decade.

**Be strategic and begin solid study habits to set yourself up for success and minimise stress or overwhelm which will affect the quality of your potential to learn and perform in any assessment.**

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

In my quest to maximise results with my tutoring students, I spoke to many high achieving students and teachers to find out what are their secrets. Plus, what are their habits and tools that really count in the classroom, studying online and ultimately in examinations?

**If you are serious about gaining a mark that truly approaches your potential, be prepared to do what others may not.**

**And that may mean doing some things differently or with more purpose.**

**However, you may be surprised at the simplicity of these top ten hacks.**



# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #1: Ask Questions.

**Lots of them. Why?** Because ultimately, **the quality of your questions will determine the quality of your thinking.** Moreover, the quality of your thinking determines the quality of your life.

The more precisely you define the problem, the more easily you can find a solution. And that means practising and refining how you ask a question.



Always remember: there is no such thing as a dumb question.

Questions you ask in class will not only save you time later but your efforts will be appreciated by other students, even if that may not be immediately obvious.

***The more you ask questions, the more you engage intellectually and emotionally in a lesson, and this is what makes the difference.***

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

**"Once you have learned to ask questions – relevant and appropriate and substantial questions – you have learned how to learn and no one can keep you from learning whatever you want or need to know."**

**- Professor and author Neil Postman**

One thing about high achieving students is **they recognise what they *don't* know** – and they ask questions to resolve that. How can you gain an advantage by recognising what you do not know? You need to enquire and ask questions of the teacher to help you.

A good teacher values those students who ask questions to clarify learning. You and your teacher are in the business of your education. Make the most of that idea.



**We get wise by asking questions, even if these are not answered, we get wise, for a well-packed question carries its answer on its back as a snail carries its shell.**

**— James Stephens**

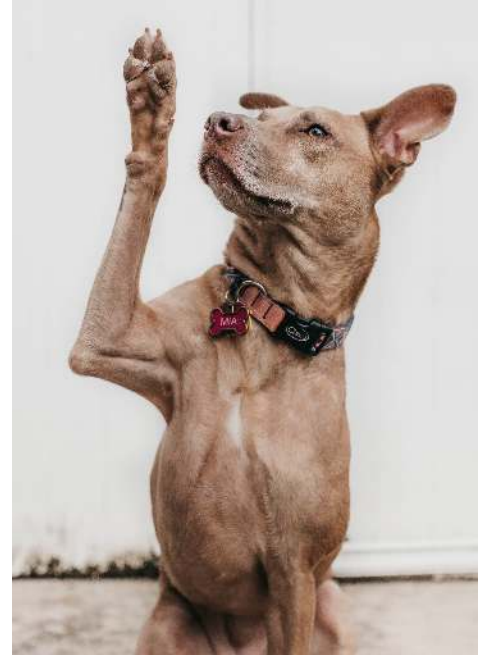
# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #2: Volunteer.

Avoid being the last to offer an idea, or to help.

**Step up. Step forward. Avoid shrinking. Think of it this way – your teacher is volunteering what they know, volunteering to help prepare you for exams. Play your part** by being at least one of the first to volunteer the answer to a question, make a comment, or to assist in any way.

Be willing to risk a little. Or in some cases, a lot. Showing your willingness to participate enables you to learn. Your ideas get priority. You become known as a leader and a giver, not merely a passenger or a taker. Teachers appreciate those who are ready to participate, even at the risk of offering an incorrect answer. We are all in the business of learning – making mistakes is part of that.



**"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."**

— Thomas A. Edison

**"It's impossible to be involved in all situations, but there's no excuse not to be involved in something, somewhere, somehow, with someone."**

— Richelle E. Goodrich

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## So how do I volunteer online?

Working and learning online can certainly be different to working in a face-to-face environment. Yet **good manners and respectful behaviour remain important for you and your teachers and lecturers to make the most of the lesson.** In fact, it is sometimes even more important to be mindful of how we conduct ourselves online.

### Here are some fast rules for maximum outcomes:

#### 1. Show up. Be there. Turn your camera on.

Do this whenever possible, **even if you are the only one.** It provides a connection with the lecturer and encourages their efforts for your learning.



#### 2. Be early.

Show your course leader you are ready and time is not to be wasted waiting for others to attend. Your behaviour will influence others to be on time, too.

#### 3. Be prepared with a question.

Often the Q&A time is short and you may want your question to have priority. Avoid valuable time in session waiting for someone to pose a question. If you and your teacher are both early or waiting, you may have your question answered before the session.

#### 4. Jump in and participate.

Fortune favours the brave. Use the chat box or show your hand to indicate you are attending to the session and wish to make a contribution. In Q&A, be willing to ask a question and lead the way for more engaged learning.

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #3: Take Notes. Always.

Senior years are busy and they are demanding. You will want to have a record of what goes on and record the points that may be of benefit down the track.

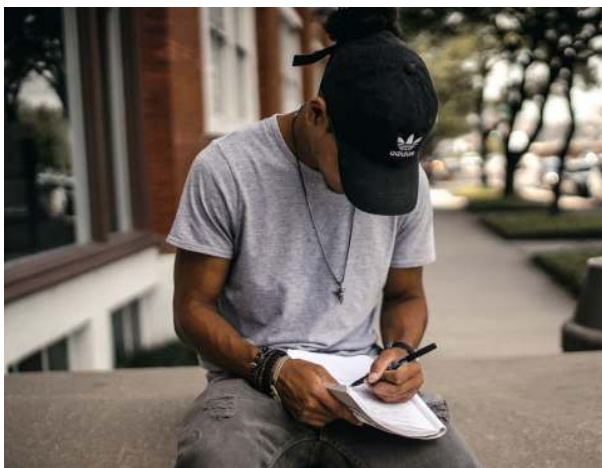
**Don't just rely on your memory.**

**When you note take, you are using different parts of your brain** and actively engaging in the learning process. **My strong advice**, even if you use devices for other work, is ***always* to take hand-written notes**. Numerous research proves that **note taking, by hand, is superior to trying to type notes**. So it seems that...

**So it seems that ...**

**"The Pen is mightier than the Keyboard."**

**— Pam Mueller & Daniel Oppenheimer**



# Secrets of High Achieving Students

Some research indicates learning and retention can be **improved by over 20%** with note taking by hand. This could be the difference to a passing grade or to entry to a college or university of choice.

So why is this the case when we see so many laptops in most lecture theatres or classrooms? Because not everyone understands the benefit for taking handwritten notes. **The good news is - you have a choice**, regardless of the laptops around you. You can still choose to handwrite notes.



# Secrets of High Achieving Students

From a neuroscience perspective, we know that there is a significant difference between creating **a transcript vs a summary** of what is being learnt. A greater number of brain parts are involved in handwritten notes. When notes are taken on a computer, most people tend to type word for word (verbatim), without what is being heard stopping in the brain momentarily for substantive processing. When notes are taken by hand, a very different process occurs. When writing, one has to process and condense the material. This means that the first part of learning is already occurring.

These students instead have to: **listen - process - condense.**

This is one of the reasons why taking notes by hand vs typing is superior for learning and retention.



Currently, the major exams in many countries are still expecting handwritten essays. Regularly practice your handwriting now so when it counts, your examiner can enjoy reading your work rather than trying to decipher it.

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #4: Keep a Paper Diary.

Keep it with you each day. Make notes in your school paper diary of actions to be taken. Preferably a diary that shows a *week at a glance*. **This way you can be planning ahead and be mindful of your commitments.** Why paper? Most students today are not permitted mobiles in class and you do not want to rely just on your screens where things can get lost all too easily.



Learn to jot down ideas when they come to you and learn the business of being reliable by keeping your work up to date, and do what you say you will. Plan well ahead for all your assignments so that you begin earlier rather than the night before it is due.

Learn to be spontaneous and record an idea in the moment. This contributes to your creativity and innovation.

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #5: Sit at the Front of the Class.

**Aim to sit close to the front of the room where the teacher instructs, wherever possible.** Aim to be in a position where you can have dialogue more easily with the instructor. You will be able to ask questions more readily in a timely manner, be part of the action, and maybe a joke or two.

**Be on top of things that are happening rather than waiting for things to come to you.** Being at the front means you can be more proactive and support your studies.

There is a reason that the front row seats in a theatre or a concert are the most expensive and sought after. The experience is different; you see more, feel more, hear more, things are clearer, you catch the asides, become aware of the subtle humour, see the mishaps and are closer to the fun. You are less likely to be distracted from your main game of learning. And you and your questions may get priority.

**Don't be afraid to sit in the front row of YOUR life.**

# Secrets of High Achieving Students



JILL SWEATMAN

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #6: Be on Time. In fact, be head of time.

**It is disrespectful to delay a class or enter when the teacher has already begun.** If you have ever given a presentation, you will know what it is like to be interrupted, distracted or be asked to start again for the late comers.

Woody Allen famously said, "80% of success was just showing up". Do it on time to get the real benefit.

This shows your respect for others and your learning.

**If you're early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late.**

— Lik Hock Yap Ivan



# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #7: Change Your Approach to Every Lesson.

**Think of each lesson**, activity, subject, topic, task, teacher, coach, tutor and text as '**a way of thinking**'. A way of thinking that can add another dimension to considering a problem, thinking about life.

**Attend each lesson with the idea that whatever you are studying is shaping how you think and how your brain is being developed.**

***Avoid wasting time debating or arguing about how your future life will ever use this subject or task.*** Approach everything with the view that **whatever you are doing or learning is developing your brain for ideas, subjects, roles you are yet to be introduced, or have yet to be invented.** Each day is a building block towards that. Make it valuable. Make it count.

Problem solving is already one of your greatest life-skills. Regardless of your anticipated future title in the workforce, problem solving will be at the heart of this position.

**Learn to be someone who sees things differently, can give another perspective and therefore, may be able to offer options and solutions others may not even consider.** You will become a better student and therefore a more valuable person in your career.

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

Photographers know about problem solving and choosing which lens will capture a moment or create something extraordinary from the ordinary. They seek to capture what others miss or may not choose to see. They seek the next right answer.

You can, too, by selecting your 'lens'. If we don't know how to change lenses, then we become trapped. Use your choice of lens to make the most of every situation.



Show your interest in the topic. **Approach your subjects with, “Everything is interesting, once you get into it.”** It may not immediately appear of interest, or benefit, but how it trains the brain to create new pathways is the key benefit. Use it well.

**"If you are not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are determined to learn, no one can stop you."**

— Zig Ziglar

Make your approach and the variety that offers, work for you in all you do. **You will become more intelligent, more popular, more confident and more valuable as a result.**

You will become **memorable**. And as a result, **more doors and options will open up for you.**

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #8: Make an Effort to Develop a Cooperative Relationship with your Teachers & Tutors.

Firstly, make the effort to always be respectful to all your teachers, without exception.

Secondly, develop a supportive relationship with all your teachers, not just your favourite ones. Ask polite questions and show an interest in your teachers.

Teachers are people too, and if you show an interest and a curiosity in them and their interest in your subject, you are likely to develop a superior relationship with them and learn a bit more along the way. **When teachers know students are interested- they give more, they become more motivated, they will become more entertaining, and you will be the recipient and benefit from that extra effort and attention to the topic.**

**You and your teachers are BOTH in the business of your learning. Acknowledge that and work actively with them, not actively against them.**



# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #9: Use your Initiative. Seek Opportunities to Apply Your Learning.

Good teachers welcome the students who seek greater knowledge or those who truly want to understand their learning and their concepts. **Understanding is very different to merely learning a process or showing up to take some notes.**

If you learn to understand a process, ***really understand*** that particular process, then you are more readily able to produce what is needed in an exam because understanding is associated with your ability to apply ideas and concepts to various situations. Understanding produces a solid base.

The good news is revision then becomes much easier. You do not have to memorise nearly as much because the laying down of learning, based on true understanding, gives you the edge. It saves precious time and avoids anxiety in the long run.



**“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.”**

— Albert Einstein

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Brain Whisper Tip #10: Work Smarter. Make Time Work for You.

**Commit to doing your work first and play later.**

A clever time management expert, Brian Tracy, used the idea of “Eat that frog first” as a great metaphor for managing time. What Tracy means by “Eat that frog!” is to start your day with the biggest, most important, and most unattractive task. It may often be the one task upon which you may procrastinate. There is discipline in doing this one thing first thing in the morning every single day – and know the rest of the day will be smoother as a result.

***Commit to doing your work without distraction*** – including social media, online games, YouTube, Snapchat, Messenger, Texting ... That is play.

**“To do two things at once is to do neither.”**

— Publius Syrus

Working smarter also means being prepared for your lessons, rather than just showing up and waiting for other students to share the prior reading or the homework task.

Consider carefully how you use your time, especially when assignments are due.

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

**So, there you have it, the top 10 habits and tools for successful studying and learning. There is no magic formula, or secret pill to becoming a high achieving student.**

Ironically, what works for you in the classroom long term will work with you in the workforce. Repetition creates habits and tools which create long term academic success.

**Effort + Practice = Success**

And do not be discouraged...

**"The best time to start was last year.  
Failing that, today will do."**

— Chris Guillebeau

**Be prepared to do what many other students may not.**

**Start TODAY**

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

## Further Information

To book a presentation or coaching session - email [jill@jillsweatman.com](mailto:jill@jillsweatman.com)

For more free articles and resources by The BRAIN WHISPERER™, Jill Sweatman, visit [www.jillsweatman.com](http://www.jillsweatman.com)

To download Jill's latest eBook – 'Tips for Homeschooling', click here <https://bit.ly/3mVGCnG>

# Secrets of High Achieving Students

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