

## GL's ultimate guide to being

# That Girl

10 ways to transform your year from  
Mission: Impossible to Mission: Be Amazing

BY BRITTANY TAYLOR

Every fall, you hit the halls thinking the same thing: This year, you're gonna be That Girl. You know, the one with straight A's, who is editor of the school paper and has an awesome social life.

But somewhere between landing a spot in the starting lineup and campaigning for student council, you find yourself careening down Homework Mountain and caving to the nasty naysayer in your head.

Not anymore! Here are 10 ways to get you in the right mindset for your most amazing year yet....

**SILENCE THE  
"I CAN'T DO IT" VOICE BY,  
WELL, DOING IT**

It's time to get after whatever it is you're going for—and now is the best time to do it. "Follow your passion by taking action," says Paula Grieco, author of *Take 5 for Your Dreams*. Don't be tempted to downgrade your dreams to a more practical vision. Sure, you're shooting for the moon, but just 'cause you're aiming high doesn't mean it's impossible. Besides, you know what

that corny classroom poster says: Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars. **DEEP BREATH.** Now try this: Work backward to tackle overwhelming goals. Start with what you want to achieve, like, say, making the all-state choir. Then, list each step you need to take to make that goal a reality. Set a deadline for completing each small task. The progress you make as you cross off each step on your list will keep you working toward the finish line.

**PUT THE TOUGH  
STUFF FIRST**

You know that one thing on your to-do list you'd rather clean out your closet than complete? Yeah, do that one first. We know it stinks, but once you get the job done, you'll free up time for the things you truly love, says motivational speaker Jill Marie Jordan. Even not-so-fab tasks, like that pre-algebra problem set, will be cinchy in comparison.

**TUNE IT OUT (OR TURN IT OFF).** And by "it," we mean everything. Twitter. Your phone. Your cat. Your chipped nails. Tell Mom you're taking an hour to focus on something important, set a timer and work hard until you

hear that ding. You'll be surprised by how much you can complete when nothing else is begging for your attention.

**LOVE EVERY CHALLENGE  
YOU TAKE ON**

"The most important thing is not to be good at everything, it's to find what makes you feel happy and energized," says Deena Maerowitz, founder of [undergradadmit.com](http://undergradadmit.com). That may mean signing up to tutor ESL students, but, sigh, saying adios to the Spanish Club vice presidency. So if something sounds just "meh," don't be afraid to say no. Then, use your time to focus on an opp that really gets you fired up.

**HAND OFF THE SPOTLIGHT.** Sure, that part-time gig for a local photographer sounds like a once-in-a-lifetime chance. But if it's not getting you psyched—or playing into your future plans—try suggesting someone else you know who could really use the chance to shine.

**ASK FOR HELP BEFORE  
YOU REALLY NEED IT**



*Not knowing  
why everyone's  
lookin' at ya?  
**Awkward.**  
Realizing it's  
'cause you're  
an all-around  
rockstar?  
**Awesome.***



“

Wise words that got us moving five minutes ago

***The question isn't who is going to let me, it's who is going to stop me.***

—Ayn Rand

***It's hard to beat a person who never gives up.***

—Babe Ruth

***Never let what someone else says distract you from your goals.***

—Michelle Obama

***Wins and losses come a dime a dozen. But effort? Nobody can judge that. Because effort is between you and you.***

—Ray Lewis

***When you get a promotion at your job, you don't go, 'That was too fast. Can I stay in the mailroom a while longer?' You take it.***

—Jennifer Lawrence

***No matter how slow you go, you are still lapping everybody on the couch.***

—unknown

***It doesn't get easier. You get stronger.***

—unknown

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We're gonna let you in on a little secret: No matter how awesome That Girl is, she's not doing it all on her own. And neither should you. Asking for help actually shows you know your limits—and that you're not too proud to bring in a li'l backup. Whether it's enlisting a peer tutor for earth science or swapping essays with a friend for a no-holds-barred critique, we all need someone in our corner to lend a hand. And, hey, when they send out SOS signals of their own, you'll be right there with a life preserver, right?

**SHOUT IT OUT.** "Get more support than you think you need," Paula says. "Whether it's friends, family or teachers, assemble a tribe of your best people and ask them to hold you accountable. Let them in on your achievements, too!"

### TAKE YOURSELF—AND YOUR TIME—SERIOUSLY

We know you'd rather meet up with your crew for lattes after school, but trust us, you're much better off scooting right home and working on that history paper due next week. Why? When you give yourself tonsa time to get stuff done, you'll stress less and will likely do a better job. Besides, you can always hang with your girls after you get your work done, right?

**SAY NO, SANS GUILT.** Make sure you're not giving up some of your precious time just because you're afraid to say no. Yep, you could bake six dozen cupcakes for your class fundraiser. But so could someone else. So stop spreading yourself thin and give yourself a much-needed breather.

### KEEP YOUR COOL

It's easy to breeze through your day with a smile and a kind word for everyone when life goes according to plan. But the way you behave when things are less than perfect shows everyone the kind of person you *really* are. The next time a project goes off the rails, put

the meltdown you're dying to have on a back burner and focus instead on troubleshooting the situation.

**TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.** When you make a mistake, you've got options: You can point the finger at somebody else, you can pretend nothing bad happened or you can own up to it. Easy to say, we know, but find the strength to go with the last option. Coming clean and focusing on fixing the sitch shows maturity and will help make the hard stuff a bit easier to handle the next go-round.

### CELEBRATE YOUR MINI MILESTONES

Every accomplishment is worth a pat on the back, whether it's a huge achievement or just another box checked off your to-do list. Aside from the squee factor, it'll make long-term goals easier to tackle, says life coach Ty Johnson-Anderson. We're not sayin' you have to announce every A+, but do try to let yourself linger in the good-for-me glow. And if someone asks what's got you so darn smiley? Flash those pearly whites and tell 'em that you just nailed Mr. Panzaneli's pop quiz.

**LET GO OF "LI'L MISS PERFECT."** The only way to learn and improve is to put yourself out there. Raise your hand in class (even when you're not totally sure your answer is the right one), try something you're not good at and take a stand, even if you're going against the grain. Not only will you get a confidence boost, but people will admire you for your bravery.

### DON'T JUST ACT SMART—BE SMART

Being a back-to-school superstar isn't all great grades and brag-worthy after-school activities. The way you interact with everyone you meet is just as important. Ty's mantra? Keep it SASSY. "That stands for 'show your abilities and simply say yes I can,'" she says. "And act according to how you wish to be per-

ceived." Wanna be known as the nice girl on campus? You know what to do!

**CLUELESS?** Get creative. Even the savviest social butterflies find themselves in situations they don't know quite how to handle. When in doubt, "think 'what would my role model do?'" advises Lennay Chapman, author of *Secrets to a Rockin' Life*. "Having a role model helps you make good decisions that support your goals," she says.

### REFUSE TO LET DEFEAT DERAILED YOU

So, you lost the tennis tourney. That doesn't mean you've gotta give up your dream of being the next Serena. "Goals are just milestones on your larger path," Lennay says. Sticking with whatever it is you set out to do, even if you send 'em sailing into the net, is far more important than boasting a perfect record.

**TAKE PITFALLS IN STRIDE.** Criticism, rejection, losing—it all hurts. But there are ways to shift those negatives into positives. To turn your sucky situation around, take five minutes to consider how you could do better next time rather than dwelling on disaster. Then, head back to square one by mapping out the steps to improvement. You've got this, girl!

### KNOW JUST HOW AWESOME YOU ARE

Need something more concrete? On a scale of 1 to 10, we'd say you clock in at 11, easy. So believe it. "Confidence is about being the best *you* you can be," Jill says. "It's not that you're stuck up, it's about being your own best friend first."

**IT'S TIME TO GET REAL.** Be honest about what you're good at, what you could stand to do better on and what's just not your thing. Understanding your strengths and weaknesses will help you pinpoint ways you can improve, know when to call for reinforcements and help ya appreciate the ways you truly kick booty. Because you do! ✨