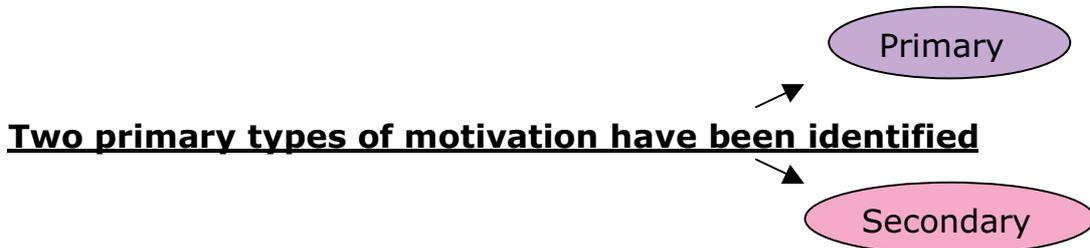


Without the proper motivation, study can be a waste of time!

Ask yourself:

- Why am I studying?
- What do I want to achieve?
- Am I interested in this subject?

Motivation is concerned with all the factors which initiate, direct and sustain our behaviour. In order to be successful in your area of study you must be motivated to learn. Being motivated to study, learn or even get up in the morning is something that does not always come naturally to everyone. In fact most of us have the task of training ourselves to be motivated to study or to go to work. Being motivated in any field can determine our level of achievement.



Primary motivation consists of our intrinsic needs which are in place in order to help us survive. For example, our motivation to eat food and drink water on a daily basis is essential for our survival, or our motivation to run when we are being chased by a lion. The motivation to engage in these activities comes naturally to us. We do them without even thinking.

Secondary motives refer to our learned desires. They are not directly essential for our survival. However, they do control our well-being and happiness. For example, we are motivated to interact with other people or to learn new skills and talents because these activities help us to feel good and happy (Moran, 1997).

Tiger Woods revealed that his main motivation sprang from enjoying the challenge of beating his own personal record (Scott, 1999)

Study is regarded as a Secondary Motivation and like most secondary motives we often have to teach ourselves to engage in this activity. We often regard the process of studying as a task that we don't like. Changing our perspective on how we view study can help us be more motivated.

Incorporating simple self motivation strategies can help you be more motivated and enjoy the process of studying more.

Self motivation strategies

Begin positive

Before you begin to study, think of some positive aspect of your studies e.g. reminder of good results/marks in recent exam/test. The idea of learning new knowledge and new skills as a result of the study you do.

Planning

Plan ahead – make a 'to-do-list' and when you have one list completed, work out your tasks for the next week. This helps to keep you organised and on top of things. As you tick off your list you will see your progression and boost your morale. Set yourself small attainable goals as you go along. For each goal that you reach reinforce yourself by doing something you enjoy, such as going out with friends or watching your favourite television programme.

Setting attainable goals can help you remain positive while studying for exams. It also gives you a sense of progression.

Your study environment

You should study in a temperate, quiet, well-lit, spacious (have desk, straight-backed chair and storage space), distraction free room. You should take a few moments at the end of each session to tidy up, file away sheets of paper and tidy your desk. This keeps you organised and helps you concentrate at the next session and slot into immediate work/study.

Rewards

The key principle in learning theory is that activities which are followed by rewards gradually tend to become rewarding themselves i.e. studying will become associated with positive consequences and over time will become an enjoyable activity of its own. Reward yourself if you spend an extra hour studying than what you had planned, or if you reach a stage in your study before the target date. Studying should not be a tiresome, laborious activity, you should try to make it as fun as possible.

Goal setting

A goal is a target or objective that we strive to attain. Accordingly, goal setting theory is the process by which we set targets for ourselves. By setting personal goals routinely, you will be aiming to achieve targets and so you will keep trying your best consistently.

Principles of Goal Setting

S.M.A.R.T.

S Specific

Clear goals are more likely to be achieved.

E.g. "I will answer all the questions on chapter 8 by 6pm this evening"

M Measurable

If your progress in achieving a goal is not measurable then you can easily lose interest in it.

E.g. All questions in chapter will be answered.

A Action

Break down the series of steps or actions needed to attain the goal.

E.g. First read chapter 8, make a summary of the main points, answer the questions

R Realistic

Your study goals should be realistic and achievable.

E.g. only do one chapter per night.

T Time based

Put a deadline on your goals in order to place urgency on their completion.

E.g. finish the chapter by 6pm.

(Bull, Albinson & Shambrook, 1996)

Goal Vision Boards

Bandura (1986) indicated that visualisation experiences are a great source of self-efficacy (situation specific self-confidence). Visualising the end goal of your study can help you keep motivated. Creating a Goal Vision Board can help you achieve this. Use the board as a way of illustrating the end product of your study or learning experience.

It can be very difficult for us to keep motivated when the end goal seems so far away. Creating your own Goal Vision Board can help you visualise and motivate you to finish your study.

Creating your Goal Vision Board

Step 1 Begin by writing down the reasons for doing your course.

Step 2 Continue by writing down your expectations when you have finished the course. For example, the job you will have etc.

Step 3 Find visual representations for each of the points on your list and place them on your Goal Vision Board.

Step 4 Place your Goal Vision Board above the area where you study to act as a constant reminder as to why you are studying.

Example → A female student studying to be a Nurse.

Step 1- Helping people get better, working in a hospital, having a stable job, working with different age groups, the variety of experiences in the job.

Step 2- To have a good job, to be able to eventually buy a car and a house, making a difference to lives, learning new skills.



Step 3 -

Exercise

A healthy student needs regular physical activity and six to eight hours of sleep. Good health should also include a well-rounded diet for the body and spiritual food for the soul.

Stretching, walking, sitting up straight, make faces, putting on some upbeat music and dancing round the room. Taking some really deep breaths – oxygen refreshes the brain & learning. All of these exercises (and many others not mentioned here) help us to feel more energetic and so, more open to ideas and a better learning state.

Healthy Eating & brainpower

The healthier foods/diet we have – the better will our memory and concentration work.

Quick dos and don'ts for keeping well:

Do's

Eat healthy food
Space out your study
Drink lots of water
Exercise regularly
Sleep well
Relieve tension with exercise

Don'ts

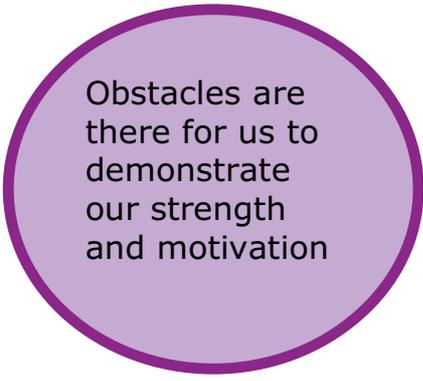
Skip meals
Stress
Live on junk food
Drink lots of caffeine
Forget leisure time
Cram information

Leisure/Study Balance

You need to have a healthy balance of study and leisure time. When you achieve your study goal take a break and get away from learning for a while. Do something fun and when you return you will be refreshed and ready to work again.

Goal Setting Motivation Table.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Goal Completed & Reward
Morning							
		L	U	N	C	H	
Afternoon							
	D	I	N	N	E	R	
Evening Time							



Obstacles are there for us to demonstrate our strength and motivation

Test your motivation with this short easy quiz.

1. I find it easy to complete any tasks that I start:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

2. I enjoy learning new skills and developing as a person:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

3. When I learn something new I want to research it more to find out as much as possible about the subject:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

4. I have set goals in life that I want to achieve:

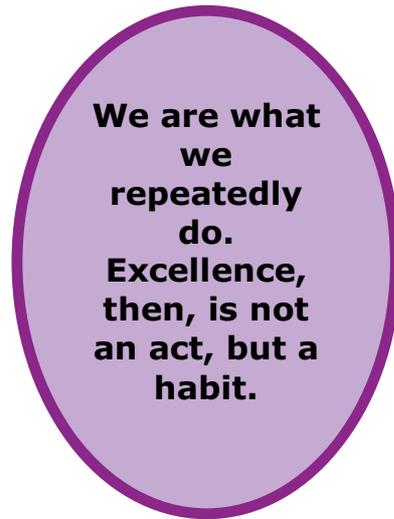
- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

5. I embrace new environments by getting involved:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

6. I engage in opportunities to learn new things:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never



Motivation quiz answers

Give a tick in the box for each of your answers.

Always	Sometimes	Never

If you answered mostly 'Always or Sometimes' you are a motivated individual.

If you answered 'Never' you may have difficulty with your level of motivation and may need to put some of the strategies mentioned above in place to help pick up your motivation level.