

MOTIVATE YOURSELF

Techniques to Avoid Procrastination

When discussing motivation it is also necessary to discuss issues of concentration and procrastination. These three topics are intrinsically connected – each affecting the other. Similarly, challenges that impact one area likely also impact the other two. When looking for ways to increase motivation it is necessary to also discuss procrastination and concentration.

When our motivation decreases our stress, guilt & apathy increase. This often leads to burn out. Our ability to concentrate will decrease. All of this increases our tendency to procrastinate.

Motivation can be split into two categories: external and internal. Otherwise known as factors that motivate extrinsically or intrinsically. While there isn't a right or wrong way to motivate yourself, different methods are more useful in different situations.

Extrinsic

- External rewards
- Avoiding consequences

Benefits

- Can be particularly important when you need to complete something you find difficult or uninteresting

Challenges

- Excessive rewards can decrease intrinsic motivation when the extrinsic reward is no longer present

Intrinsic

- Internal rewards
- Enjoyable

Benefits

- Creates positive emotions
- Typically produce better quality work

Challenges

- Can be difficult to find personal meaning in work/academics that don't immediately interest you

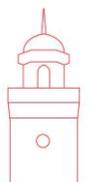
Examples

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in a sport to win awards • Cleaning your room to avoid being reprimanded by your parents • Competing in a contest to win a scholarship • Studying because you want to get a good grade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in a sport because enjoy it • Cleaning your room because you like tidying up • Solving a puzzle because you find the challenge fun and exciting • Studying a subject you find fascinating |
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Try combining both intrinsic & extrinsic motivators for the most effective approach.

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation occurs when we act without any obvious external rewards. We simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn, and actualize our potentials.



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Factors that increase intrinsic motivation are:

Curiosity Curiosity pushes us to explore and learn for the sole pleasure of learning and mastering.

Challenge Being challenged helps us work at a continuously optimal level work toward meaningful goals.

Control This comes from our basic desire to control what happens and make decisions that affect the outcome.

Recognition We have an innate need to be appreciated and satisfaction when our efforts are recognized and appreciated by others.

Cooperation Cooperating with others satisfies our need for belonging. We also feel personal satisfaction when we help others and work together to achieve a shared goal

Competition Competition poses a challenge and increases the importance we place on doing well.

Fantasy Fantasy involves using mental or virtual images to stimulate your behavior. An example is a virtual game that requires you to answer a question or solve a problem to move to the next level.

Why do we Procrastinate?

We often tell ourselves that procrastination stems from laziness. However, in reality the reasons why we may procrastinate are much more complex than simple work avoidance.

Habit Many university students did very well in high school even though they procrastinated a lot.

Overload When there are too many tasks to do, or a big task that seems overwhelming, it's easy to procrastinate.

Control Some people procrastinate because they feel that making decisions about when to study is one of the few areas over which they have control.

Perfectionism If a perfectionist receives a low mark, procrastination creates an “emotional out” – the low mark does not reflect their true ability or potential, so there is no loss of self-esteem

Adapted from: Wong, L. (2003) *Essential Study Skills* (4 Ed.)

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