Motivation

is what keeps us attending classes, getting assignments in on time, and studying for exams when we would rather be doing something else more enjoyable. Most students have a problem with motivation at some point in their course, for example:
- At the start of a course: it is not what you thought, you are disillusioned.
- In the Second Year of your course after a successful first year: “new year, same old sh*t”.
- After a particularly stressful period: when it hits you that life just goes on as usual.
- About halfway through semester: when it has gone on long enough for you to be tired but the end is not in sight.

Motivating Yourself to Study

One of the most frustrating things a student can experience is finding him or herself in university, wanting to do well, and at the same time finding that he or she can't get motivated! Motivation plays an important part in how much time and energy you spend studying and going to class, and ultimately it plays a major part in determining the grades you earn. The following are some suggestions which can help you be honest with yourself about your motivation. Now, frankly, motivation is often a complicated matter. These suggestions may be enough to help you be aware of what is affecting your motivation (or lack of it), but if you would like to explore yourself further, give us a call at the Counselling Center, and we will be glad to give you a hand.

1. First of all, determine why you are in university. There may be several reasons, of course, but your main purpose should be to get an education, i.e., to expand your mind by learning. You might also want to learn enough to compete at a higher level in the job market, but learning is the number one priority. Some other reasons which people often place at the top of the list, but which are usually poor reasons are:
   a. Your parents wanted you to come. (Whose education is it anyway?)
   b. All your friends came to university.
   c. University is better than getting a job.
   d. University is one big social partying bash, so you came for fun.
   e. It's a sure way to get a high paying job
   f. You didn't know what else to do.

2. Begin the process of making a career decision as soon as possible. There is not need to make a specific decision right away, but you will be more motivated in university when you have a career direction. Remember too, that your career must be your career, not your parent's or teacher's or anyone else's.
3. When exploring career options, be realistic. Not everyone can be in business, law or medicine, nor should they be. Explore your abilities, interests, values and career options before you decide which direction to take.

4. When you have decided on a career direction, you can then more appropriately choose a major. Your school work then becomes relevant, and you will be more motivated to study.

5. Motivation is directly related to your attitudes about university and yourself. Try to have a positive attitude toward yourself, your lecturers, books and everything else. Even if you choose to be negative and angry, don't you owe it to yourself to determine what effect that has on your performance?

6. Risk! Become involved in your classes. Try doing things you wouldn't normally do. Participate, be active and seek out knowledge.

7. University is not High School. If you think they are the same, you are seriously mistaken. In university you are responsible for nearly everything, including courses, time management, social behaviors, setting limits, managing money and mental and physical health. Are you mature enough to handle all of this? If you run into problems or have questions, seek help! There are plenty of people on campus who can help if you will look for them.

8. All work and no play makes you a dull person. Take advantage of the intellectual, social and physical opportunities on campus, keeping in mind, of course, your main reason for being in university.

9. Set some goals. If you clearly state what you want to accomplish and how you can accomplish it, you are much more likely to succeed. It is sometimes best to sit down occasionally and write your goals out on paper. Be sure to specify how to reach them. Goals are great, but if you have no idea how to reach them, you are not likely to get anywhere. Also, occasionally review your goals and see how you are doing.

10. Dwell on your success not your failures. Pump yourself up! Let yourself feel good about what you do well. Try to understand why you do not do other things well. You can be more motivated by feeling good about yourself, than by continually punishing yourself for screwing up.

11. Anger can get in your way. Many students expect too much from their professors, books, university facilities, secretaries. When people or things do not meet your expectations do you become angry and then belligerent? You might ask yourself, "Who am I to expect all of this from so and so?" or "Can I really expect people to be as perfect as me?" As a rule of thumb, unrealistic expectations lead to anger and false hope leads to disappointment. Anger gets in the way of being receptive and open to experiences.

12. Another problem arises when you feel like a slave. Remember, it should be your choice to be doing what you are doing. Ultimately you are in control even when others ask or seemingly demand something of you. University is not going to jail; you can leave any time you wish.

13. Do you fear failure or success? How might one or the other of these fears be manifested and what effect do they have on your motivation?


15. Keep a calendar so you will know when you should be more motivated.

Texas Women's University