



CHAPTER 7: MOTIVATION

You've heard it said that if you love your work, you'll never work a day in your life. Sometimes you love what you do ... and then there are things we all just have to do anyway. In college, there are foundation classes and other required coursework that won't always pique your interest. The trick is finding a way to engage and then sustaining that motivation.

Look at the chart below. For every check mark you place in the right column, there's an indication that you may be having some problems with motivation.

- Do you see how college success fits in with your goals?
- Is it easy for you to focus on your college assignments?
- Do you dive right into class projects?
- Do you keep working in the face of difficulties while trying to understand a complex concept?
- Do you put effort into completing all of your assignments and sometimes go above and beyond?
- Are you not sure how college success fits in with your goals?
- Is it easy for you to get distracted from your college assignments?
- Do you find it hard to get started on class projects?
- Do you get derailed when you can't figure out a complex concept?
- Do you put in the least amount of effort necessary to pass?

- Do you understand that there are factors you can't control and instead focus on the things that you can?
- Do you have trouble accepting responsibility or blame others for your own poor performance?

External Motivation

External motivation means that your motivation to attain your goal comes from a source outside yourself. Examples of external motivation include:

- I'm going to study law because that's what my father wanted.
- If I lose 20 pounds, my husband will be happy.
- My boss will like me more if I take up golf.

Acting in the interests of other people is difficult to maintain. It requires a great deal of effort and results in less personal satisfaction for your achievements.

Internal Motivation

Internal motivation means that your motivation to accomplish your goal comes from within you. Your motivation is determined by your own values and goals. Examples of internal motivation include:

- I will attend all of my classes so I can learn as much as possible.
- If I lose 20 pounds, I'll be healthier and have more energy.
- I've always wanted to learn tennis, so I'm going to enroll in lessons.

With internal motivation, it is much easier to stay motivated. Trying to find some internal value in everything you do can help sustain motivation.

Sustaining Motivation

Whenever you feel your motivation waning, try the following steps:

1. Clearly identify your motivators.
2. Ensure that your motivators are realistic.
3. Try to find some internal motivation in all of your activities.
4. Periodically check your motivation levels using the checklist above.
5. Keep your motivators on your mind. You might consider writing them down and carrying them in your wallet, pocket, or purse.