# Chapter 8: Motivation

There are three resources in this chapter:

* Short-Term Motivation Tips
* Long-Term Motivation Tips
* Saying Goodbye to a Habit or Belief that Holds You Back

Short-Term Motivation Tips

**1). Reset Your Space**

* Take time to clear your workspace. This will help get you in a mindset to work. Set a timer for 10 minutes, pick up your workspace, and organize your course materials.
* Consider what type of space you work best in. If you need quiet, you might need to leave a house full of loud roommates and head to the library or a coffee shop. Find an environment to work in that’s best for you.
* Consider sounds and smells. Does it help you to listen to music? All music or only instrumental music? Would lighting a candle be calming for you? What about your space helps you the most?

**2). Reset Your Mind**

* Try meditation before studying to help center your mind. Practice your breathing technique and work to calm your mind. Find a short, guided meditation online to follow.
* Give yourself a motivational pep-talk! Tell yourself that you are a smart and capable student. Try to rewrite any negative scripts from the past.

**3). Reset Your Body**

* Exercise, even low-intensity exercise like walking, stretching, and light yoga, can help decrease stress and anxiety.
* Find an exercise activity that you enjoy to help increase your energy and focus.
* What works for you? A 15-minute walk outside? Some short stretching activities? Try different things and see how you feel after.

**4). Choose your ONE low-effort motivation booster!**

Look at all the suggestions above and think about your life, mind, and body. Pick one suggestion to be your quick, low effort “re-set button” when you’re lacking motivation to study or do coursework. Is it going for a 15-minute walk outside? Is it clearing off your desk and lighting a candle? What about meditating for 10 minutes?  Write your low-effort motivation booster below!

**My low-effort motivation booster is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Long-Term Motivation Tips

**1). Know your GOAL and know your WHY.**

GOAL= What you want to achieve.

WHY= Why you want to achieve that goal.

Think about your current educational goals. Maybe you have a goal to pass all your classes this semester. Maybe you have a goal to study for one hour a day. Maybe you have a long-term goal of graduating from college.

Think about WHY you are doing what you’re doing. WHY are you in school? WHY are you working so hard to achieve success as a student? Maybe it’s so you can get a good job, support your family, or be more financially independent.

Once you know your GOALS and your WHYS, WRITE THEM DOWN AND PUT THEM SOMEWHERE YOU’LL SEE OFTEN. This could be your phone background, your bathroom mirror, or the cover of your course notebooks.

Goal setting has been shown to greatly enhance motivation and nurture the growth of skills and engagement in learning!

**My GOALS:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**My WHYS:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**2). Establish a Study/Coursework Schedule**

* How are you going to support your goals? By dedicating time to studying and getting coursework completed.
* Take a look at your week (or your month) and set aside blocks of time just for studying and completing assignments. Always set aside more time than you think you’ll need! This will allow you to be flexible when emergencies (or just life) happen.
* Creating and implementing a clear study plan significantly improves course engagement and academic performance.

**This week, I will study the following days and times:\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**3). Identify who to ask for help. Then, ask for help when needed!**

Who can help you achieve your goals? How can you contact them? What can they help you with? Think about the levels of support available to you on campus (instructors, tutors, advisors, etc.) and off campus (family members, friends, coworkers, etc.).

Fill in the chart below. When you start to struggle, use the chart to reach out and ask someone for help. Asking for help isn’t a sign of weakness; it’s a sign of intelligence, strength, and maturity!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Who can I ask for help?** | **What can they help me with?** | **How do I contact them?** |
| **Instructor Peterson** | Understanding my biology coursework. | I can email: [bpeterson@collegeclass.com](mailto:bpeterson@collegeclass.com)  I can visit during office hours: M/W 12-2 pm, Room 123  I can call: 651-987-6543 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Saying Goodbye to a Habit or Belief that Holds You Back

Most people have a bad habit or a destructive belief that gets in the way of their success. Some students say disorganization or procrastination are their big problems. Others say they would be more successful if they didn't constantly check their phone, or if they were better about limiting time spent with friends and family. Others believe destructive things like "I'll never learn math," or "I'm a terrible writer." Think about a behavior or belief that is keeping you from being the student you’d like to be. Write it below.

**Step 1:** **Think about how your behavior or belief affects you, or the people you care about**. Most students' lives consist of four areas-- Academics, social life/family, Emotional and Physical Health and hobbies/ extracurricular activities. NOTE: The effects are not always negative! For example, let's say your behavior is that you spend time socializing when you should be studying-- this behavior is great for your relationships.

Complete the chart below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Area of My Life** | **Below, write a sentence or two about how the behavior or belief you'd like to change affects these four areas of your life. Make sure to include positive and negative effects.** |
| Academics |  |
| Social Life and family |  |
| Emotional and Physical Health |  |
| Extra-curricular activities and hobbies |  |
| Other |  |

**Step 2**: **Imagine how your academic life would be better if you didn’t have your behavior or belief.** If you are disorganized and spend hours frantically rushing around to find your books or car keys, imagine what a relief it would be to know exactly where they are. If you continually tell yourself you will never learn to write, how nice would it be to sit down to do your English homework and say instead, "I'm getting better at writing?"

Below, list what you would "get out" of changing this behavior or belief. How would changing it improve your life? Would you have more time? Feel less stressed?

**Step 3:** **Imagine what you will give up or lose by changing this behavior or belief.** Whether you realize it or not, you chose behaviors and beliefs because they get you something you want or help you avoid something unpleasant. Even though your behavior or belief might harm you academically, it is important to realize that it benefits you somehow. For example, if your bad behavior is that you spend hours scrolling on your phone watching videos, you are likely de-stressing or learning things you are curious about. If you struggle with saying "no" to friends and family who want you to drop everything to help them, your academics might suffer, but your social relationships are flourishing. Even negative thoughts such as "I can't learn math" might benefit you-- if you fail a math test or do poorly on an assignment, your belief gets you off the hook- after all, you can't help but do poorly. You're bad at math! Letting go of your behavior is scary when it means you will have to face something that causes you stress, say "no" to someone who will be disappointed or give up something you enjoy. You might experience some grief or anxiety about changing.

Below, write down what you will miss, or lose out on if you choose to change your behavior or attitude. Look at the chart you completed in step 1 for ideas.

**Step 4:** **Make a plan you can live with**. Don’t try to radically alter your behavior. It won’t work. Effective change happens slowly. However 1) you have to be specific about exactly what you want to change and how you will change it, 2) you need to identify the tempters that are likely to get you off track and 3) you need to develop a plan for handling them.

See the sample chart below:

What exactly do you want to change?

*I would like to quit playing games on my phone until my homework for the day is complete.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How will I change this behavior? | When I get home from classes, I will leave my phone in the kitchen drawer and do my homework in my bedroom. |
| *What tempters might make it hard for me to stick to my plan?* | *I am so used to checking my phone every time I get an alert that I'm afraid I will check it before I put it away and then I will end up scrolling through my phone and playing games. I might tell myself, "I'll only do this for five minutes." Or, "I will only play one game." But them I will end up wasting an hour.* |
| *What can I do to handling those tempters?* | *To handle this temptation, I will shut the notifications off on my phone before I enter my house. Then, I will put my phone in the drawer. Since I play games when I get home from classes because I want to de-stress and get my mind off classes for a few minutes, I will attempt to de-stress by doing about 10 or 15 minutes of exercise instead of scrolling and playing games.*  *If this doesn't work, I will try doing my homework in the campus library, because I would feel awkward playing games on my phone in the library.* |

Complete the chart below for the behavior or belief you would like to change.

What exactly do you want to change?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How will I change this behavior? |  |
| What tempters might make it hard for me to stick to my plan? |  |
| What can I do to handling those tempters? |  |

**Step 5**: **Evaluate and Celebrate Small Victories.** Recognize that changing behavior is hard, so give yourself a few days to see how your plan is going.

If you followed or partially followed your plan, great! You are on your way to making your plan a habit. Did you sort of stick to your plan? For example, if you wanted to stop playing games on your phone until your homework is done, maybe you managed to do that three of the five weekdays. Below, sum up how, overall, following your plan went for you. Remember to be gentle with yourself if you weren't perfect.

Consider how following or partially following your plan made you feel. Did you feel more productive? Did you feel a sense of accomplishment? Did you miss your behavior or belief? Was some other aspect of your life helped or harmed by your plan?

Did you not follow it at all? If not, decide if this habit is worth changing or if the cost is simply too great. If you decide that this is still a worthy goal, try again. Consider thinking up new or different ways to stick to your plan. For example, can a friend or family member be an accountability partner? Can you change your technique?