

How to: Understand motivation and its factors

Motivation is an internal impulse that directs action towards a specific goal. This is what drives us to act and obtain what we want. Without motivation there is no action. There are **two types of motivations**: primary and secondary.

Primary motivations represent actions geared towards our survival, the satisfaction of our primary needs (eating, drinking, social contact, etc.). For example, when we are hungry, we are motivated to seek food. These motivations are independent from our culture and our personality. That means, everyone feels them.

Secondary motivations represent our passions, our activities, and our learning. We may not be interested in learning, but there are areas that motivate us. Motivation can either come from our own interest, or because we need it to achieve something (for our studies or our survival, for example).

There are **two types of secondary motivations**: intrinsic and extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation represents a personal, inner motivation of individuals to do something for pleasure, or because they think it is important (pride in accomplishment). The more we have this type of motivation, the more motivated we are to carry out our tasks. The challenge of completing the tasks seem greater than the reward itself.

Extrinsic motivation represents the external motivation of individuals to perform a task in order to obtain a reward.

How to encourage motivation?

Since childhood, we are conditioned to always see the negative side, for instance, the majority of global education systems tend to point out what is wrong and what needs to be improved. School curriculum use a grading system that in turn produces a classification of pupils (good VS bad). It is so much easier for us to see the negative side, what is not yet done, and what we missed, but it is more complicated to take the time to look at what is going well, what we have accomplished, and what we are grateful for.

In order to promote your intrinsic motivation in your studies, try to answer these questions:

How do you benefit from your studies/work? Will this be useful for your future? Will it help accomplish a second project? Will it help you in your daily life? Find out why your studies and your work can be useful for you. There are no right or wrong answers, each person has their own reasons, whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic.

Keep in mind that **failure is not a bad thing**. It is part of the learning process and it helps us to learn more and understand better, to know what to do and what not to do. Look for the positive and bright side of what is happening to you, no matter how painful the situation is. Think about strategies to overcome your problem, correct your mistakes. If you are feeling too much anxiety, try some relaxation exercises.

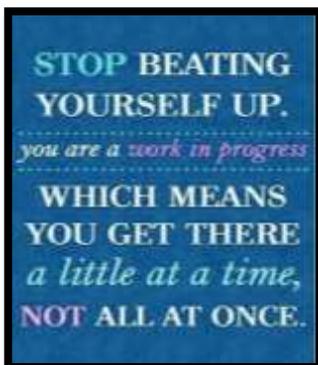
How is stress born?



To stay motivated, it's important **to know the usefulness** of what we are doing or learning. To do this, try to write small notes in your lessons or assignments in order to explain its uses.

Since nowadays we spend a lot of time on new technologies (phone, laptop, etc.), we have become used to being strongly stimulated. It is therefore just as important to stimulate learning and work in different ways: sharing group discussions, using other media such as writing, drawing, painting, photography, videos or films, concept maps, mind maps (Mind Mapping), etc.

Set **positive goals** for yourself (what to do), that are **specific**, and **achievable**. Sometimes we have projects that although they are important to us, may seem very difficult to achieve or we might feel that we do not know where to start. Divide your project into several stages. Surround yourself with the necessary materials for your needs (this is already a first step: yes, even if it seems trivial to you), What is the main topic of your project? Do you need to research, to read? Taking some time to research information is already a big step in your project, even if you haven't written a line yet. Brainstorm, write any ideas that come to you on a piece of paper without looking for their feasibility or how good they are. Even the most ridiculous thing can get closer to your end-goal. Believe in yourself. Like a great sportsman in the Olympic Games, it took a lot of patience and training, but step by step, he built his body and improved his endurance in order to achieve a good level in his discipline. You are this great sportsman, step by step, you manage to move forward towards your project.



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Take the time **to meet your physical and physiological needs** (eat, drink, sleep, go to the bathroom, etc.). Your work or goal will not be better accomplished if you do not let go a little! On the contrary, the progress of your work/project largely depends on your well-being, and your well-being depends, above all, on the satisfaction of your basic needs. Do not neglect them.

Finally, have a touch of **gratitude** to yourself! **Be grateful** for your journey, the work already done (regardless of the result), and the daily challenges that you have fulfilled without even realizing it. Praise yourself daily for the little things, no matter how small they are. You will then need to maintain this motivational flame. Sometimes it will be big and sparkling. And sometimes it will be smaller and noticeably less bright. It is normal!

Today, you are at the foot of a ladder that you will be climbing step by step, so don't be too harsh on yourself. Confucius said: *"A journey of a thousand kilometers begins with a single step"*. Try to fight against demotivation, your lack of will, and your excuses.

Beware of demotivation!



The enemy of motivation is discouragement, in other words, **demotivation**.

Demotivation can be linked to the past: memories of failure, fear, and stress. The brain does not differentiate between past and present, it thinks it is reliving these emotions a second time.

Linked to the present: your way of learning does not suit you, you lack cognitive, affective and/or social resources, there are external barriers (mother tongue, socio-cultural habits, etc.), mental barriers (fear of not being up to it, of disappointing) or even unmet physical/physiological needs (hunger, thirst, need for movement, fatigue, etc.).

Linked to the future: the goal is considered unattainable, it doesn't make sense to you, you may lack self-confidence in the ability to evolve and progress, or even lack confidence in the future.