

Motivation

Back on Track



Motivation has a strong influence on how well you do your job. Students often develop a "Slave Mentality." That is, they see themselves performing tasks which are required by their teachers but which are utterly meaningless to them.

In contrast, the students who see how their schoolwork fits into their plans for themselves become willing workers. It is quite true that "you can do anything you want to do" because wanting makes the necessary work easy.

Determination to work does not mean the same as motivation. "Will Power" will not work over a lengthy period of time. You can force yourself on occasion, but there are definite limits to the success of such an approach.

How to Gain Motivation

Step 1: Decide what you're trying to do in college. (You may need a counselor or other advisor to help with this, but that's why they're there.) Find out exactly how you go about achieving what you want. (What classes are required. Equally important, what classes aren't required. How long will it take you? How much will it cost?) With this information you can see the end of the tunnel. You can see yourself progressing, and you can avoid a lot of "wheel spinning."

Step 2: Make college your job. Don't let the incidental business of earning a living and leading a social life interfere with your central task of getting through school. If something **must** be neglected (and good planning can usually avoid this), then neglect something other than school. Your job is probably a short-term, dead-end proposition anyway. Don't get bumped out of school just to work 48 hours a week for the minimum wage.

- a. Real students own their own books, have a suitable place to work, and keep their materials conveniently available.
- b. Most distractions come from within you. If you have trouble concentrating, try to see what's bothering you and take steps to eliminate it. Most problems yield to direct action, but you must do the acting.

Step 3: Set short-range goals

- a. Analyze your study task. What do you want to achieve? How can it best be done?
- b. Set a definite time limit. You can get as much done in one hour as six if you know you must. Work expands to fit the time available.
- c. Evaluate your success or failure. You can learn best from making mistakes, provided you recognize that they **are** mistakes.