

MOTIVATION

During this challenging time it can be hard to find the motivation to do even the simplest of tasks. Most of you are trying to do schoolwork at home, find new ways of communicating with friends, living 24 hours a day with parents/carers/siblings or spending lengthy times alone. All of these things can have an effect on our motivation and resilience and leave us feeling stuck.

What is Motivation?

Motivation is an internal process. Whether we define it as a drive or need, motivation is a condition inside us that desires a change, either in the self or environment. When we tap into this well of energy, motivation endows the person with the drive and direction needed to engage with the environment in an adaptive, open-ended, and problem-solving sort of way. (Reeve. 2018)

If you are feeling stuck, unfocused and uninspired you are probably looking for ways to increase your motivation. For many of us we get stuck in the 'getting ready process' we simply never get started.

If you are waiting for inspiration to kick in, then I think you will be waiting a long time. Motivation isn't something that happens to you, it is something you make happen. All progress and self-motivation starts with YOU taking action. One action will then lead to another.

If you want to increase self-motivation, commit to achieving something specific every day, even if it is doing something for just 5 minutes, it is a start to increasing your motivation.

How to increase motivation:

1. Simplifying

By creatively planning your day it allows you to simplify. It is really hard to stay motivated when your mind is confused and cluttered with lots of things you feel you need/want to do. Transform complexity into simplicity by doing less.

Think about what you want to achieve in one day, make sure your goal is realistic and achievable. Maybe write down three things you want to achieve in one day, don't worry if you don't succeed, just write down the things you did achieve that day. If it is school work, think about talking to your friends about your plans to complete it, support each other with motivation to complete work.

2. Focus on your accomplishments

Procrastination is a word I hear a lot, and usually focuses on thoughts and feelings of not reaching a certain ideal or goal. However if we think about how far we have come instead of how far we have left to go, we may just increase our motivation. (e.g. I've still got 1500 words of my English essay to do, I'll never get all that done) could lead you to procrastinate and put the work off as it feels too big of a task, but if you focus on the how far you have come (Great I've managed to do 500 words today, that is a great start, if I do another 500 words tomorrow I will have nearly finished) this will probably motivate you to finishing the essay.

Acknowledge unhelpful or negative thoughts and feelings – Trying to stop negative thoughts and feelings isn't really effective, our mind works that way. What you can do is use more positive and encouraging self talk. Be your own coach, practice self-compassion instead of self criticism.

3. Set measurable goals.

By goal setting, you increase motivation and train the brain to focus only on things that are specific and measurable. Consider possible obstacles and how to overcome them. Think about the pros and cons of doing something – what will change if you do nothing – what will I or others gain from this – who or what will benefit. (E.g. Tomorrow my goal is to tidy my room, I will benefit from having a tidy space to work and sleep in also my parents will stop nagging at me)

When we achieve measurable goals we tend to feel accomplished, which increases motivation.

In this present time, it may feel like progress is slow and we are not moving in the right direction. However, we can't stop time; we can only make better use of our time.

4. Visualise success.

When you have a vision of yourself as someone who doesn't complete projects, then you think of yourself as that person. But if you tell yourself every day that you are a person who can complete things, you will begin to think and act like that person. If you are procrastinating on a big project, just start small and do something to move it forward, even if only for a short time. The next day do a little more on that project. A 1% improvement everyday can produce big results in the end.

5. Increased gratitude boosts motivation

Expressing gratitude for what you have will make you less likely to feel envious and fixated on what others have. Gratitude increases your energy and you appreciate things more. Expressing gratitude also makes you a lot more creative and deepens your motivation. Try this exercise: Think about the people most important to you Next, write down 5 things you are grateful for or appreciate about that person. You could tell them the 5 things or just keep it to yourself and sense how you are with that person the next time you meet. Another important focus for gratitude is yourself, what are you grateful for today? Taking the time to really appreciate what you have, will help increase motivation and also make you a lot happier.

6. Acknowledge Success

It is important to acknowledge your success and how far you have come. Review each day, look at what you did achieve, however small, and write it down. Think about rewarding yourself (e.g. If I get this Maths homework finished, I can spend more time talking to my friends).

Understanding you are achieving something is the key to keep motivation going.

Lastly give yourselves a pat on the back for however you are managing your day. Right now there is no right way or wrong way, only your way.