

finish it — be pleased you have something done, pick up the pieces and move forward from there.

- **Make sure your goals are realistic.** Your goals should be based on your abilities and circumstances. Don't establish constraints that make the realistic, unrealistic.
- **Remain flexible.** Anticipate bumps in the road and expect to work around them. If you are willing to redefine your goals to account for changed circumstances, you will remain motivated and on the path to success.
- **Break tasks into small quantities.** Sometimes we try to force ourselves to do too much — like trying to swallow all the hotdog at once so that we can eat our ice cream. A little writing often can be a very productive regime — a page a day makes a 365-page book at the end of the year.

Remember long-term goals for motivation.

There may be a time when you lose motivation because it's the same old task, day in and day out — and you're bored to tears with it. Sometimes just remembering your long-term goals is enough to remind you why the short-term tasks are important to your overall success.

In order to get motivated and stay motivated:

1. Identify your values, beliefs, and desires
2. Recognize your strengths and weaknesses and use this information to establish clear and realistic goals
3. Understand the role of personal circumstance
4. Realize that success is the merger of all three factors

When your goals are realistic and match your desires, you will be motivated. When you're

motivated and work hard toward your goals, you will succeed. When you succeed, your motivation will grow, you will set new goals, and you will continue to achieve.

Know yourself, know your circumstances, set realistic goals and start to succeed now!

Help is available

If your motivation and goal setting problems are too big to handle alone, help is available. Visit your local library or bookstore for books and magazine articles on motivation and goal setting. Check your community newspaper for motivation and goal setting skills classes or workshops. Talk to your student assistance program counselor at school or your employee assistance representative at work.

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MOTIVATION AND GOAL SETTING

Have you lost it? Or can't you get motivated in the first place?

Many people have difficulty at some time during their lives becoming motivated. Sometimes this is due to boredom with the task, topic, job or course of study. This pamphlet discusses some of the techniques you can use to stimulate your interest — or even just to become productive again.

Of course, there may not be any easy answers to the deep questions (the meaning of life, the unemployment rate, responsibility for sick family members) or personal problems that may need attention from qualified professionals, but sometime lack of motivation is a kind of sophisticated procrastination problem. This pamphlet has some practical suggestions for overcoming the inability to get started, and includes strategies for identifying values and goals.

Motivation, goal setting and success

Motivation is the combination of desire, values and beliefs that drives you to take action. These three motivating factors, and/or the lack of them, are at the root of why people behave the way they do. Because ultimately you control your values, beliefs and desires, you can influence your motivations. This means, if you consider something important and assign value to it, you are more likely to do the work it takes to attain the goal.

To understand what motivates you, you will need to understand what is important to you. If you have never thought about this question, do it now. Consider issues such as family,

relationships, learning/school, grades, work, money, aspirations, achievement, status, travel, social causes, etc. People's goals and desires grow from their values and beliefs. Once you have made your personal list, begin to think about how the items relate to one another. Are some issues more important to you than others? Are some more important in the short-term while others are more important in the long-term? Are they linked in some critical way? These issues and relationships are always alive inside us. By becoming consciously aware of them, you can begin to modify, control and understand them.

One of the keys to success is having a realistic view of your strengths and weaknesses. Do an informal assessment of your abilities. Reflect on what you have learned about yourself. An accurate and honest assessment of your abilities is essential. It prevents you from underestimating or overestimating your skills and directs you toward attainable and appropriate goals.

Knowing what you value and desire, along with an assessment of your strengths and weaknesses, makes it possible to establish personal goals. Most people already have a mix of short-term and long-term goals of some type in mind for themselves. Students often are aiming toward a particular test, project, class, grade point, degree, graduate program, professional school or career. These goals often are complemented by others, such as living a healthy lifestyle, maintaining personal integrity, volunteering, working, nurturing relationships or growing as a person. It is not unusual for short-term goals to support long-term goals. For example, a student's long-term goal to teach elementary school might

be supported by a series of short-term goals related to class attendance, study habits, project preparation, test performance and commitment to outside activities.

All goals, whether short-term or long-term, should support these common attributes:

- **Make sure your goals are clear.** The problem with many goals is that they are vague. "I must study tonight" is actually a nebulous goal – what specific tasks are you going to perform to "study?" It may be better to set a measurable goal, i.e. "tonight I'll read Chapter 6."
- **Focus on short-term goals.** There is no rule that says you must know exactly where you are going before you set off on our journey: You can make decisions about where to stop, where to eat and where to stay as you go along. In other words, you don't necessarily need to look further ahead than the next week or the end of the month. You can achieve a lot by concentrating on what is happening NOW and what specific tasks you need to do each day. The more you do, the more you'll be capable of doing.
- **Set a time frame.** Listing tasks to be done each day and then crossing the completed ones off your list is an effective motivator. Once you can see that today wasn't wasted — you did complete some or all of your tasks — you can start having more confidence in yourself.
- **Build in rewards.** When you're setting deadlines for yourself, make sure you include a pleasant consequence for completing the tasks. Too often, our goals and deadlines are emphasized with "or else," rather than with a positive result.
- **Look for successes.** Focus on what you have done, not what you've neglected. Perhaps you have started something but couldn't