

When Motivation Is a Problem

- **Who you are is more valuable than what you do.** Your worth as a person is not based on your intelligence, your grades, or how hard you work. It is enough to be **you**.
- **Practice impulse control** by contemplating the consequences of your actions. How will you feel afterwards? Then, act to satisfy yourself.
- **Write out a plan for yourself.** Jot down personal and academic goals and priorities, and reread them when you're in a slump.
- **Don't worry about or dwell on things that go wrong.** Concentrate on your successes. Remember that little successes build up just as quickly as little failures.
- **Give yourself time to change.** Forgive yourself for backsliding and making mistakes. Mistakes are a normal part of the learning process. Without them, learning is difficult to impossible. Most mistakes are mislabeled when they are really attempts that didn't work.
- **Don't choose to be a perfectionist.** Make approaching and the process of achieving your goals the basis of your self-respect rather than reaching your goals.
- **Don't allow feelings of inadequacy to get you down.** Think about all the things you do have going for you. Choose to believe in yourself.
- **Imagine the worst that could happen** if you're feeling down or hopeless. Exaggerate your fantasies and then smile at them. This puts your current situation in perspective.
- **When you're down, go to someone whom you know cares** for you and ask for a "pep talk" that reminds you of your good qualities, talents, and abilities and/or make a list of your good qualities and read them aloud.
- **Be willing to risk failure** for something you really care about. If you are willing to risk failure, you are also willing to risk success, too!

- **Learn to recognize when events are not turning out** as they should and act early to redirect your efforts to achieve satisfaction for you.
- **No one else is forcing you to do your work.** You've decided to take it on. Don't waste your energy on activities that don't move you toward your goals. That doesn't mean periodic rest and relaxation aren't important to include in your schedule.
- **Start early.** The sooner you start, the more time you'll have to learn from non-productive attempts and the sooner you'll be free to do other activities.
- **Expect a degree of tension.** Use that tension as energy to motivate yourself.
- **Different people have different styles of working.** For example, some people need competition to do their best, while others work better at their own pace.
- **Make long and harder tasks as comfortable for yourself as possible.** One way is to do them in short bits (but stay with it), do them in comfortable clothes, among friends, in familiar surroundings, with whatever you need to keep moving forward.
- **Pure motivation is rare.** Most of the time we mortals must keep plugging away before we can enjoy success. Sometimes the plugging can be very enjoyable.
- **Pause every now and then,** as needed, to remind yourself why you have chosen to take on certain work and what you expect to get out of it. Give yourself a pep talk.
- **Reward yourself** with a treat when you've done something you feel good about. You did it so you deserve the rewards.
- **Completed tasks keep interest and motivation higher.** If a large task is not completed, be sure to complete one or more small tasks before you quit for the day.