

# Increase your motivation

## Andrew Fuller

More students find it harder to remain motivated in third term than in any other. So this is the time to give yourself a mid-year tune up and rev up.

The most important thing to know is that not feeling motivated hasn't really got much to do with motivation. It has more to do with feeling anxious and worried. In fact this is the formula:

### **Fear + Worry = Loss of Motivation**

Motivation has more to do with overcoming your fears than anything else. It feels much easier to not put in than to risk failing at something. Fears loom larger if we try to avoid them.

### **Let's discuss the most powerful self-motivation techniques.**

#### **Set small goals and one large one.**

For each subject that you do at school set a small goal each week. For example a goal might read and understand chapter one. Write the goal down somewhere. When you have achieved that goal give it a tick.

Decide to make your favourite subject at school the one that you will "go for broke in". In this subject your aim is to top the class. This is the subject that you will use to judge yourself by.

#### **Get organised**

Get yourself up to date. If you have fallen behind in any subject, have a working bee to catch up. Ask others to help you. Ask teachers to help you by saying something like I lost motivation for a while in this subject but now I'd really like to catch up. If you have not been in the practice of taking notes, start. If you have become embarrassed about asking questions in class, set a goal of asking one question per class. If that is too embarrassing, ask the teacher after class,

If you've missed notes, ask for copies of them.

Write a revision summary for the subject to date topic by topic.

If your study area has become a mess, clean it up.

Use post-it notes to organise the steps towards a successful outcome.

On the first post-it note write the successful outcome you have in mind for that subject

Write the step before that

And the step before that

And the first step you could take.

You wouldn't enter a marathon without doing a series of shorter training runs first and the same thing applies to doing well at school. Regaining your motivation is a step by step process.

#### **Give up believing that you know how smart you are.**

Most people who feel unmotivated think everyone else knows more, is more talented, is smarter and has a lot more brains than they do. My research shows that most students have absolutely no idea how well they are going to do at school.

It is highly likely that you are more intelligent than you realise. It is also highly likely that most of the people around you in class are not quite as clever as they appear to be.

**Build on your strengths forget about your weaknesses,** Success in life is about doing more of what you are good at and less

of the things you are not good at. Serena Williams is not well known because she can do Maths, Einstein wasn't well known because he played soccer. When you focus on the things you find more enjoyable and interesting at school, even the things you find harder become easier.

**Use your time in school well.** Many people muck around in school and then wonder why they have to do so much work outside of school. Consider sitting towards the front in class. If you can focus and listen well while at school you can save yourself endless hours. This is valuable time saved that you can use for hanging out with friends and having fun.

**Be honest with yourself.** If you have felt unmotivated you may have done anything to avoid doing the study time. The world is full of excuses that you can make: "The dog needs a walk", "I have to finish this game and then I'll study", "I'll have a nap and study when I wake up". You have to be tough enough on yourself to do the work **BEFORE** you do the computer games/ TV watching/ chat room messaging etc.

Also be honest enough to admit to yourself that lying in bed, with the computer on, listening to music, with a DVD in the background and messenger open to chat with friends, is not and will never be, studying. Have some study time sitting up at a desk or table with **NO** electronic distractions on.

**Change your routine-** If you've been finding it difficult to get yourself motivated, change your set pattern. For example, study in a local library rather than at home or change the room you will study in.

Just as you learn to surf best by surfing, you learn to succeed in exams and essays by giving your undivided attention to your study. Practice in the same conditions you intend to perform in. There won't be electronics and music in the exam room.

### **Why should you care?**

You might be able to dismiss all of the above points by saying "I can't do it" or "I can't be bothered" or "This sucks." That is just the part of

you that is scared that is talking you out of it. The scared part thinks that if you try and fail, it will be much worse than never having tried in the first place.

Think about what would happen if you applied this type of thinking to the whole of your life. You wouldn't learn music and start a band because U2, Pink and 50 cent have already done it. You wouldn't talk to someone you like because they would reject you. You wouldn't go to a place you would really like, because it would probably disappoint you. You wouldn't live the life you could live because you would lack the daring and courage.

### **Give up fear and gain motivation**

You know the No. 1 fear of all time?

Death?	No.
Speaking in public?	No.

The number one fear that people have is that other people will think badly of them.

And you know what the biggest and saddest joke about that fear is?

Most people don't think about you at all. Most people are so busy or so focused on themselves that haven't got the interest or the energy to judge whether you are good at something or not.

So, there is a chance that you could throw away a really successful, enjoyable life by worrying about something that doesn't even exist. So as Yoda in Star Wars said there is only do or not do. It is up to you. But don't make what other people might think of you if you stuff up, a reason for giving up on yourself.

### **So why listen to me?**

I spend a lot of my time talking to adults who gave up on themselves at school and spend their lives doing boring jobs that don't pay very well.

I also spend even more of my time talking to students who have done really well in school after not being thought of as clever, or talented, or gifted or smart in any way. These students have taught me the ingredients of success. Now you have them too. What you do with them is up to you.