

Motivation & Goals



Learning Goals

The goal of this chapter is to help you learn how to:

1. Understand motivation, what influences it, and how to increase your motivation to succeed as a student.
2. Learn how to set S.M.A.R.T. goals.
3. Understand the value of motivation and goal setting as it relates to the SQSS and your student success.

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Motivation for College

To identify your current motivation for college, mark all of statements on the following checklist that are true for you. There are no right or wrong answers on this checklist. This is a self-reflective tool, so you will get the most out of it if you are honest.

In college ...	
_____	1. I am here to prepare for my future career.
_____	2. I go to classes mainly to get attendance points.
_____	3. I am here because I want to make a difference in my chosen profession.
_____	4. I turn in my homework so that I don't get a zero.
_____	5. I got to class because I'm interested in the subject matter.
_____	6. I'm taking liberal studies classes my first 2 years just to get them out of the way.
_____	7. I'm taking a class in my major this year because it interests me.
_____	8. I am only here to get a degree.
_____	9. I want to learn to know myself better and to mature.
_____	10. I am here because college graduates make more money than high school graduates.
_____	11. I want to learn how to plan and manage my future.
_____	12. I am here primarily because my parents want me to be.
_____	13. I am here to learn how to live independently.
_____	14. I'm here so I'll be able to support my family financially.
_____	15. I want to gain information and learn.
_____	16. I want to have the same status as friends who attend college.
_____	17. I want to feel confident in the choices I am making.
_____	18. I can avoid getting a full-time job and having to fully support myself.
_____	19. I want to learn how to plan and manage my future
_____	20. I am here because my best friend from high school is here as well.

Now count your responses to the even-numbered and odd-numbered items separately.

- If you checked more even-numbered items, you are more extrinsically motivated. That is, the major influences on your decisions in college originate outside of yourself. They come primarily from other people such as family or friends, or they lie in external conditions such as the job market.

(Continues)

- If you checked more even-numbered items, you are more intrinsically motivated. That is, the major influences on your decisions in college originate within yourself. You want a college education because you want to learn more about yourself and the world, because you seek challenge and the chance to develop your abilities, and because you want a satisfying career as well as a well-paying job.

While extrinsic motivation isn't wrong, intrinsic motivation tends to be a better predictor of student success. This is because intrinsically motivated students are able to empower themselves to succeed by using the goals and values that they have set for themselves. This kind of investment in a goal isn't easily shaken by outside circumstances or challenges. Such students see themselves as the initiators of action and they accept responsibility for their behavior. If your scores were a bit more extrinsic, college can provide experiences that will strengthen your intrinsic motivation. This chapter will help you understand more about the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and other influences on your motivation to be successful in college.

“You must give everything to make your life as beautiful as the dreams that dance in your imagination.”

— Roman Payne

A motive is the reason behind an action; it energizes our behavior and directs it toward a particular goal. To be motivated is to direct your efforts toward something. The result of motivation is usually an observable behavior. For example, if you're motivated to succeed in a class, we should be able to observe behaviors like always attending class, going to office hours, reviewing your notes, completing all of the assigned reading—all of which are supported by the same basic motivation. However, if you say you're motivated to succeed in a class but all we can observe is you binge watching a TV series, we can probably conclude with relative safety that you're not actually as motivated as you claim to be.

We often think of motivation as quantifiable. We say things like “I'm not very motivated” or “I'm really motivated” to accomplish a given goal. To some extent, that is correct; motivation can be thought of as a resource—something of which we can have either “enough” or “not enough.” In the following sections, we will discuss what affects motivation and how you can increase the amount you have.

Our definition of motivation also specifies that your efforts must be directed toward a particular outcome or goal. It's difficult to talk about motivation without talking about goals. As individuals, we are motivated by a variety of outcomes, goals, and needs. For example, we are born hardwired to satisfy our physiological needs for food, warmth, shelter, and safety. As we develop, we learn to be motivated by other things, usually shaped by our culture and community. For example, we are motivated by the goal to achieve and by the desire to please or help others. The last section of the chapter specifically addresses setting goals and constructing them carefully, which is a key to maintaining your motivation to succeed in college.



Reflection Question 2-1

What or who is motivating you to be successful in college? Identify the values, attitudes, people, ideas, and/or inspirations that are the driving forces behind your desire to succeed.

2.1 What Influences Motivation?

Career Connection



In the workplace, understanding what motivates an individual will be key to inspiring your team. A good leader leads with “why,” which creates the value and interest for colleagues to fully commit to a shared goal.

Motivation is a big concept that attempts to explain what drives our behavior. There are many different theories that explain different aspects of human motivation. In this section, the contributions that are most relevant to college students are summarized.

2.1a Extrinsic & Intrinsic Sources of Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is personal, or internal, to you. When you are intrinsically motivated to succeed, you are in college to learn more about yourself, you are personally invested in the challenge, you are interested in developing your knowledge and skills, and you are driven to get a degree, an education, and to pursue a career path. You can still be intrinsically motivated to succeed in college even if you haven’t yet chosen a major or a career. The important thing is that your motivation comes from within.

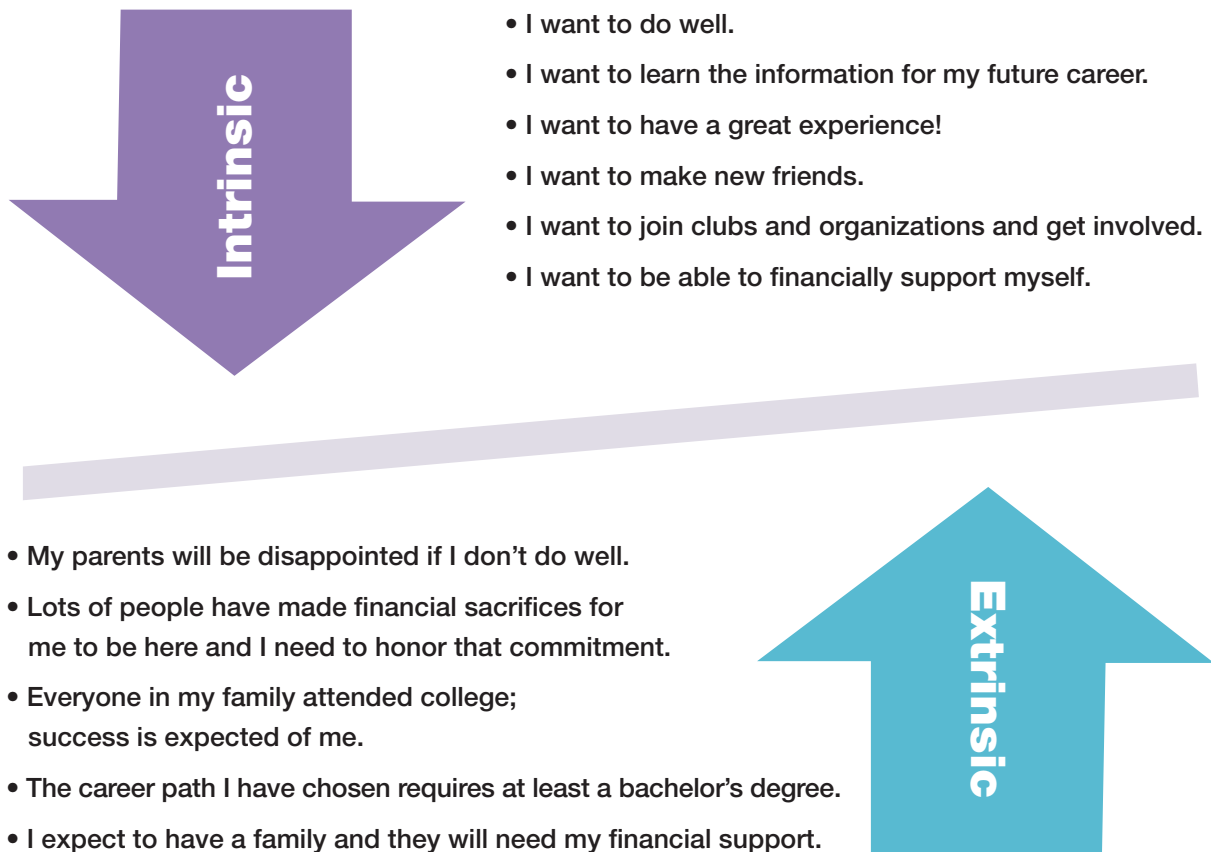


Flashcards are available
for this chapter at
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Extrinsic motivation is driven by factors that are outside of, or external to, you. When you are extrinsically motivated, the major influences that energize your behavior come from the university, your instructors, your family and friends, or the job market. If someone else is the major driving force behind your decision to attend college, you might find it difficult to maintain your motivation and ultimately succeed.

Students who are primarily intrinsically motivated do better than those who look to others for their source of inspiration and “push.” As you move from dependence to independence, you will see yourself becoming more interested in pursuing your own path and acting on your own initiative rather than complying with other’s wishes.

However, most of us are driven by a blend of internal and external sources of motivation. It’s all right to be motivated to learn because the topic interests you (intrinsic) and at the same time to be motivated to perform well and be acknowledged by your instructor as a good student (extrinsic). Sometimes we are only motivated by external factors until we begin to see the inherent value of a given goal; then our motivation shifts focus to more internal factors. Your parents probably forced you to eat vegetables as a child, but now you may have learned to see the value in their nutrition and to enjoy their taste. See Figure 2-1 for a summary of different sources of motivation for college success. You are probably motivated by sources from both the intrinsic and extrinsic sides, which is very appropriate.

FIGURE 2-1 Intrinsic & Extrinsic Motivations to Succeed in College

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2.1b Value

One of the key influences on your motivation is how much you value the outcome or goal. For example, if you really value the time you spend in a particular class and how effective the instructor is at helping you learn the information, you will be motivated to continue to go to class. If you value how you feel as a result of your exercise routine, you will continue to exercise.

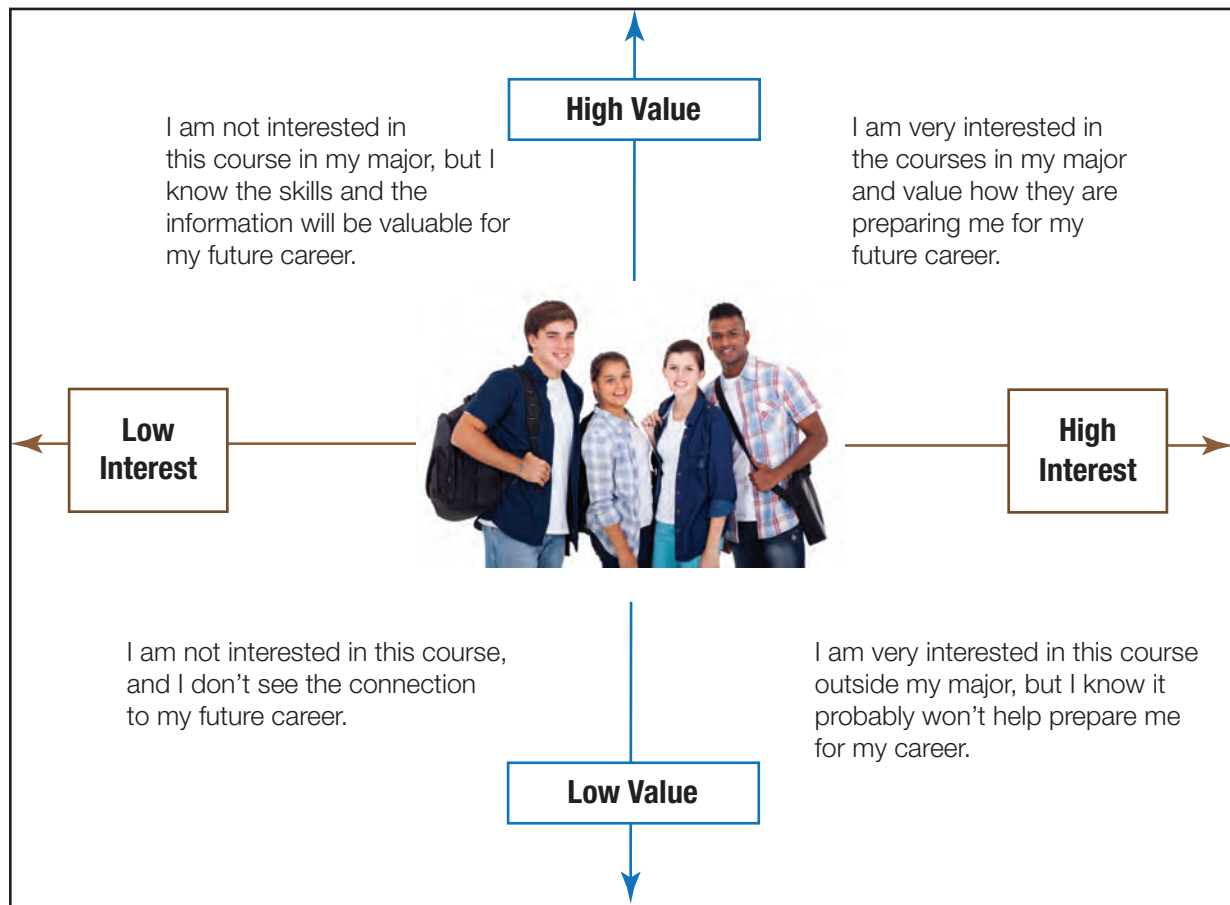
There are two areas of your college education to which you can ascribe value: the experience of going to college and the outcomes of that experience. Let's explore each one.

Experiences Attending college includes a myriad of experiences such as the day-to-day lifestyle in the residence hall, eating on campus, making friends, going to class, studying, and attending activities and events. This is particularly true for students who live on campus and who go to college soon after high school. What is the value of these experiences? If these things are going well, you probably perceive them to be of value and are excited each day to put in more effort into making new friends, attending more activities, and studying topics that interest you. For students who commute to campus or who choose to attend college later in life, the experience may take a backseat to the goal of getting a degree. Even for students living on campus, if these things are not going well, your desire to put effort into your college experience might be diminishing. Perhaps you find it difficult to get out of bed; maybe you've started to skip class and isolate yourself from others.

Outcomes Your college experience ultimately results in a set of outcomes. At the very least, finishing college means earning a degree. Along the way, perhaps you've made lifelong friends; created a network of mentors, advisors, and faculty; learned how to think critically; and have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in your career. It's likely that the reason you have chosen to attend college is because you already placed great value on those outcomes.

2.1c Interest

Another aspect that influences motivation is your level of interest in an outcome or goal. *Interest* is a feeling of wanting to learn more about, or be more involved in, something. It relates to motivation because if your interest is high, you will be more motivated to pursue something. For example, if you're very interested in practicing medicine, this should translate into motivation to do well in your science courses in the hopes of becoming a doctor. Interests are uniquely personal. Figure 2-2 shows some of the different ways our level of interest and ascribed value shape our thinking.

FIGURE 2-2 Individual Interest in, and Value of, College Courses

2.1d Supportive Beliefs

The next set of influences on motivation are belief systems that are supportive and result in an encouraging, constructive framework that drives motivation. Your thoughts about your potential to be successful, and how much control you feel you have over events in your life, can either support or squash your motivation.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is your belief that you can be effective or successful. If you believe that you will succeed in a certain task, then your motivation to put forth maximum effort will be high. If you believe you are likely to fail, then you might conclude that it's not worth trying at all. Your beliefs about your ability to be successful originate from several places:

Past Successes and Failures If you have done it before, you are likely to believe you can do it again, and vice versa.

Your Peers Seeing people similar to you achieving success can be very inspirational. If they can do it, you can to!

Your Mentors People around you can encourage you by telling you that they are confident that you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful.

These beliefs help us gauge whether or not effort is warranted. When we decide not to apply effort, we are not motivated.

Control

Locus of control

The extent to which people believe that their actions are determined primarily by their own behavior (internal locus) or factors outside of their control (external locus)

As individuals, we all hold certain beliefs about how much control we have over the events in our lives. As it relates to motivation, this is called your **locus of control**. Psychologist Julian Rotter (1971) coined the term *locus of control* to refer to the extent to which people believe that their actions are determined primarily by their own behavior or factors outside of their control. Individuals who operate with an *internal* locus (or source) of control believe that, in most situations, their own actions determine what happens to them. They accept responsibility for the consequences of their behavior (Greenberg and Baron 1995). For example, someone with an internal locus of control might think:

- I'm attending college because I choose to.
- My test scores are based on how hard I study.
- My friend is not speaking to me because I hurt her feelings. I can probably repair the situation by apologizing.

Individuals who operate with an *external* locus of control believe that much of what happens to them is caused by forces and events beyond their control. Often they hold fate, luck, or other people responsible for the good and bad things that happen to them. For example, someone with an external locus of control might think:

- The teacher gave me an A on the final exam because she's nice.
- I lucked into the promotion at work.
- I didn't get elected to student council because the current president doesn't like me.

You can shift your source of control from external to internal by changing your beliefs about what you can control and what you are responsible for. Students who operate from an internal locus of control know when to take credit for their accomplishments and when to assume responsibility for their mistakes. They feel and act empowered to exert considerable (but not total) control over their destinies. Individuals with an internal locus of control are more motivated because they understand how their effort can effect change and produce positive results.



Reflection Question 2-2

What are your most significant sources of internal motivation? What are your most significant sources of external motivation?

Fixed versus Growth Mindset

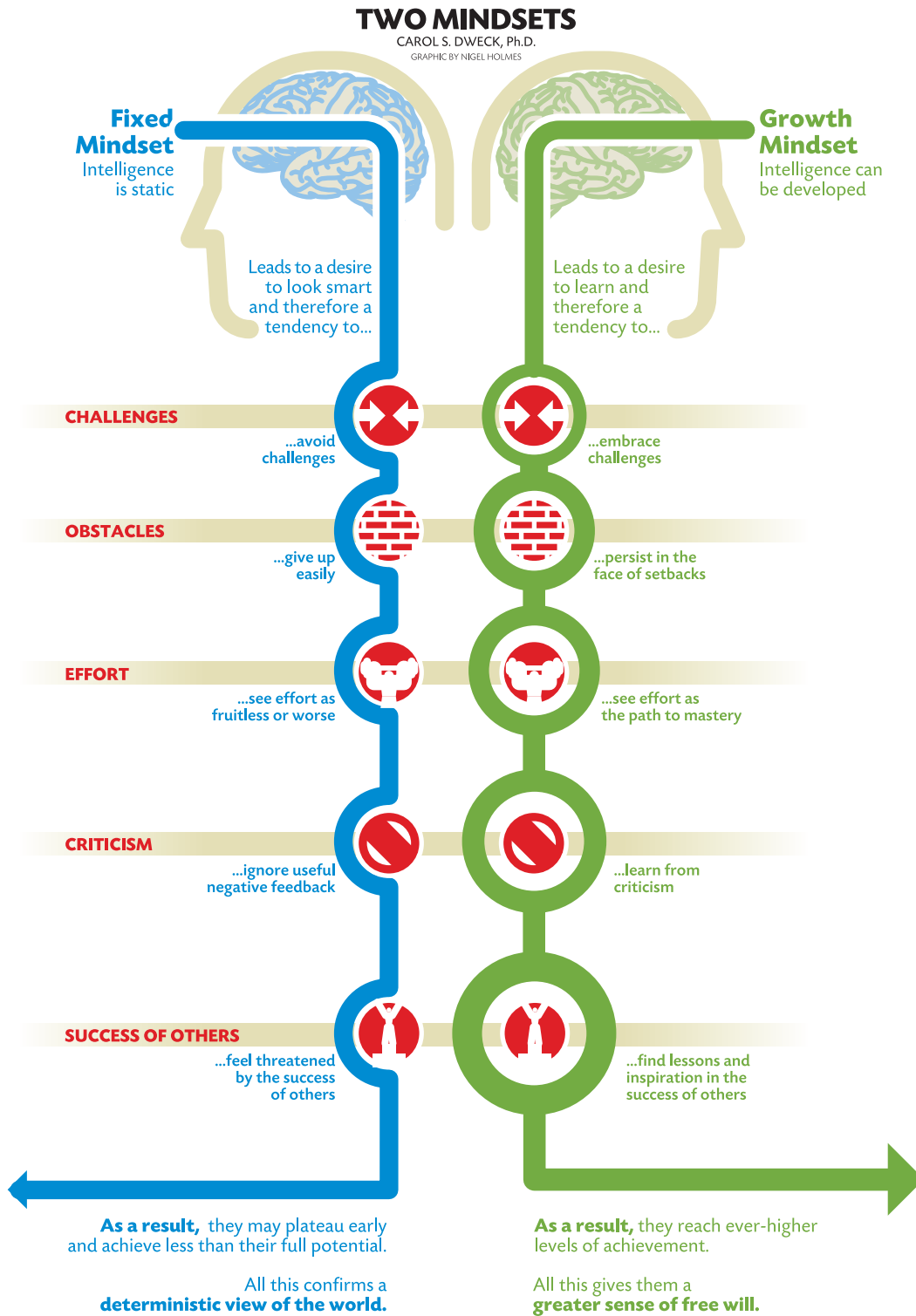
A *fixed mindset* is the belief that your qualities (like intelligence) and abilities (like the ability to learn a particular subject) are inherent and cannot be changed. Said another way, individuals with fixed mindsets believe that they cannot get better by applying effort. This doesn't necessarily mean they lack self-efficacy. They might believe they are inherently good at one subject, while feeling like they have no chance of ever improving at another. Students with a fixed mindset demonstrate motivation and resulting effort that is consistent with their fixed beliefs. For example, if you believe you aren't good in math, then you won't be motivated to put much effort into your math class.

A *growth mindset*, on the other hand, is the belief that your qualities and abilities can be developed through practice and effort. Even if you struggle with math, if you have a growth mindset, you will be motivated to go to office hours and tutoring and to work extra problems to practice and develop your math skills.

"Hope floats but effort propels."

— Rob Liano

It's important to note that there is no evidence that any individual abilities are truly fixed. We can all do better if we apply more effort. Adopting a growth mindset enables you to think positively about the situation and believe that your effort will produce better results, thus increasing your motivation to pursue your goals.

FIGURE 2-3 Fixed versus Growth Mindset

Grit

Grit is a particular aspect of motivation that refers to an individual's ability to stick with a goal over the long term, despite challenges and obstacles (Perkins-Gough 2013). It's based on a combination of your passion for the goal and your persistence in striving to achieve it. The more strongly you feel about the goal—the more you want it—the more likely you are to achieve it, no matter how difficult things may become. Grit is not only about overcoming performance barriers but also about doing a task over and over again and staying focused on goals over a long period of time. Success in college requires you to overcome many hurdles on the path to graduation.

2.2 How to Increase Motivation

To increase your motivation to succeed in college, you will need to address one or more of the influences that shape your motivation, sense of control, ascribed value, interest, and positive beliefs about your ability to succeed.

2.2a Reflect Within

Reflect on one or more of the influences on your motivation; see how you can change your thinking to create more motivation, and take action to do so. You must learn to be active in this process and not expect others to motivate you. Remember: *You* are the architect of your own future.

"Of course motivation is not permanent. But then, neither is bathing; but it is something you should do on a regular basis."

— Zig Ziglar

Reflect on Intrinsic & Extrinsic Sources

Reflect on the internal and external sources of your motivation. What or who is pushing you? If your primary sources are external, think about how your goal is personally relevant. If your primary sources are internal, think about those individuals that are supporting you and their reasons for wanting you to succeed.



Reflection Question 2-3

Think about all of the courses you are taking this semester. Which subjects do you have a fixed mindset about? Which do you have a growth mindset about? Think of at least three reasons why your fixed mindset is false by considering some recent progress—no matter how incremental or small—that you've made.

Reflect on Value

Look for the value in your goal. Quick Tips for Increasing the Value of Going to Class lists several valuable outcomes that frequent attendance can bring about. Does anything on the list personally connect with you? Visit with a faculty member or your advisor and ask them “why” questions: Why is this course included in my degree program? Why is this a prerequisite? The answers to these questions might help you identify more sources of value in your college experience and the subsequent desired outcomes.

Make a visit to your career center to identify internships, co-ops, and other employment opportunities. These preprofessional experiences will help you understand the connections between your coursework, your college experience, and your future career, further deepening the value of this journey.



Quick Tips

For Increasing the Value of Going to Class

These quick ideas will help you jump-start your motivation for going to class.

- » I will develop skills in listening and note-taking that will contribute to my personal and professional success.
 - » I can develop a working relationship with my instructor and possibly gain a mentor.
 - » I can make friends with my classmates.
 - » I will learn information for the test.
 - » I will be earning credits towards my degree.
 - » This course is a prerequisite for the next one, so I need to take it.
 - » It's more effective to go to class than to rely solely on reading the book.
 - » If I don't go, I don't know anyone to get notes from.
 - » If I don't go, I might lose attendance or participation points that can't be made up later.
 - » If I don't go, there might be a pop quiz that I miss and can't make up.
 - » Why not go? After all, I've already paid for it!
-

Reflect on Your Level of Interest

Do some research on your own to learn more about the topic or activity you are currently engaged in. Did you find out something that increased your interest? Delve deeper. If it's an assignment and you have some control over the topic, try to connect it to your major (if it isn't already). For example, an elementary education major taking an environmental science course could write their research paper on the best practices for teaching elementary school students about recycling (rather than an essay on the benefits of paper versus plastic grocery bags). Now, not only is the topic more interesting because it relates to the student's major, but it also has increased value because this information could be used later in the student's future career as a teacher!

Reflect on Your Self-Efficacy

What activities or tasks do you do best? Which ones give you the greatest confidence? Look to others for words of encouragement or inspiration. Identify a role model who has successfully achieved your goal. What helped them succeed? Talk to your instructors and advisors to learn how other students have been successful. Reflect on your own situation. If you have low self-efficacy, is it founded in real concerns or just an overall fear of failure? What can you change about your behavior to overcome any perceived barriers to success?

Reflect on What You Can Control

Carefully analyze your goals and identify the aspects over which you have direct control. Your time, your focus, and your energy are all positive attributes that you bring to the table and that you can control. In an academic setting, you will rarely get to control what you are learning, what you are tested on, or how hard the test is—but you can control how thoroughly you study.

Reflect on Your Mindset

Adopt a growth mindset and carefully watch yourself for incremental change. Everyone learns to walk before they can run. What did you get better at today? What will you get better at tomorrow?

2.2b Use Your Willpower

The difference between motivation and willpower is the difference between “go” and “stop” (Markham 2012). Your motivation drives you to put forth effort, or to “go” and do something. Your willpower, on the other hand, is the ability to resist temptations that get in the way of your goal. This self-control gives you the ability to say “no” or “stop.” For example, you might be highly motivated to study and, therefore, are reading your textbook in the library. Then you get a text inviting you to a party. Your motivation got you to the

library, but your willpower will keep you there. Invoke your willpower and resist those temptations that threaten to get in the way of your goals. Here are some ideas for harnessing your willpower:

- *Think about something else.* Focusing on what you are trying to avoid, or what you can't have, will only deplete your willpower.
- *Manage your stress.* That way you can put all your energy towards increasing your motivation and willpower.
- *Use self-affirmations.* Remind yourself of your goals—and that you are capable of achieving them. Put your goals or inspirational words on sticky notes, your phone screen, your mirror, or anywhere else you'll see them frequently.
- *Be healthy.* If you are tired, it's easy to lapse into bad habits and make poor choices. Nutrition and exercise are integral parts of having the energy to manage your motivation and willpower.
- *Take it one step at a time.* Rather than focusing on the whole list, just do one thing at a time so you're not overwhelmed.
- *Avoid temptation.* If you are likely to become distracted from studying by your phone or the internet, turn those things off. It's often easier to avoid temptation than to fight it.

2.2c Create a Motivating Environment

Organizing the objects in your environment is sometimes easier than organizing things like ideas, feelings, and attitudes—which can't be seen or touched. If you are feeling overwhelmed, start by cleaning up the area around you. This real-world organization will jump-start the psychological organization necessary to move forward.

Begin each day in a goal-oriented way. Include a motivational habit in your morning routine. Read your favorite inspirational quote (such as those we insert in each chapter), make some notes in your journal, visualize yourself in your first job, or revisit your goals. Create a quick ritual that focuses you on your priorities and goals. Morning exercise and a focus on the day's activities can be an excellent way to start your engine. In addition, design your physical environment to promote good study habits by removing distractions. Remember to schedule when you work on your reading and assignments to optimize your energy and concentration.



Visit www.BVTLab.com to explore the student resources available for this chapter.



Quick Tips

For Increasing Motivation

These quick ideas will help you kick-start your motivation.

- » Find out about internships or summer work experiences related to your desired career.
 - » Read job descriptions for entry-level positions in your desired career. Are you ready for a job like that now? If not, what do you need to do to get there?
 - » Meet with a mentor.
 - » Write your goals on notecards and post them where you'll see them daily.
 - » Read the biographies of people you admire. Look for the key factors that enabled them to deal with obstacles.
 - » Reward yourself!
 - » Take a small break.
 - » Be clear about the benefits of completing your goal.
 - » Just work on one small step—don't let the rest overwhelm you.
 - » Visualize yourself at graduation.
-

“If it doesn’t challenge you, it won’t change you.”

— Fred DeVito

2.2d Study Smarter, Not Harder

The use of good study strategies is a key component of motivating yourself to study. If you are anxious about your study process and not confident that your current techniques will produce results, you might avoid studying altogether. On the other hand, if you are confident that what you are doing works, you will be motivated to refine your techniques and create a process for yourself that is efficient and effective. In other words, your study techniques will be smarter—not necessarily harder or more time-consuming.

Another aspect of studying smarter is to be very goal-oriented about your study time. Frame each specific task in relationship to your short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. How are your goals affected when you read that chapter, finish that problem set, or write that paper? Making that connection explicit can be very motivating.

During your study sessions, periodically stop and monitor your performance. Are you making progress? What have you learned? Seeing how far you've come should feel good and motivate you to keep going. Do you notice incremental improvements in your ability to read, review, concentrate, and/or solve problems? Your effort is paying off. Keep it up!



Reflection Question 2-4

When you feel a lack of motivation, how do you normally address it? Which of the ideas above for increasing motivation seem the most useful to you personally, and why?

2.3 Goals

A goal is something that you are trying to achieve. It is the outcome or result of the effort you are putting forth. Goals are different than dreams or desires because a goal is something you plan to act on—something that will eventually have a result.

Goal setting is the process of identifying a specific outcome and the steps that it will take to reach it. The process of goal setting is a valuable planning technique and will apply not just to your college experience but to your personal life and your future career, as well. Successful college students establish goals and review them often.

2.3a Setting S.M.A.R.T Goals

Effective goals have five common characteristics. They are specific, measurable, action-oriented, relevant (or realistic), and time-based. Let's examine each one of these characteristics as they apply to your college experience.

FIGURE 2-4 S.M.A.R.T. Goals



Career Connection



S.M.A.R.T. goals began in the business sector thanks to Peter Drucker and his book, *The Practice of Management* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006). This concept is not only valuable for students but also helps a company focus on specific and actionable plans that are delivered on time and with positive return on investment.

Effective goals have five common characteristics. They are specific, measurable, action-oriented, relevant (or realistic), and time-based. Let's examine each one of these characteristics as they apply to your college experience.

Specific

Your goals should be as specific as possible in describing what you are trying to achieve. Avoid sweeping statements such as “get good grades” or “lose weight” and be more specific about exactly what you want. The following goals are all very specific.

- My goal is to get at least a B in biology.
- My exercise goal is to run a 5K.
- My goal for studying is to read two chapters of my ethics book.

Measurable

Your goals should also be measurable—otherwise, how will you know when you've achieved them? How will you track your progress toward your goal? What will indicate that your goal has been met? What type of feedback will help you measure your progress? Returning to our earlier examples:

- *My goal is to get at least a B in biology.*

Your overall grade in biology is a culmination of many smaller grades on tests, papers, homework assignments, quizzes, and the like. By tracking each of these little grades, you can measure your progress toward an overall grade of B or higher.

- *My exercise goal is to run a 5K.*

While it should be clear when this goal is completed (you'll be crossing a finish line), it's more difficult to measure your progress. Chances are, you'll have to train before you can hope to achieve this goal. Setting smaller goals along the way will help you work your way up to your final goal of running a 5K, and your ability to meet these smaller goals will help you track your progress.

- *My goal for studying is to read two chapters of my ethics book.*

This is perhaps the most easily measured goal of the three! You can count the total number of pages in those two chapters and monitor your progress as you complete the reading assignment.

Action-Oriented

A goal should not only be measurable but also achievable through a given *action* you plan to take. Using words like, *start*, *stop*, *increase*, *decrease*, and *maintain* in your goal statement can help you create action steps for your goal. You should be able to state your specific goal as a measurable action.

- *My goal is to get at least a B in biology, so I will attend all of the classes and complete all of the assigned reading.*
- *My exercise goal is to run a 5K, so I will start going on runs every morning.*
- *My goal for studying is to read two chapters of my ethics book, so I will stop watching television and get to work!*

“Do you want to know who you are? Don’t ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you.”

— Thomas Jefferson

Relevant or Realistic

Your goal should be relevant to your needs and something you can realistically achieve. Keep in mind that relevance also means making your goals personal. Did your parents set the goal of you getting a 4.0 GPA, or did you think that was personally necessary, as it would help you get into medical school? Having personally relevant goals increases your motivation to achieve them.

Realistic goals are challenging but attainable. They push us, but not toward doing something that is impossible. If the challenge is minimal, and there is little or no reason to work on the goal to begin with, then your motivation to accomplish the goal will be low. Conversely, setting goals that are too high can also result in a lack of motivation, as your self-efficacy will tell you not to put forth effort when you are likely to fail. Returning to our examples, let's look at how these three goals might be relevant and realistic.

- *My goal is to get at least a B in biology.*

Bio is a prerequisite for anatomy and physiology, which is required for my major, so I should try to do my best to learn this subject matter. Getting a B is realistic for me because I earned all A's and B's in high school biology.

- *My exercise goal is to run a 5K.*

Running is something I personally enjoy and it lowers my stress and helps me stay fit. This goal is realistic because I can already run a 2K without too much trouble.

- *My goal for studying is to read two chapters of my ethics book.*

Reading the assigned chapters will help me understand the next lecture and, eventually, will help my GPA in this course. This goal is realistic because the chapters are short and I have all evening set aside for this task.

For further help determining if your goal is realistic, follow these two simple steps:

1. Evaluate your past accomplishments and failures in areas related to your current goal. Although past experience is not always an accurate predictor of future performance (due to factors like maturity, instructor teaching style, and other internal or external circumstances), it is still something to consider. For instance, if you've always done poorly in biology courses in the past, it might be unrealistic to aim for an A+. Setting a goal of "at least a B" is more realistic.
2. Advance one step at a time. If you have no idea where to start, your goal might be too large. Try breaking it down into smaller, more achievable goals.

Student Success Showcase

Guadalupe Quintanilla moved to the United States from Mexico when she was in the first grade. Because she could only speak Spanish, she found herself unable to understand what was going on in class. She eventually dropped out.

Years later, married with three children, Guadalupe saw the same cycle repeating when her own children were put in a slow track class because of their English skills. She became determined to help them and enrolled in a community college English course. While her first semester was “a tremendous ordeal,” she was motivated by her family. After class she would do housework, feed her family, help them with their homework, and then start on her own. She discovered she could learn and that she wanted more. She went on to complete not only her associate’s and bachelor’s degrees but eventually a doctorate. Here are her own words about her journey:

It was a long and difficult journey but definitely worth it. I learned a lot during that journey. I learned that success is personal and that we must have our own definition of it in order to accomplish it. I realized that my formula to success can be described in three steps: you want, you plan, and you persist. The challenge in step one is to know the difference between wanting and wishing. I wanted to learn to help my children in school; wishing would not have been enough. Step two, planning or goal setting, simply means: Where do you want to go with your life? If you do not know, you are never going to get there. Step three, persistence, is in my opinion the best antidote to failure. One has not failed until one stops trying.

I also realized during my journey that I am, as the poet Amado Nervo said, “the architect of my own destiny.” I also learned two very important lessons: one, that I can do anything that I really want to do; two, that it is a privilege to have the opportunity to learn. Furthermore, I realized that it is okay to have limitations, e.g., I speak with an accent, but that we must not turn those limitations into excuses.

- a. What specific motivational strategies did Dr. Quintanilla use that facilitated her academic success?
- b. Which of the SQSS were also part of Dr. Quintanilla’s approach to managing her success in college?

Sources: Adapted from: Quintanilla, Guadalupe. 1996. “Almost a Failure.” Keynote presented at the National Association of Developmental Education, Little Rock, AR, February 29

Time-Based

You should have some idea from the beginning of when you hope to accomplish your goal. You should also set aside time to work toward it. This will make you accountable (at least to yourself) for starting on the goal, putting forth consistent effort as you work toward it, and finishing it on time. Having a timeframe will help you maintain your motivation as you strive to meet your deadlines.

- *My goal is to get at least a B in biology.*

The timeframe for this goal is the span of a semester. This kind of goal should be set at the beginning of the term rather than at the end, when it may be too late. If you set the goal after a rocky start to the course, the timeframe may mean your goal is no longer realistic simply because there aren't enough points left to earn in order to recover your grade.

- *My exercise goal is to run a 5K.*

The first question you should be asking is: When is the race? If you start preparing too soon, you could end up taking too many days off, not pacing yourself properly, or losing your motivation altogether. If you start training too late, you might not be able to achieve the necessary level of physical fitness without risking injury.

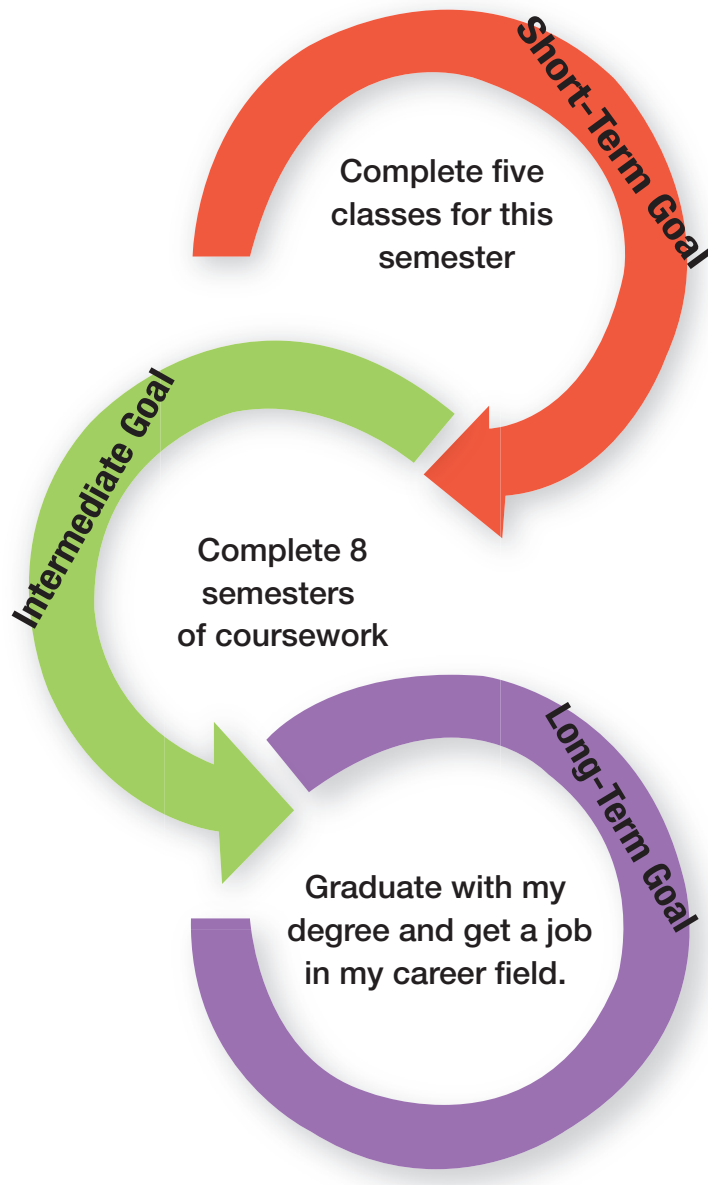
- *My goal for studying is to read two chapters of my ethics book.*

How much time does it take you to read two chapters? How long before the class where those chapters will be discussed? If it's 10 p.m. the evening before a reading quiz, you may not have time to read the chapters and get a good night's sleep. This may be another example of when the timeframe renders a goal unrealistic.

2.3b Mapping Bigger Plans

In order to achieve your most complex and ultimate goals, you will need to map out long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals along the way. Your college experience, your financial well-being, and your career are all areas that will likely need a more complex map that includes several levels of goal planning.

FIGURE 2-5 Short-Term, Intermediate, & Long-Term Goals for College



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Long-Term Goals

Long-term goals typically take several years to achieve and may be less specific than a S.M.A.R.T. goal. Think 4, 5, or 10 years into the future. Will you have graduated from college? Where will you be working? In what position? Typical long-term goals for first-year college students might include:

- Graduate in 4 years.
- Obtain an entry-level position in my chosen field.

- Be accepted into a graduate program.
- Have a lifelong network of friends from college.

“All great achievements require time.”

— Maya Angelou

Intermediate Goals

To reach your long-term goals, you must establish and achieve intermediate goals. *Intermediate goals* are the specific and realistic steps that act as milestones along the path to reaching your long-term goals. They might be accomplished after several months or a year. Typical intermediate goals for first-year college students might include:

- Complete 8 semesters of coursework.
- Get an internship in my career area.
- Become a TA for a class in my major.
- Become an officer in a student organization relevant to my major.

Short-Term Goals

To reach your intermediate goals, you must establish and achieve short-term goals. *Short-term goals* are specific and realistic objectives that you can accomplish within a relatively short period of time. Think of it like a Russian nesting doll: Intermediate goals are the steps required to accomplish your long-term goals; short-term goals are even smaller steps required to accomplish your intermediate goals. Short-term goals are small enough that they can (and should) be expressed as S.M.A.R.T. goals. Typical short-term goals for first-year college students might include:

- Study biology for an hour each night so that I can get at least a B on my midterm exam.
- Visit the career center during my first semester so that I can learn about internship opportunities related to my major available this summer.
- Introduce myself to at least one person in each of my classes during the first week so that I have someone to study with and can make new friends.

Career Connection



Most organizations map their larger plans and goals in the form of a strategic plan. This typically leads with a vision statement outlining where the group aspires to be in the next 5 years; this is usually followed by a mission statement that describes what the organization plans to do, generally, and then very specific strategies and goals for how they will achieve their 5-year vision.



Reflection Question 2-5

Do you set a specific grade goal for each of your courses? Reflect on your past experiences as a student, generally, and in each of your subjects, specifically; now set a goal for each course.

2.3c Getting Feedback About Your Goals

Can you imagine becoming a good skier or an accomplished musician without receiving feedback about your performance? How would you feel about spending 4 months in a new job or completing an entire college course without any kind of evaluation? Research demonstrates that goal attainment is made easier by systematic feedback (Greenberg and Baron 1995).

Obtaining feedback is part of having a growth mindset. When you commit to yourself and your goals, you are committing to evaluating the progress you're making in reaching those goals. "How am I doing?" and "What can I do to improve?" are questions you should constantly be asking—both in college and beyond. It's important to find people whose feedback you can trust. Feedback that's too soft or lavish won't help you grow; feedback that's too harsh may discourage you from achieving your goals. Constructive feedback should point out both what you're doing well and what you can do to improve.

2.4 Connect to Campus

If your motivation is low and you're having difficulty improving it on your own, there are several places on campus where you could go for assistance. Everyone has experienced low motivation from time to time and has their own personal strategies for kick-starting their drive to succeed. Their ideas might work for you or give you inspiration for how to change your own situation. Here are some ideas for where to go on your campus for assistance with motivation:

- *Faculty* Faculty members were students once and still juggle the demands of a full-time job and their personal lives. During office hours, choose one of your instructors who seems likely to relate to you more personally. Be clear about what specific things you are finding difficult and ask for ideas about how to motivate yourself in those areas.
- *Tutors or Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leaders* These are usually your peers—students just like you. They have already demonstrated their ability to be successful, so they have first-hand experiences motivating themselves to achieve. Ask them what they do when their motivation is low.
- *Career Center* You can specifically address your long-term goals by visiting your campus career center to find out about internships and service learning opportunities that will connect you to your career. By having a more direct experience in a professional setting, the value of your long-term graduation will increase, as will your interest in your courses and program of study.
- *Campus Counseling* Your campus counseling center is a great place to go when you're feeling so overwhelmed that you are no longer able to put energy into achieving your goals. A counselor is trained to help you identify the performance barriers and obstacles that are getting in your way and help you strategize how to clear your path so you can back on the road to success.

2.5 Connecting Motivation to Your Career

Motivation in the workplace is a key issue for management and workers alike. The term “workplace engagement” is currently receiving considerable attention in the business world. It refers to the extent to which an employee is truly committed to their work. Promoting workplace engagement is the joint responsibility of the employee and the employer. If you don't feel valued and are not interested in your set of responsibilities, you won't feel motivated and your productivity and/or the quality of your work could suffer as a result. A good leader will make sure to explain the “why” behind all projects to ensure everyone has the same vision for their collective results. You want to be placed in a career that motivates you beyond the paycheck you bring home.

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Therefore, it's important when you are conducting your first major job search that you look carefully at the organization's strategic plan. Is this a vision and mission that is personally meaningful to you? Will you feel empowered in your role? These are key aspects to your ability to stay in that role and earn promotions down the road. However, you may find yourself in a situation where the leader, the tasks, the environment, or other factors of your job do not generate positive motivation and you have no other job possibilities. Such situations do occur, and your challenge will be to remain engaged enough to complete your work satisfactorily until conditions change or until you find a different job, while keeping your intermediate and long-range goals in sight.

Paul's Note

My primary motive for attending college was mostly extrinsic—my parents and older siblings put pressure on me, and I also wanted to delay having to enter the military draft (Yes, I go back that far!). As a result of my mostly extrinsic motivation, lack of study skills, and inability to manage time with all the freedom I had, my freshman grades were a disaster. After a family move and transfer to a college where I could commute, I began gradually to mature educationally (i.e., to recognize that learning can be interesting in itself, that good grades were not my only goal, that I should become the locus of my control, and that I could achieve higher grades if I worked harder). It felt good to become self-efficacious about my courses. By my junior year, my motivation had shifted significantly from primarily extrinsic to mostly intrinsic, and the satisfaction that resulted strengthened both my self-efficacy and locus of control. Then nothing could stop me from achieving my goals.

Rebecca's Note

In the last couple of years, I've started dreaming up some personal challenges such as 100 days of consecutive running, 50 days of clean eating, and a lifetime ban on diet soda. Each time I use the same approach. I first do some research to develop the specifics (e.g., What's the minimal mileage of the run? What foods are clean and unclean? Why is soda bad for me?). Once I have the information, I set the specifics of my challenge (e.g., 1 mile, no sugar, no soda), which creates relevance and makes the plan realistic. For example, I had rejected the idea of "100 Happy Runs" because I knew I didn't have time to run a 5K every day. Once I shifted my thinking to a daily 1-mile minimum, the goal became more realistic. Then I create a countdown using a phone app and reset the lock screen to see my daily progress. This is very motivational for me. At some point in the process, I share my goal with others. I was so anxious about my running goal that I didn't share it until I had run for 75 days in a row! When I shared my diet soda tally, students and faculty starting dropping by my office to share their own struggles with that particular habit. Their stories were very inspiring, which motivated me further. The elements of S.M.A.R.T. goals are part of my process, even if I don't label each step in that particular way.

Closing Comments

This chapter focused on motivation and how it influences your success in college. There are many factors that influence motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation, the value we ascribe to a given goal, our interest in it, the extent to which we feel we can control it, and the beliefs that support us in our various pursuits. These factors can all be positive influences in increasing your motivation if you monitor each and adjust your thinking and behavior as needed. How goal setting affects your future and your motivation was also explored, and the process for setting goals that are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Relevant/Realistic and Time-Based) was detailed. By carefully monitoring your motivation during college, you are accepting responsibility for your success. This will greatly enhance your college experience and help you achieve your long-term goal to graduate.



EXTEND YOUR EXPERIENCE

What, So What, and Now What?

1. *What* are four of the influences on motivation and how can you use those influences to increase your own motivation?
2. *So what* is the value of setting S.M.A.R.T. goals to you?
3. *Now what* will you do next to improve your motivation?

SQSS Reflection

One of the SQSS is motivation. Explain how at least one of the other SQSS relates to motivation.

Your Campus Quiz

1. Where on campus can you go to get help with motivation and goal setting?
2. What would you need to do to prepare for a visit to that campus resource?
3. What might prevent you from seeking help?

Case Study

Maddie had a larger goal of graduating from college with some type of business degree that would allow her to make a six-figure income. She thought business was best way to make lots of money. In her first semester of college, she is taking several liberal studies (general education) courses that will apply to all of the available business majors. Since they aren't actually business courses, she's just going to do well enough to pass them to get it over with. She was a pretty good student in high school and never needed to study much, so her approach to the first round of exams is just to do some review the evening before and see how it goes. There are lots of options for completing these requirements, and if she doesn't like the ones she's enrolled in, she plans to just switch them out next term for others to replace any she's doing poorly in.

1. How would setting S.M.A.R.T goals for each of Maddie's courses help her?
2. What are at least three different possible negative outcomes of her approach to just repeat or replace any courses she does poorly in? Could any of those negative outcomes be used as intrinsic or extrinsic sources of motivation?
3. What campus resources should she use to increase her motivation for the courses she is enrolled in now?

Projects

Project 2-1: College Success Interview

For this project, you will interview at least one individual (ask your instructor what the project requirements are) about their experience in college and what led to their college success. You will use your interviews to see what lessons can be gleaned that apply to your own situation.

1. Identify a faculty or staff member at your college who would be receptive to a brief interview. Think about someone who has already helped you and with whom you've established a friendly relationship.
2. Make an appointment for your interview. Respect their time and get the interview off on the right foot by scheduling this conversation at a time that's convenient for them.
3. Ask the following open-ended questions. (Use good listening skills; give them time to think about their answers; don't interrupt, but nod and acknowledge their answers. Take good notes, and thank them for their time.)
 - a. Tell me about your college experience.
 - b. What obstacles did you face in graduating or being successful?
 - c. Looking back, what individuals, resources, or opportunities were central to your success? How were they helpful?
 - d. If you could go back and do it over again, what's one thing you would change?
 - e. What's one thing you wish all students knew about how to be successful in college?
4. Reflect on your interview and write a brief reflection that addresses the following:
 - a. What influenced their motivation to succeed in college?
 - b. How does learning about their experience help you understand the college experience better?
 - c. Based on what you've learned in this interview, how can you motivate yourself to be more successful?
 - d. What will you do differently as a result of your interview?

Project 2-2: Goal Mapping Your Semester

Step 1: Envision Your Long-Term Goals

Envision yourself in your first job after graduation. What are you doing?

Step 2: Identify Your Intermediate Goals

To reach your long-term goal of career placement after graduation, you must establish and achieve intermediate goals. Remember that intermediate goals are the specific and realistic steps that are milestones along the path to reaching your long-term goals. What are four specific and realistic steps that you will need to achieve to make your job placement a reality?

Step 3: Plan Your Short-Term S.M.A.R.T. Goals

To achieve your intermediate goals, you must have a very specific plan. Using the S.M.A.R.T. goal characteristics, map out a plan for one of the intermediate goals you identified in Step 2.

S: _____

M: _____

A: _____

R: _____

T: _____

Step 4: Be Proactive

Look at your S.M.A.R.T. goal and think about some of the performance barriers that might become obstacles to your success. Describe at least two potential barriers and steps you can take to prevent them from getting in the way of your goal.
