

## **STUDY SAMURAI LIBRARY TIP FOR APRIL: HOW STUDENTS GET THEMSELVES MOTIVATED TO DO ACADEMIC WORK**

*The following is extracted from 'Regulation of Motivation: Evaluating an Underemphasized Aspect of Self-Regulated Learning' by C. Wolters. (Educational Psychologist, 2003, 38(4), pp.189-205).*

1. **REWARDS:** Many students set rewards for themselves "I'll read this section then I can eat this sandwich". Some students use the opposite, punishments; they create consequences for themselves where they will deprive themselves if they do not do the work.
2. **SELF-PRAISE:** Some students find that recognising their progress to themselves and praising themselves for their efforts creates a more positive mental environment and encourages them to keep going. Comments such as "Well done, you've solved yet another problem" can help create mental stamina.
3. **GOAL-ORIENTED SELF-TALK:** Students who think about why they are studying or what possible future outcomes could be from putting in effort can also strengthen the effect of these thoughts by making sub-vocal statements while they are engaged in an academic activity. When faced with an urge to stop working they may focus on the thought of getting better marks, or getting into a particular course at uni or even the satisfaction of learning a new skill or developing self-discipline.
4. **INTEREST ENHANCEMENT:** This involves looking for ways to make the task to be completed more interesting or enjoyable. Even making slight modifications to make something less boring or repetitive. One student found that by writing notes in a different style it made the activity more inspiring.
5. **ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURING:** This is also referred to as resource management and is all about removing temptations and creating an environment that is more conducive to studying. It may even mean studying in a different location such as a local or school library in order to stay focused on the tasks to be completed.
6. **PROXIMAL GOAL-SETTING:** Breaking larger tasks into smaller more manageable chunks will help students to feel more motivated about what needs to be done. Setting specific and achievable short-term goals with an allocated time-frame can help increase students' sense of efficacy.
7. **DEFENSIVE PESSIMISM:** "I think about how unprepared I am in order to get myself to work harder". There is mixed research about this approach and the negativity involved. However every student is different and for some students making themselves a bit anxious about what they haven't done may be necessary to get them to start doing their work.
8. **EMOTIONAL CONTROL:** Thoughts produce feelings, feelings lead to actions. If we can make our thoughts and feelings more positive, this can lead to more positive actions. When students are feeling unmotivated, strategies such as taking a short amount of time to close their eyes and engage in deep slow breathing, or counting slowly backwards from 10 while thinking positive reassuring thoughts about their abilities to do what has to be done has been found to be beneficial.

Learn more about developing motivation at [studysamurailibrary.com](http://studysamurailibrary.com)

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