



How to Build Self Motivation

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Success is the result of hard work, discipline and self motivation. Of these three factors, self motivation is the most important, because it propels the student forward, to run the extra mile and to take on new challenges; rather than doing “just enough” to get by. It is also the hardest to build, especially when the student is dealing with issues like low performance and self esteem.

What exactly is self motivation? It means that you are driven for success, rather than pushed. It means that even if no one else is there watching you, you work hard and push yourself, for yourself. You work hard because you want to, not because you have to. If you can dig deep down to find your template for motivation, commitments and hardwork becomes your second nature, and along with your successes.

In this article, I will discuss the idea of self motivation and how to build it, and there are 3 key steps:

1. Set your goals and think big

Self motivation feeds off of *inspiration*. Imagine yourself in the best dream in the future. What do you want? What do you dream of? What if I told you that it is completely possible to be where you want to be in that perfect future? Let's paint a picture.

Imagine yourself ten, fifteen, twenty years from now. Really take a moment and think about this. Focus on the details. What will you be doing? What career path will you be on? What field will you be working in? Will you be well known? Successful? Maybe you want to help others, or maybe you want others working for you. What you imagine is very important because this is what you will aim for. Success begins with building a future and expectations in your mind. With hard work and perseverance, you can achieve this dream and turn it into a reality.



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1. Set your goals and think big

Now that you have your ideal future in mind, work backwards to the present. Start small and start specific. Let's say you want to become the brain surgeon of a hospital. What does that translate to in high school? Perhaps you'll set yourself the goal of 85% in Chemistry this semester. Then next year, try upping that to 90%. Remember, your goals should be a staircase to your dream. When you leap forward – make them realistic and take solid steps, and focus on building a good foundation.

2. What motivates you?

This is one of the hardest aspects of self motivation. It is easy to dream big, but much harder to work towards it. Thus, we need to find out what motivates you. Is peer recognition? Feeling of success? I once had a student who with extremely low motivation and self esteem. With the marks dangerously low in the 30% in math, he came to me and I began to tell him that he was able to become a top student if he was willing to try. He bought into it and decided for himself that for one summer, he would try real hard to turn his situation around. Over the summer, he practiced his math everyday for 4-5 hours, strengthening his skills. A year or so later, he was in the 90% range. But where does the motivation stem from? As his friends began to see the change in his grades, they sought tutoring from him, giving him a feeling of significance. The peer recognition drove him to be better and better, eventually pushing him towards great success in high school.

You need to determine what it is that will get you to want to work. If you can isolate what makes you tick, not only will this push your academics further, but it can be used as a lifelong tool – something to drive you forward.

3. Recognize yourself

The third step to build your motivation, is to recognize and acknowledge your own progress. No matter how small a success you have made, whether you received A on a small quiz, or have done all your homework for the night, it is important to congratulate yourself. You have to feel good about yourself and feel your confidence grow and it will drive you forward.



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3. Recognize yourself

This feeling of confidence stems from recognizing yourself. You don't have to wait until you achieve a 95% in Calculus exam to give yourself a pat on the back! You can give credit for disciplining yourself and following your schedule; give yourself credit for starting a new plan or learning something new for the day; give yourself credit for completing your homework ahead of your class. The key is, there are so many ways to recognize yourself, and this will help you to enjoy the process! In many of our tutoring sessions, we always remind our students that they are "smart", give them a pat on the back that they did a great job, even when a small accomplishment of answering a question or two correctly. This is important, as we encourage our students to raise the bar and their expectations; they become focused and eventually feel "smarter". It is often true in math as in many other things, how smart you are largely depends on how committed you are, and the amount of effort you are willing to put in. You need to make yourself feel good, that what you are doing is worthwhile, in order to ask yourself to commit your full potential.



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