

## Becoming self-motivated

**What are things you do or say to yourself that make you feel unmotivated?**

**What are things you do or say to yourself that make you feel bad about school?**

**What can you do about these things – how can you improve your motivation and learn to motivate yourself?**

- Suspend critical self-judgements: as you are learning new skills and developing weaker areas be gentle. It takes courage to do this. If you continually judge your behaviours as “bad” or “stupid”, you will get discouraged and likely give up or keep putting it off. Be kind, your efforts will tend to last longer.
- Make your intentions positive rather than negatives: doing this will change your perspective, your attitude, and your energy. To do this, instead of saying “I will not doze off while studying math”, say “I intend to stay awake and alert while I focus on math”.
- Notice physical sensations: when you avoid certain parts of your school work, note the physical symptoms – churning stomach, heart racing... This shows you it is an area where you feel less confident. If you avoid it, this tends to confirm to yourself that you probably can’t do it. If you instead choose to use your skills, face the problem, it will change your perspective toward it and it will seem less intimidating the next time.
- Make intentions small and “keepable”: doing this will give you the opportunity to succeed – break large goals into small, specific tasks you can accomplish fairly quickly. E.g. *Big intention*: I will do well on that bio test (big, vague, and hard to translate into action) versus *Smaller goal*: I will study chapter 1 in bio during my hour-long break today. In other words, set goals you can act on, that you will accomplish.
- Define goals through behaviour: Instead of saying “I intend to work harder on my history assignments” say “I intend to make summary sheets for my readings”. This gives you a concrete action to do instead of a vague idea that’s easier to postpone.
- Set time lines: they can help focus your attention and keep you on track for intentions. E.g. I will choose the topic for my paper by Wed, I will run it by my teacher by next Monday, I will do a quick first search on internet next weekend.
- Anticipate and take note of self sabotage: planning to study at 9h but start a 2-hour movie at 8h? Maybe you’re not scheduling enough leisure time or you might be feeling overwhelmed. Ask yourself why you are avoiding your project and what the solution might be.
- Time management: there are 168 hours in a week. To see where you lose time, where you can make changes, you’ll find it’s actually easy. Need to monitor how you spend your time first. Not to judge or criticize, it might be working fine for you. It’s just to see if your impressions about where/what spend your time on are accurate or a bit different from what you expected.