Finding Motivation During COVID-19
By the RCTC Advising and Counseling Department

We are all facing this topsy-turvy new reality. Wearing masks, learning from home, Zoom classrooms and social distancing are the new normal. These strange times are bound to lead to a lack of motivation, feeling distracted and overwhelmed.

Even though things seem strange, you can find your own way to navigate and deal with the tasks in front of you. If you can prioritize, the rest will fall into place.

Here are some techniques to try, they are not the only way you can find your motivation, but one or more may be helpful.

Find your WHY

You started college to reach your goals. Try to think about your classes in terms of how they get you closer to your goals. Break it down even further – how does this assignment get you closer to your goal?

What is your WHY? Ask yourself these questions:

- Why did I start school?
- Where do I see myself in one year? Five years?
- How will I feel when I graduate?
- What do I value about myself?
- How do my values relate to how I act during this difficult time?

Write down your goal and post it somewhere near your computer. Think about it every time you need a motivation boost.

Imagine the Outcome

When you enrolled in these classes, you had a plan to be organized. You were confident you could get the work done by the deadline, and spend the time getting it done.

Stop reading for a second and imagine yourself in two months…. The end of the semester.

1. Think about how you will feel if you just scraped by? You missed some assignments? You did not do what you had planned? How do you feel about yourself?
2. Now, think about how you would feel if you started doing what you need to do, in order to be motivated? If you turned it all around and ended up with a strong grade? If you took the time to go to the Learning Center for the help you need? How do you feel about yourself?
Block Schedule

Set a time every day, or every other day, for the homework in each specific class. Try to plan two hours for every credit in the class. For example, for a 3-credit class you would block 5 or 6 hours per week. So, every day at the same time you work on that one class. You can do the work in your regular work-space, at the Learning Center, or at a study space on campus. Write down your schedule in your planner or post your study calendar on the wall. Spend that block on that same class, every time. Finish your work? Work ahead! Here are a few things to consider:

- How will you know it is time to start your block study time? A phone alarm? Is it right after lunch? After class? Setting a trigger can be very helpful!
- Do you have 2 hours for every credit you are taking?
- What do I do about my phone? We know how easy it is for your phone to become a distraction. Can you put it in another room? Do you turn it off?
- Did you schedule in rewards after you are done studying? Maybe you get to watch a show you love. Do you call your best friend or significant other? Do you walk the dog? Do you just zone out? Do you take a lovely nap?

Remove Motivation from the Equation

When you have a lot of free-time, it can be even harder to find motivation. The more free-time you have, then you are more likely to have some hard choices – do I do schoolwork or something less productive. You start to feel like you must keep saying “no” to yourself again and again…. When you would rather be doing fun things. That sounds draining and exhausting!

You can break the cycle by following a schedule. This takes the good and bad choices out of the equation! If you schedule your study times, and down times, you don’t have to always say NO to yourself.

Think about a break

Sometimes, you just need time away from work and school. Maybe you need a little self-care time to remind yourself what you are working for. It could be an afternoon or an entire weekend. Try to take the time when it will do you the most good. Finally, don’t forget to schedule what makes you happy!

- Maybe you need some quality time with someone you care about. Can you meet somewhere in person and social distance? Can you watch a movie together, but apart, on your phone?
• Plan self-care activities like a hot bath, a pedicure, time with pets, listening to music, prayer or practicing gratitude.
• Try to get outside. It might be cold, but it is going to get even colder! As Norwegians say, “There is no bad weather, only bad clothing.” Need good clothing? RCTC’s Hive Supply has a Coat Closet so you can get a warm winter coat.
• Feeling guilty? Accept the feeling and release it. Guilt is not useful to you, today or any day.
• Consider limiting technology. Take a break from the news. Stop doomscrolling!
• Release the guilt of not being productive. You will get back to work when your break is over. Take each day as a chance to start fresh.

Reach Out When You Need Help

• RCTC Learning Center: https://www.rctc.edu/services/learningcenter/
• College Counselors – Call 507-285-7260 to schedule a personal counseling appointment.
• Take an Free Online Screening to see if you need to talk to a Counselor: http://www.ulifeline.org/rctc
• RCTC Health Services and Zumbro Valley Mental Health (on-campus): https://www.rctc.edu/services/health/
• Can’t concentrate due to Financial problems? Apply for the Cares Act Emergency Fund: https://www.rctc.edu/coronavirus/caresactinformation/
• SE Minnesota Crisis Response Line - Call 1-844-CRISIS2

Bibliography


