


## Motivation and Self-Improvement

- What do you do when you need to motivate yourself?
- What do you think of the self-help industry? What are its pros and cons?
- When do you feel particularly motivated? Is there a song or book or movie that makes you feel particularly inspired?
- Do you know anybody who is a very driven or hard-working person?
- What is a task in your personal life that you feel like you need a lot of motivation for?
- Do you think you are more motivated or hard-working now than when you were younger?



 1. Read the motivational quotes below and discuss with a partner. Which do you agree with, which do you disagree with, and which do you find confusing?

- “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” -*Elbert Hubbard*
- “Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.” -*Charles Swindoll*
- “The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more.” - *Jonas Salk*
- “The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” - *Mark Twain*
- “People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day.” - *Winnie the Pooh*
- “If you fail to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” -*Benjamin Franklin*
- “To be a good loser is to learn how to win.” - *Carl Sandburg*
- “Fear of failure is the greatest motivational tool. It drives me.” - *Jerry West*
- “I love deadlines. I like the “whooshing” sound they make as they fly by.” -*Douglas Adams*



2. Read the motivational tips below and complete the missing gaps with your own words.

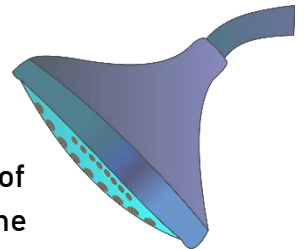
Rise and Shine!

The key to winning the day is winning the morning! Waking up at 5 or 6 am will provide you with more time, more energy, and will give you a head start against the rest of the world. It will also ensure that you have a healthy circadian rhythm. One of the best ways to wake up early is to Eg. "set an alarm out of reach of your bed."

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Take Cold Showers

Cold water shocks your system, giving you a boost of adrenaline and dopamine that can last up to 3 hours. On top of that it has the added benefit of being great for your joints, reducing inflammation and increasing mobility. The hard part? .....



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Write a Journal

It may sound funny, but one of the best ways to keep track of your self-improvement is to make it a daily habit to write a journal. This can help you see patterns in your life that may not have been clear before, but can also help to make you more grateful for the little things. There is a lot of research that shows that gratitude is one of the most important emotions for general well-being, and keeping a journal is a great way to remind yourself to appreciate what you have. You don't have to write something huge every day, you can just take note of the little things like.....

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Treat Yourself

When working towards a goal, it's important that you celebrate the little milestones along the way. In other words, you need to reward yourself! If you feel like you've been working hard, or achieved something large or small, don't be afraid to give yourself a little treat. Some common rewards you could treat yourself with are.....

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**3. Ask and answer the questions about the strategies in exercise 2 with a partner.**

- a) Which piece of advice above are you most sceptical about?
- b) Which pieces of advice do you think you are most likely to try in your own life?
- c) Which pieces of advice do you already use in your own life?
- d) Are there any other common strategies you can think of to stay focused and motivated?



**4. Read through the problems below and try to make advice for each of them.**


- a) "I often feel really determined to quit smoking, but then when I try I only make it for about 3 days."  
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- b) "I want to start a hobby that will improve my health, but I'm not sure what I should do."  
.....
- c) "I feel like I don't have enough willpower to do anything that is difficult."  
.....
- d) "I feel like I don't have good social skills. I have been reading a lot of books about how to talk to people, but when I try it just seems so awkward."  
.....
- e) "I want to learn to be more disciplined. I spend too much time on the couch."  
.....
- f) "I am so disorganised. I am late more often than not, and I am constantly forgetting appointments."  
.....
- g) "I don't want to be a dirty person, but my car and my apartment are always a mess. I try to keep them clean but somehow they just always end up filthy again."  
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5. You are going to listen to a podcast about self-improvement which uses the terms in the box below. Use the terms to complete the sentences below.

sword	worthwhile	insecurity	counter-productive
look up to	obsessed	eventually	crappy
			competence

- I used to really *look up to* him, but now I can see he's a terrible person.
- He's *obsessed* with Star Wars, it's all he ever talks about.
- If you practice piano for 2 hours a day, *eventually* you'll get very good at it.
- King Arthur pulled the *sword* from the stone.
- Going to the gym for 3 hours a day is actually very *counter-productive*, you're probably doing more damage than good.
- Do you think it's *worthwhile* training for flexibility? At the moment I'm just training for strength and cardio.
- These clothes look nice but the quality is actually really *crappy*, they'll fall apart after a few weeks.
- He has a lot of *insecurity* about his own intelligence, so he tries to make other people feel dumb.
- They offered multiple courses to improve the *competence* of the staff.

 6. Listen to the audio from the podcast "better ideas" and answer the questions below.

- What are the two hobbies he mentions in the introduction? *Going to the gym and playing piano*
- Why does the speaker think the self-improvement industry can be destructive? *Because it sells the idea that self-improvement is the key to all problems.*
- What point does the speaker make about very successful people and self-improvement? *They don't obsess over self-improvement; they obsess over certain subjects like coding.*
- What mistake did the speaker make when he was trying to improve his social skills? *He read lots of books about socializing instead of going out and doing it*
- What metaphor does the speaker make about people who spend too much time reading self-improvement books? *He says they are like knights sitting around sharpening their swords instead of going out and fighting.*
- What did you think about the podcast? Did you agree or disagree with any of the points?