

Student Wellness Services

Motivation & Time Management

Wellness Workshops
2023



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Territorial Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes:

the **Blackfoot Confederacy** (the **Siksika**, **Piikani**, and **Kainai First Nations**), the **Tsuut'ina First Nation**, the **Stoney Nakoda** (the **Chiniki**, **Bearspaw**, and **Goodstoney First Nations**), and **Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III**.

The University of Calgary is situated on land adjacent to where the Bow River meets the Elbow River. The traditional Blackfoot name of this place is “**Moh'kins'tsis**.”

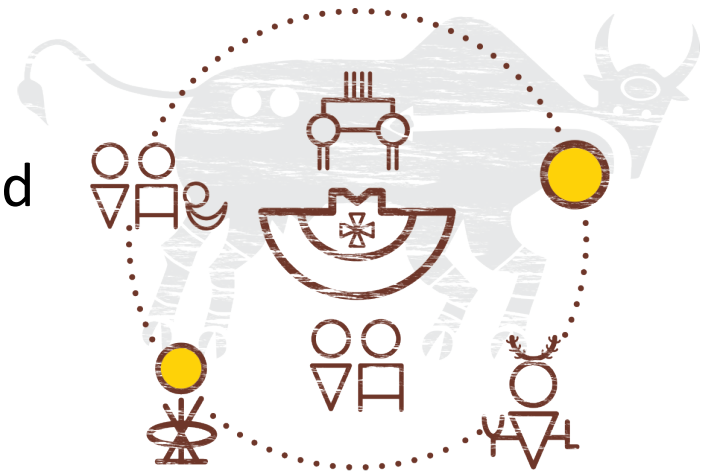


Image: The Cultural Model for the University of Calgary's Indigenous Strategy, ii' taa'poh'to'p

Objectives

- Learn more about the nature of motivation and avoidance.
- Develop a better understanding of your motivation and task initiation habits.
- Learn strategies and tools to increase motivation and improve time management.

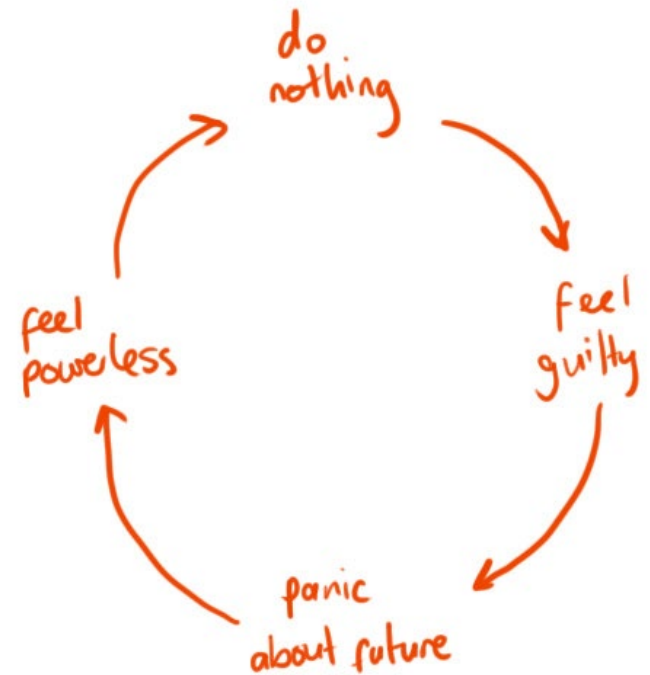
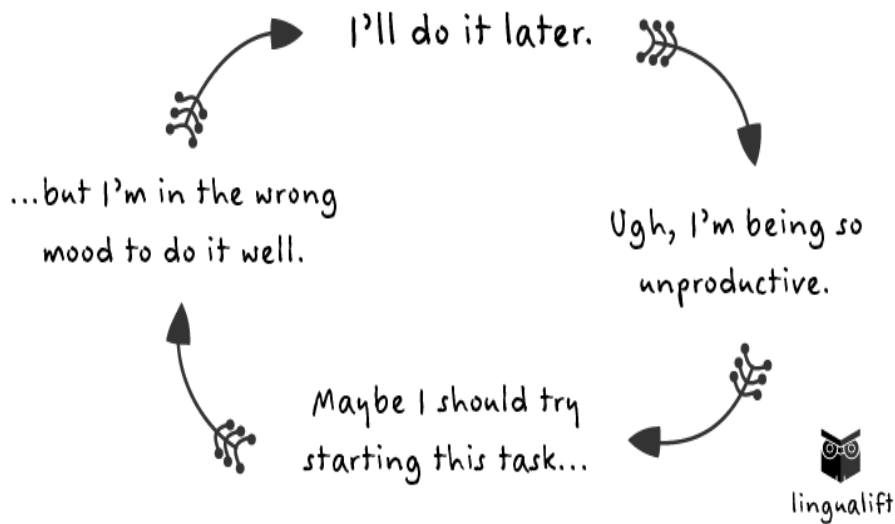
when u got like 15 essays 4 assignments and 6 exams to study for and u just chill in bed contemplating ur whole life



Motivation and Learning

- Motivation is not a resource or an emotion – it is a *response to stimuli*
- Motivation helps us to do one of two things:
 - Maximize a predicted reward (ie. Earn a scholarship)
 - Minimize a predicted threat (ie. Pass a key exam)
- **Mastery vs. Performance**
 - Research shows that we are motivated to learn either to achieve **mastery** (to master materials & develop personal competence) or **performance** (to perform well in comparison to others)
 - Performance-related motivation is more effective in the short term, mastery-related motivation more effective in the long term

Rinse and Repeat



Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Motivation

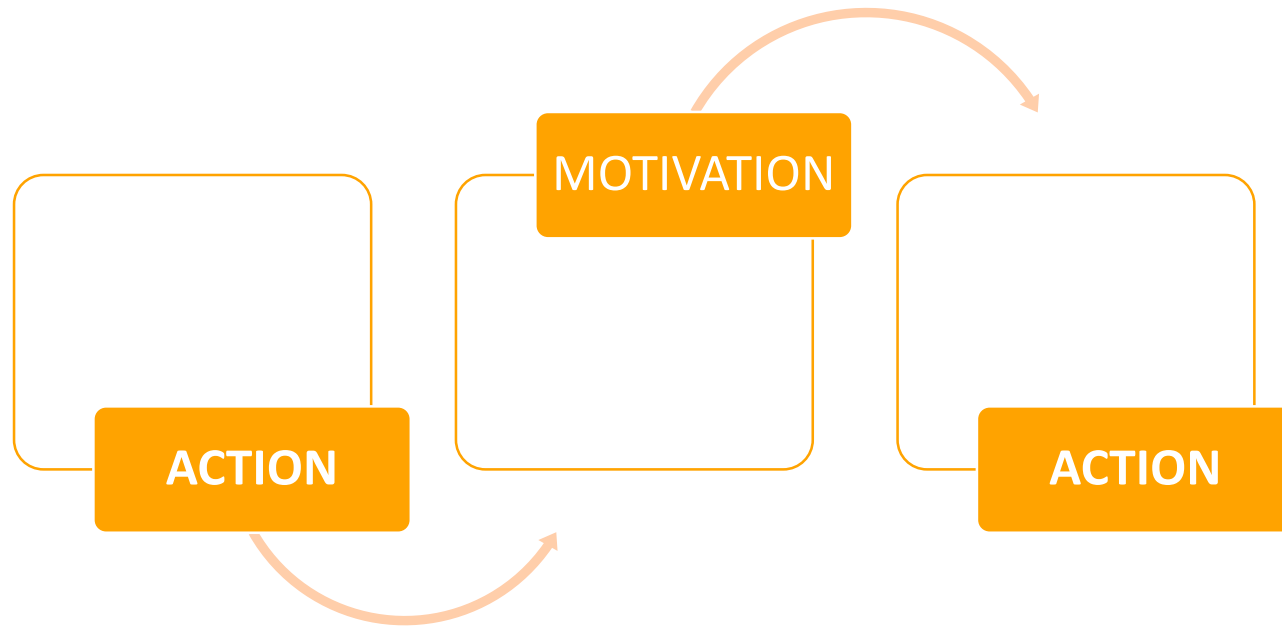
- **Intrinsic**

- “Spontaneous tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capacity, to explore, and to learn, even in the absence of operationally separable rewards” (Domenico & Ryan)
- Motivated by personal interest, enjoyment

- **Extrinsic**

- Prompted to act by external stimuli
- Examples: a deadline, expectations from others (real or perceived), financial reward

Assumptions, Assumptions...



Motivation leads to **Action** But in fact **Action** leads to **Motivation** leads to **Action**
(Kearns & Gardiner, 2009)

What factors contribute to low motivation and avoidance?

Factors that contribute to low motivation/avoidance

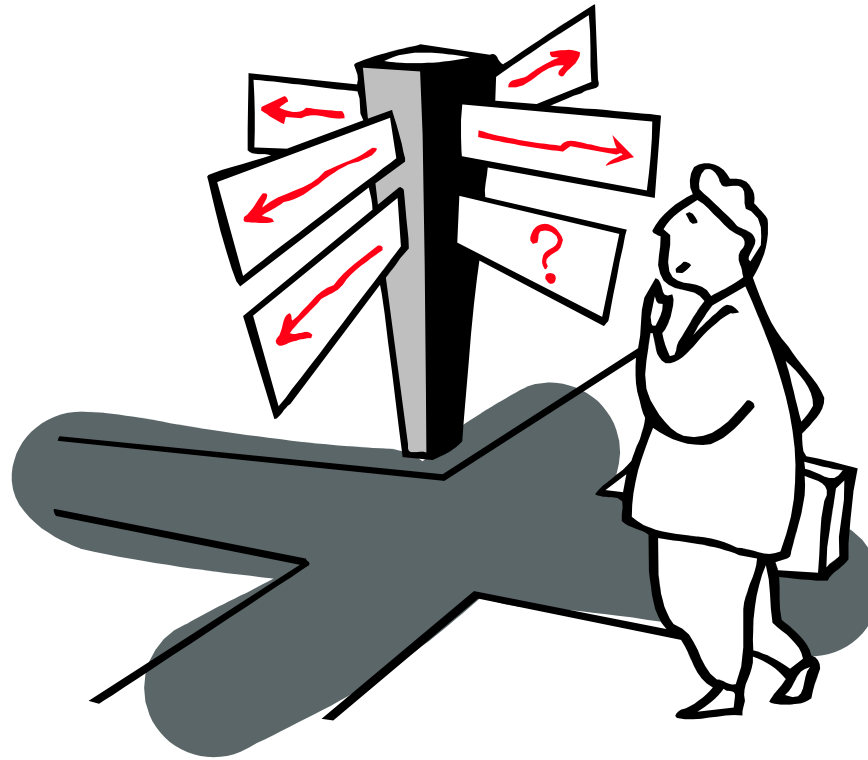
- Stress/burn-out
- Overwhelm – too many tasks to do at once
- Fear of failure
- Distractions & difficulty with focus
- Not knowing where or how to start
- Finding the task boring
- Not seeing the value of the task

Procrastination or Overwhelm?

- Procrastination is not about laziness or lack of competency – it is an **avoidance** technique – avoiding an unpleasant, boring, or overwhelming task helps us feel like we are avoiding the negative emotions that come with these tasks
 - People who have difficulty starting a task tend to **underestimate** time required to complete a task (McCown, 1986)

Procrastination or Overwhelm?

- **Overwhelm** is not the same as procrastination. Overwhelm can feel like we are frozen and make it feel almost impossible to start doing something.
- It can be difficult to start a project or assignment if you don't have a clear understanding of:
 - what ALL the individual tasks are to accomplish it
 - what order each task needs to be done in
 - how much time you need AND have available to do each task
- People who have difficulty starting a task tend to **underestimate** time required to complete a task (McCown, 1986)



Strategies and Tools

Strategies and Tools

- Take Action {
1. Avoidance Log
 2. Challenging Perfectionism
 3. Urgent-Important Matrix
 4. 5-Minute Rule
 5. The Pomodoro Method
- } Build Awareness

Build Awareness: Avoidance Log

- What am I delaying?
- What feelings contribute to delaying on this?
- What thoughts contribute to delaying on this?
- How did I rationalize continuing to delay?
- What was the outcome?
- What can I do to not delay in this area?

(Knaus, 2006)

Build Awareness: Perfectionism

- **Perfectionism IS:**

- “the compulsive need to achieve and accomplish one’s goals, with no allowance for falling short of one’s ideals” (Neff, 2011).
- aimed at minimizing or avoiding feeling of **blame, judgment, and shame**
- protective; **shields self-esteem** from any vulnerability
- other-focused – seeking approval and acceptance

- **Perfectionism is NOT:**

- the same as striving to be your best
- self-improvement

The 5-Minute Rule

- Tell yourself you only need to work on the task for **five minutes**. Set a timer.
- If, after 5 minutes, the task is so horrible that you must stop, allow yourself to stop.
- Most people will find that after five minutes of doing a task, it is easy to continue – **starting is the most difficult part**. Only committing to five minutes makes starting easier, and starting makes finishing easier!

Alternate option:

- If it is still difficult to continue after 5 minutes, you can instead do repeated sets of 5 minutes working, followed by 5 minutes of a break. Repeat as needed.

Motivation vs Discipline

DISCIPLINE

MOTIVATION

The Pomodoro Method

WHAT IS THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE?

A method for staying focused and mentally fresh

STEP 1



Pick a task

STEP 2



Set a 25-minute timer

STEP 3



Work on your task until the time is up

STEP 4



Take a 5 minute break

STEP 5



Every 4 pomodoros, take a longer 15-30 minute break

Procrastination or Strategic Delay?

Strategic delay entails deliberately putting off a task to generate time pressure as a source of motivation.

But what happens when you run out of time?

“Procrastination may be the enemy of productivity, but it can be a resource for creativity.”- Adam Grant

Modifying the Pomodoro Technique

- **Experiment with the length of your pomodoros.**
 - For tasks you are particularly dreading, 25 minutes may seem too long
 - For longer, more complicated tasks, consider 45 or 60 minute pomodoros (and longer breaks!)
- **Use your breaks wisely.**
 - If you're working on screens, try stepping away from screens for your 5-minute interval
 - Fresh air, movement, and hydration help to improve focus
- **Break down complex projects**
 - If a task will take more than **4** pomodoros it should be broken into smaller, actionable steps (ie. **Write entire paper** -> **Complete citations for paper**)

Other Time Management Tips

- Work around your natural energy cycles (when you are most alert)
- Poke holes in a project by using small bits of time rather than waiting for a large available chunk of time (Alan Lakein's Swiss Cheese method)
- Delegate where possible
- No Zero Days

Technology can be your friend



StayFocusd

Offered by: Transfusion Media

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/stayfocusd-block-distract/laankejkbhbdhmipfmgcngdelahlfoji>



Forest:

stay focused, be present

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/forest-stay-focused-be-pr/kjacjdnoddpbbcijlcajfhhdhkpgk>



Productivity Owl

Offered by: mriek

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/productivity-owl/eoagmdboiealblmpaahjlhajggndaahi>



Marinara:

Pomodoro® Assistant

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/marinara-pomodoro%C2%AE-assist/lojgmehidjdhhbmpjfamhpkpodfcodef>



Strict Workflow

Offered by: Matchu

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/strict-workflow/cgmfnfnlfcgeijcalkgnnkigkefkbhd>

Getting Help from Others

On-Campus Resources

Student Wellness Services

www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services

Student Success Centre (3rd floor TFDL)

www.ucalgary.ca/ssc

Program Advising

www.ucalgary.ca/registration/resources/program-advising



Getting Help from Others

On-Campus Resources

Student Wellness Services (403) 210-9355

www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services

You may book an appointment for:

- Counselling
- Student Support Advising
- Neurodiversity Support Advising
- Harm Reduction



References

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