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2015

Motivation and Performance, Blog 13

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my blog

<https://rampages.us/tilghmanms/>

Mason Tilghman

The screenshot shows a blog interface. On the left is a dark sidebar with the text 'my blog' and 'Just another Rampages.us site'. Below this is a search bar and sections for 'RECENT POSTS' (listing 'Final Video', 'BLOG 10', 'Blog 9', 'Blog 8', 'Blog 7'), 'RECENT COMMENTS' (listing 'The Blog Father on Hello world!'), and 'ARCHIVES' (listing 'October 2015', 'September 2015'). The main content area has a title 'FINAL VIDEO', a date 'OCTOBER 5, 2015', and a 'LEAVE A COMMENT' link. Below this is a video player with the title 'VCU Performance & Motivation Final' and a thumbnail image of a person in a library. Under the video is the text 'I hope you enjoy it!'.

FINAL VIDEO

OCTOBER 5, 2015 LEAVE A COMMENT

<https://youtu.be/XZzn9CXO-U8>

I hope you enjoy it!

BLOG 10

SEPTEMBER 29, 2015 LEAVE A COMMENT

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)

My final project will be a video of some sort. I like the idea of a voiceover slideshow but it'd be hard to make it unique from the rest of the class that also chooses this option. I want to make a more creative video filmed on my phone and edited but I don't really have any concrete ideas for

that yet. I want it to play out like a story of some sort, but I don't know how i'd incorporate the bike race. Once I figure these things out it'll come together. I think I'm just gonna start messing around until I get a solid idea.

If I end up bojangling on that idea and end up doing a typical video presentation, I still feel I'd be able to differentiate it enough. I am pretty well versed with programs like PowerPoint and can usually come up with pretty creative ideas – it was one of my top 3 strengths in the assessment we took at the beginning of class

BLOG 9

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)

Stanley's story gives me hope for myself because he went through immense hardships and still maintained his willpower while I only have to maintain mine enough to achieve relatively easy and straight forward goals. I know that things don't always go as planned. There will be weeks where I can't workout twice or work on programming. In those cases I have to focus on my other less important goals. If I'm sick and can't go to the gym, I'll spend the time cleaning my room instead. These goals aren't things I write down but still nag me throughout the day. Also, as the chapter states, keeping neat and clean unconsciously guides people toward self-disciplined choices, so having a clean room will surely help.

I'm excited to being a full week and see if I accomplish my goals. The bike race was a weird week and traveling and lack of hw got in the way of me really working on them. This week will be interesting to see how I handle my current workload on top of my new goals.

BLOG 8

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)

I generally keep a positive and supportive group of friends. I think my roommates have the most potential to help me achieve my goals. We are always around each other and they are also two of my best friends. They know about my goals as I constantly complain about this class. Luckily, my goals are shared by them for the most part. One of my roommates plays rugby with me so we both do that and workout together. Our workouts are usually more intense together vs by myself due to social facilitation. My other roommate makes music and we could push each other to work harder when we'd rather be lazy.

Going to the library will be my easiest goal to seek help with. I think nearly all of my friends would be willing to go with me so I should be able to find a partner anytime I want one. The only problem with this is that in the library I tend to get distracted when I have people with me.

Although my roommates can be helpful, I could see how they might hinder my goals as well. My roommate somehow manages to drink every night without it affecting his grades but I cannot. I have been exercising my willpower pretty well and refraining from drinking as much as possible, but if I slip up I could be in trouble.

BLOG 7

SEPTEMBER 25, 2015 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)

It was in high school when I first felt the effects of social facilitation. I had joined the cross country team and noticed that during practice I would go faster and further if I ran with teammates instead of by myself. This got important during races, where the fastest runners stay in a pack to pace and push themselves, conserving only enough energy to make a final push at the end. It is similar in the world of cycling, although much more important in team events. If the riders stay in a straight line they can catch the draft of the line leader and conserve energy. Then the line leader can rotate to the back while the fresh legs take over. Staying together whether its alongside your teammate or your rival will result in more effort being applied. This concept also applies to our daily lives. Research has shown that people who go to the gym with a partner perform better and are less likely to skip a day. I can apply this to my own goal of working out and start going with a partner. With regards to my goal of going to the library, it seems like a good idea to form a study group or find classmates to do hw with.

BLOG 6

SEPTEMBER 25, 2015 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)

After reading Chapter 6 I decided I would try the posture exercise and see if I notice any difference. It would be gradual so I'm not sure if I would realize it, but even if I don't I'll still have great posture so I don't really care. I've wanted to improve my posture for a while. One of my main goals is to work out and if I can stick to it that should also reflect an increase in self-control. I feel like I have good self-control as is, but the fact that I'm already slouching again shows that I can definitely use some work.

It seems like the key to improving self-control is to use it. Regardless of the task involved with self-control an improvement will occur overall as long as it requires self-control. Doing little things throughout the day such as maintaining posture and brushing teeth with off hand will improve self-control across your entire life, resulting in benefits that outweigh good posture and clean teeth.

BLOG 5

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 LEAVE A COMMENT

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)

I notice ego depletion in a lot of places in my life. The most recognizable situation it happens in is at night after all my classes. I never smoke or drink during the day, but at night I always fall victim to the temptation. I've spent all my willpower during the day dealing with class and people that I can't resist a temptation that doesn't even affect me during the day. Another situation is near the end of a difficult test. I reach a point where I can no longer continue or try and usually just give up and turn it in with more than one missing answer. My willpower to try has been depleted by trying so hard on the previous problems. Yet another time I experience ego depletion is during rugby practice. When people are messing up on a drill I usually don't say anything and just get back in line to do it again. But if it continues to happen I can no longer resist and usually end up saying something to my teammates such as "straighten the fuck up". My willpower prevents me from speaking out at first, as it could create conflict, but this holding back depletes my willpower and I eventually crack.

In all of these situations ego depletion is brought on by a depletion of willpower. In the situation that happens the most (me caving into a beer after a hard day) it is a long term depletion that causes me to eventually cave. In the other two situations it is a short term depletion caused by me expending all of my willpower at once.

I think the best way to prevent ego depletion is by eating a good breakfast followed by a good lunch and dinner with snacks in between. While you'll get a lot more glucose from candy, it's generally not a good idea to rely on such snacks because of the crash you get and short term effect. Eating healthier foods will give you a longer and steadier supply of glucose rather than a single huge rush. However there are situations where I feel candy can help. If I'm about to take a test or play a rugby game, sugar filled gummies could prove useful for a fast willpower replenishing effect. The test and a rugby match are both usually short enough that I would be done with the task before I'd experience the crash.

From the book and online sources, I found some solutions to recovering from ego depletion that don't involve candy or food. It seems that being put in a good mood helps recover from ego depletion. Activities like watching comedy movie or getting a gift resulted in a restored ability to self regulate. (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022103106000862>)

Another self regulation restoring factor was motivation. If people were motivated with a prize like money, they would perform well. This experiment by Baumeister showed that people who were told they had unlimited willpower performed better than those who were not told this, however the effect was only short-term and they still fell victim to ego depletion eventually. (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022103112000509>)

BLOG 4

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)

It made a lot of sense that making decisions fatigues the mind. Especially after reading the first chapter about the need for glucose to function, any sort of thought will deplete you some amount. So making a decision, which is in a lot of cases a difficult thought, should definitely fatigue you more than normal thoughts. It's surprising that this fatiguing can have huge effects such as keeping someone locked up. It made me wonder what decisions Obama and other leaders have made rashly due to their exhaustion. I have definitely noticed it in myself. While shopping I follow my list and compare brands along the way. Towards the end I start to care less and less and eventually settle for the first thing that pops out to me. I even noticed that whenever I get a frozen pizza (never on my list) its always near the end of the trip, when my willpower is depleted from all the decisions I've had to made.

One part of the chapter in particular made me think. It spoke about how it was easier for people to make decisions if they were deciding for someone else rather than themselves. I was wondering if the choices they arrived on for the other person were the same choices that person would've made after they deliberated over it. In other words, how similar were the outcomes even though little effort was put into one set of choices and a lot was put into the other set. If they are similar, wouldn't be be a good idea to let other people make some decisions for us? It would be less fatiguing overall and free us up to make more personal decisions that require more effort. Let me know what you think.

BLOG 3

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 LEAVE A COMMENT

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)



my moleskine (before implementing the next action principle)

I have a small moleskine journal that I always bring with me for writing down to-do lists and other ideas/things to remember. It's made me a lot more productive earlier but after reading the chapter I realized I could do even better. I am gonna try and start implementing the "next action", which is essentially narrowing down vague goals into a clear step that can be accomplished in one sitting. For example, instead of writing "Pack for vacation", I'd write the first step to packing for vacation, which for me would be "Pick out clothes to bring". This is a much better way to write down to-dos and I hope will start to increase my productivity.

Another concept I learned about from Willpower is the use of folders to clear future events out of your conscious for when you need them. I have one folder right now that I put nearly every piece of paper I get in. This leads to a lot of clutter with no real direction. By having a folder for everyday I could put away a piece of paper for the day its due, for example my completed quizzes into a folder marked for a few days before my test so I could use them to study. I'm going to try this on a smaller scale than the book uses (43 folders) because I don't receive enough papers to fully utilize this system.

These small adaptations will help me achieve any goal, not just the 3 I'm focused on for this class. Even after rewriting my current to-do list implementing the next action principal it looks a lot more manageable.

BLOG 2

SEPTEMBER 23, 2015 LEAVE A COMMENT

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week creative work (making music or programming)

After reading the SDT article I found that two of my goals are autonomous and one is controlled. The controlled goal is spending time at the library. My motivation for this goal is not based on my own self-value of going to the library, but the external pressure of my parents and peers. Knowing that it is controlled I believe I'll have to focus extra hard to complete this goal.

I don't think the SDT article did a very good job explaining what it means by competence and relatedness (it only references them together or bunched with autonomy, it never references either one alone or attempts to define it), so I had to do some research before seeing how they apply to my goals. I found another article that does a pretty good job of defining them all. (http://www.selfdeterminationtheory.org/SDT/documents/2009_NiemiecRyan_TRE.pdf)

Using this links definitions, I found that my goals (mostly) hit all three. My goals, even though one is controlled, are all goal in which I willingly devote time to. Nobody has to make me do them, which makes them autonomous. I think they will appeal to my need for competence in that they all have pretty easy measures of achievement. I'll feel competent at the library if I get good grades, and at the gym if I make weight gains. My goal on creative work is a little hard to measure competence, but I can gauge my success by self measurement, and see if I meet me own expectations. I believe these goals fulfill my need for relatedness in that they are pretty common. Pretty much every student wants to be in the library or at the gym, and I have a lot of friends I can work on these goals with together. I have friends that make music, but don't have any that code, so I feel the programming goal falls short in fulfilling my need for relatedness. I won't have anyone to show it off to or talk about it with. This could become a problem....

I almost immediately identified my flow experiences while reading the article. I play rugby at VCU and can definitely sympathize with the the feeling of shedding all outside factors and just playing the sport. All my worries (such as this class) are nonexistent when I'm playing and only reappear around an hour after the game. As a physics major I often do heavily involved problems that I've noticed get me in a sort of flow. I'll work tirelessly until the problem is solved with a "Good Job!" message from the online service I use. Then its on to the next problem. As someone with ADHD who struggles to focus I'm often surprised by how long I can work on these problems without checking my phone or opening Facebook. I need to get into a flow with my goals in order for them to come to fruition. At the library this shouldn't be hard, as well as at the gym, because the challenges meet my skill level. With regards to making music I have to somehow challenge myself instead of just going with a blank slate and doing whatever I choose.

BLOG 1

SEPTEMBER 22, 2015 LEAVE A COMMENT

My goals: Spend 5 hours per week at the library, Workout 2 times a week, Spend 3 hours a week learning to code

I have three people that I mainly look up to when seeking inspiration. They are, in no order, Elon Musk, Muhammad Ali, and Kanye West. They each have traits that directly coincide with my three top strengths determined by the quiz. My first strength was Judgment, which Elon Musk reflects perfectly. He makes extremely well-reasoned decisions when forming his ventures. Currently in charge of Tesla and SpaceX, two very successful and forward thinking organizations. He is also currently developing a “hyperloop” in CA which will enable travel in near vacuum tubes at extremely high speeds. Muhammad Ali is known for his bravery, which was my second strength. His confidence is unmatched and as a black athlete in his time he had many people fighting against him. There are many speeches by him that give me chills, but this one is particularly touching.

<https://youtu.be/lndlgWFcc6Q>

My third strength was Creativity. Kanye West embodies this principle in nearly everything he touches. Every album has changed the entire genre of rap, and he has recently begun to break down barriers in the fashion industry as well. These three figures have motivated me for quite some time, but it was still a huge surprise to see exactly how closely they aligned with my strengths. Now I see why I am drawn to these people and use them to achieve my own goals.