



# VCU

Virginia Commonwealth University  
**VCU Scholars Compass**

---

Great VCU Bike Race Book Student Blog Posts

Great VCU Bike Race Book

---

2015

## Motivation and Performance, Blog 5

Jessica Diaz

*Virginia Commonwealth University*



Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/bike\\_student](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/bike_student)

 Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) License.

---

Downloaded from

[https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/bike\\_student/76](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/bike_student/76)

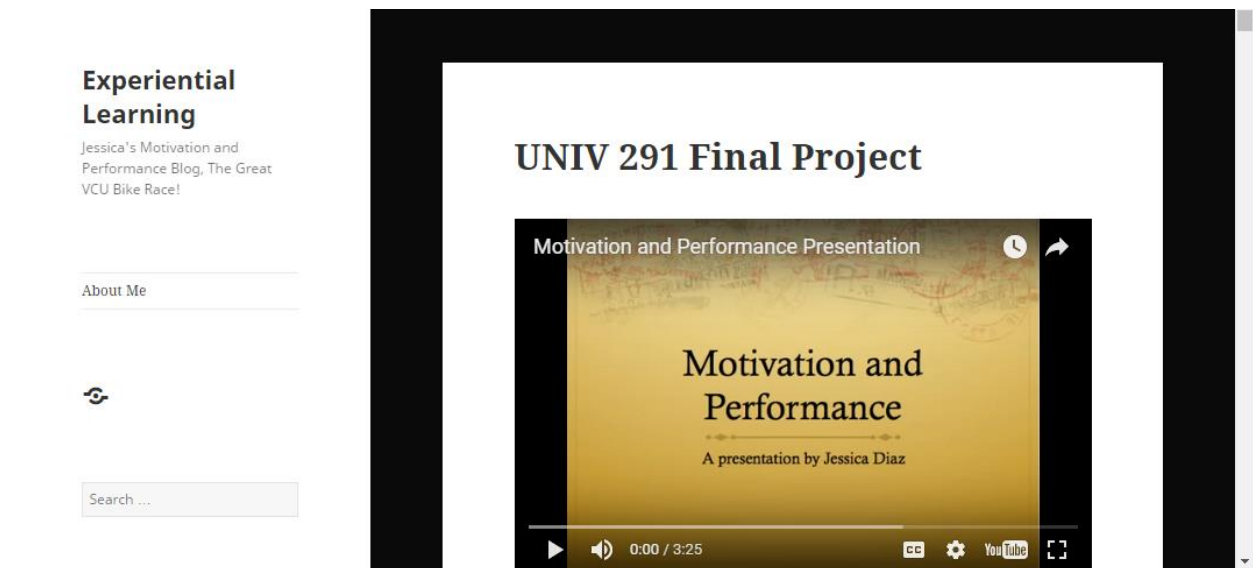
This Blog Post is brought to you for free and open access by the Great VCU Bike Race Book at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great VCU Bike Race Book Student Blog Posts by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact [libcompass@vcu.edu](mailto:libcompass@vcu.edu).

# Experiential Learning

Jessica's Motivation and Performance Blog, The Great VCU Bike Race!

<https://rampages.us/diazauniv291/>

Jessica Diaz



## UNIV 291 Final Project

Posted on [September 29, 2015](#)

Categories [Final Project](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubr](#) [UNIV 291 Final Project](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nse10nVLXZU>

## Day 10: Final Project Proposal!

Hi everyone! I'm Jessica and my goals for the upcoming semester include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting.

For my final project I'd like to use Jing to narrate over a few power point slides that show my experience during this course over the last few weeks. The main points that I'd like to include in my project are which blog posts and chapters of the book helped me organize how I will reach my goals. My goals before the course started were all over the place and reading the book Willpower and

blogging new ideas of how to reach my goals from different angles helped me make a realistic plan to reach my goals. Next I'd like to take a little bit of time to talk about the progress I have made towards my goals. Then I will discuss how the UCI bike races motivated me to reach my goals and what the experience of having the bike races in town did for me. The bike races were amazing in allowing me to take the course and think about what motivation in performance looks like in real life. The racers helped me think about new goals and for this class, how to make my goals more manageable and attainable. In my wrap up I'd like to talk about how all these components came together and taught me about motivation, willpower, self control and performance.

As stated earlier, I want to create a Jing for this project instead of a traditional video of myself. A Jing is like a video but instead of recording my face it will record audio, while I talk over whatever is shown on my computer screen. The great thing about using a Jing is that my video will not be able to exceed 5 minutes which will help me be clear and concise when presenting my final project. I hope to use Jing to narrate a power point or a Prezi – depending on which format will look better and will be accessible on the Jing application. I definitely want to use images that I took from the bike races and also Images of me working towards my goals. I think since I have a lot to talk about I'll have to cut a few things short or maybe prioritize what things fit into my presentation the best as I start to put it all together.

Posted on [September 28, 2015](#) Categories [Day10](#), [Uncategorized](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubr2](#)  
[Comment on Day 10: Final Project Proposal!](#)

## Day 9: Setbacks

Hi everyone! I'm Jessica and my goals for the upcoming semester include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting.

Reading Chapter 7 was very insightful and reading about Henry Morton Stanley from a new perspective was fascinating. The section "Brain on Auto-Pilot" was interesting and my favorite section of the chapter. In particular, I liked this chapter because it helps understand how we can overcome setbacks. The book

showed that research suggests that we often do not use self control in situations that indeed call for controlled behaviors. The research suggest that self control is best used / most effective when individuals tries to establish good habits and break bad ones. The book mentions that high self control was also found with individuals with high willpower. These individuals used self control to avoid bad habits such as smoking and heavy drinking and used willpower to establish “patterns of healthy behavior”.

Knowing this is good to know because while I have a lot self control, based on my goals and progress is shows that my willpower could grow more so that I can reach my goals that would help me develop healthy behaviors and a healthier lifestyle. I face set backs everyday from weird scheduling conflicts that come up to just being plain lazy. Developing a strong will power will help over come set backs by helping making my goals of training for a 10k a habit that I do every day. My hope from reading this chapter is that I can use my willpower to make running everyday something that becomes automatic. By turning running into a good habit it will take less effort to find the time in my day devoted to training. The good thing about the setbacks that I am facing now is that none of them are really stopping me, I’m stopping myself, I have been training and now I need to get into the habit of being more consistent. Instead of 2-3 times a week I need to look at 4-5 times a week. Other setbacks that could happen include injury. I’m lucky that so far I have not been injured but it has happened in the past and could happen now. Overcoming a setback that is not internal (such as me being lazy or not working my training into my schedule) will be harder to overcome. The best way to make sure I can come back from injury into full training is to make sure while I am injured to eat healthy, make a full recover then train again slowly knowing my body’s limits.

Posted on [September 27, 2015](#) Categories [Day9](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubrb2](#) [Commentson Day 9: Setbacks](#)

## **Day 8: Community 2- Examining People Close to Us**

Hi everyone! I’m Jessica and my goals for the upcoming semester include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting.

Our friends and families can do so much to create a support system while working towards new goals. I have told some of my friends and family about my goals such as running a 10k so that those who are interested will start a training group with me. I think my friends were excited for us to try something new. In the past we have run “fun” 5Ks together such as the foam glow run. For me, it turned out to be more like a light jog / walk due to the fact I hadn’t trained at all. While training for the 10k our goals are to jog a consistent pace the entire time. So far my sister and one friend of mine are interested in joining my training group. We hope to meet at least once a week to train together and message each other our progress during the rest of the week. By supporting each other we will feel motivated to work towards our own goals and help our team mates meet theirs. I told my friend who snowboards every season that I want to learn (after 3 years or saying no) and he was very excited not only to teach me but also for me to try something new. While its intimidating to try new things with people who are more experienced the best thing to do is to keep your morale up! While in my situation my family and friends are very supportive and full of positive influences but in the past I have had goals that weren’t supported by others. The way I overcame it was if they were friends to give myself space from them and start to surround myself with people who are supportive. If it was family I talked to out so we could agree to disagree. Its so important to be surrounded by a support group that helps you move towards your goals and pushes you keep your willpower and motivation up!

Posted on [September 26, 2015](#) Categories [Day8](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubrb3](#) [Commentson Day 8: Community 2- Examining People Close to Us](#)

## **Day 7: Community 1- Social Loafing**

Hi everyone! I’m Jessica and my goals for the upcoming semester include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting.

Social Loafing is the tendency for individuals to work less when working in a group. The idea is that an individual would slack off if they are working on a group project unlike if they were working on an individual project. I think when working with a group social loafing can happen but also the opposite effect could happen. When working with a group with proper motivation a group can be a support group where working together encourages team work and support.

In cycling I think that a team must work hard to overcome social loafing. In the tour de France and other elite cycling races the team work together so that one cyclist can advance. That type of planning and commitment to winning sacrifices a lot. Team members have to sacrifice their bikes and bodies to block other teams from passing the top cyclist.

In my own life I think I overcome social loafing with the fear that if my name is attached to a project I want it to represent my full potential of work. Of course it is tempting to sit back a little and ride on the work of others but that kind of tendency leaves uncertainty to the value of work as a group we are producing. I have found its best when working with a group to divide the group evenly but also if possible to divide the work on interest. In most cases we are willing to do more work if we are working on something we enjoy. Professional cyclist must overcome many obstacles to become the best but working as a team should be a process to help support and motivate each other and hopefully they have great tactics to overcome social loafing.

Posted on [September 25, 2015](#) Categories [Day7](#), [Uncategorized](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubrb2](#)  
[Commentson Day 7: Community 1- Social Loafing](#)

## Day 6: Sustained Effort 3 – Self Control

Hi everyone! I'm Jessica and my goals for the upcoming semester include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting. In order to increase my self control for the long run I want to continue to make to do list. The chapter on to do list has really helped me learn how to make more manageable to do list. My typical to do list used to have everything I needed done for the next week or so. It was good for an overview of the things I needed to do but it wasn't reasonable on setting goals. Learning about how most people who have a Monday to-do is typically a list meant for a weeks worth of work helped me put into perspective how much I can really accomplish in a day. I found it fascinating to learn about the Zeigarnik effect and the power of an incomplete.

Another way I want to increase my self control is set little goals like the book mentions. Many of my goals on my daily todo list are large and broad. I want to create smaller more specific goals that will help me continue to work to my

larger goals. While my large goal is to run a 10k, every day I need to work towards a small goal of training. Right now in the beginning stages I want that to be everyday to walk at least 15 to 20 minutes. Once I am able to walk 20 minutes briskly I can start to jog everyday. Being able to set up small goals like this will be important to me so that I can work towards my larger goals. I need to work towards being able to run but to start that being able to build strength psychically, which is just as important as building as building strength mentally.

Posted on [September 24, 2015](#) Categories [Day6](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubr2](#) [Commentson Day 6: Sustained Effort 3 – Self Control](#)

## Day 5: Sustained Effort 2, Ego Depletion

Hi everyone! I'm Jessica and my goals for the upcoming semester include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting.

Ego depletion occurs when a person struggles to maintain their own willpower and self-control. Ego depletion can occur because a person is using all the mental resources they have and they simply get exhausted. Willpower is ability for an individual to take control on their own actions and control of the mindset to complete the tasks at hand. Its important to know what willpower is in order to understand how ego depletion is at hand. In my own life, I face ego depletion when ever I am moving too fast. Sometimes its at the very beginning of the day such as on Mondays when I have to be at my internship before 8:30 so I might skip a good breakfast such as oatmeal or eggs and instead go for a quick chocolate granola bar to go. It doesn't seem like a massive step to ruining a day but a lot of small things can add up to ego depletion. Without giving the body what it needs, it has to work so much harder to run functionally. Ego depletion for me could reduce me working towards my goals because without the willpower to train I'll never be physically or mentally prepared to tackle a 10k.

The example above is a great illustration of where ego depletion can develop along the journey of my goals for the upcoming semester. While being on top of my health isn't a laid out goal its such an important part to make sure I will be



able to complete it. Now consider another situation that could cause me to experience ego depletion, stress. When I'm stressed over school work its can be really hard for me to focus on a goal like completing a painting. Even though I really want to get the painting done, when I'm stressed my willpower can go away. I begin to let myself believe that its really not important at all if I finish the painting and I have better things to do like work on the issues that are stressing me. Its so unfair to put myself in that kind of situation because when I'm in the right state of mind I do have the will power and the desire to complete a project like this for myself. In order to work towards my goals, I've been battling to figure out ways to reduce the stress that blocks me from being able to reach my goals. I've found that the best way for me to do this is to try and eliminate the stress all together. That might mean better planning to make sure I'm meeting deadlines, find more time to relax and getting enough sleep. If I've reached a point where I can not help the stress from coming over me I have to find a way to keep calm and do something that is relaxing and that can help me focus. Sometimes that include just finding a moment to breathe in fresh air or grabbing a small snack to refuel my body. The book mentioned how when a person is depleted that often times glucose being restored to the brain can help fuel the brain. I have found for me carrying granola bars as a snack helps but its important to note although the snack helps, its no substitute for a real healthy diet. I hope to continue to learn how I can battle ego depletion in my life and use the proper motivation and willpower to reach my goals in a healthy manner.

Posted on [September 23, 2015](#) Categories [Day5](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubrb1](#) [Comment on Day 5: Sustained Effort 2, Ego Depletion](#)

## Day 4: Sustained Effort 1

Hi everyone! I'm Jessica and my goals for the upcoming semester include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting. Information that will be helpful for me to reach my goals vary for each goal. For running a 10K (which lately most of my efforts have been in) my sister gifted me a fitbit. The fitbit measures how many steps I take in a day and helps me keep track of how long my run have been. I can connect it to my phone to use gps to tell me how far I ran and what my average mile was. For the upcoming 10K, I want to be able to run 6.1 miles without stopping. Using the Fitbit allows me to see my progress, for example when I first started training I could jog about 10 minutes without stopping, now I'm about 15 minutes. This is great to know cause if you had asked me how far I



could run my best guess would have been 20-30 minutes from past cross country training but the truth is with out consistent training I have a lot of work to do to regain some of my old running habits and abilities.

For my artistic goals, I have some experience with creating scrapbooks and crafts. While a painting will be very different I'm hoping to take in steps such as:

- plan the actually size – perhaps 16×20 or 18×24
- practice water coloring on a small size to create good color combinations
- take photos for reference such as pumpkins and leaves
- begin to sketch out smaller scaled versions
- transfer onto real scale

In terms of finishing my other goal, I don't know very much about snowboarding so I need to consult my friends and family members who have done it before. I think its especially important that I try to be objective because I don't want to hurt myself when I try it out. It will be much safer and enjoyable if I research proper ways to get started as a new snowboarder.

Posted on [September 22, 2015](#) Categories [Day4](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubrb2](#) [Commentson Day 4: Sustained Effort 1](#)

## Day 3: Motivation 2, To-Do List

I'm Jessica and my goals for the upcoming semester include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting. Chapter 3: *A Brief History of the To-Do List From God to Drew Carey* of the book *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength* by Roy Baumeister and John Tierney explores many ways a to-do list can help one achieve a goal. Using this chapter (and book) I can come up with an organized plan to achieve my goals. I liked the section Fuzzy Versus Fussy because it described how important it is to have clear goals to work towards. When I was thinking about what kind of goals I wanted to use for this class I wasn't sure how to describe a clear goal. My goals were kind of all over the place like being more active. See its a great thing to want to be more active but its a kind of fuzzy statement. After reading this chapter is was nice to say to

myself, okay but how can I take that further and be more specific. I decided to take it further by saying I want to train and complete a 10k.

Before reading this book I have been decent at making to do list, they make me feel organized and typically less stress but I never understood how helpful they actually are until I read this chapter. This chapter helped me a lot in learning the importance of goal setting and making to-do list to avoid the Zeigarnik Effect. To start off, the Zeigarnik effect is when an uncompleted task stays on the mind of an individual. Reading this reminded me of my “frog.” In my humanities class we learned a story that briefly goes like this: A man has to eat a frog everyday. He can choose to eat it anytime. The best time to eat is is first thing in the morning so he can continue his day without worrying about his frog. However if he waits until later (perhaps the afternoon) to eat it all he will think about during the day is how he still needs to eat his frog. We used this story to remind us not to procrastinate and similarly if we don’t complete the task we need to do we’ll think about our frogs all day. I definitely believe that these ideas go hand and hand, and will work together to make sure I am efficient while working towards my goals this semester.

Posted on [September 21, 2015](#) Categories [Day3](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubrb1](#) [Commenton Day 3: Motivation 2, To-Do List](#)

## Day 2: Motivation 1

My upcoming goals include trying new things such as running a 10k, learning to snowboard and finishing a large scaled watercolor painting. I would say that my goals are autonomous because no one is asking or expecting me to complete these things but I believe doing them would be good for me. Completing my goals will rely on a lot of intrinsic motivation. If I successfully complete my goals, it will be give me a huge sense of accomplishment. The fundamental needs of autonomy are relatedness and competence. I think my goals, while are heavily intrinsically motivated definitely rely on both relatedness and competence. I am planning to form a running group to train for the 10k. By doing so I will receive great feedback from my teammates on how my training progress is going. In addition, training as a team will also help us push each other to complete our goals. Constant feedback will help me stay focused and learn where I need to improve. Having a team will create a support system and will to help me feel like my accomplishments don’t go unnoticed. Creating a team fosters a support system that both houses relatedness and competence towards a goal.

Flow experiences for me include listening to music, crafting, and cycling. These are all flow experiences to me because being a student is sometimes overwhelming and time consuming but when I get to do these things its very enjoyable. Doing things like these are nice cause I'm doing it for myself. It gives me the freedom to relax and not think about other things. Whenever I am cycling all my focus is on the road / trail and it feels amazing when I get to a point where my body just takes over and I'm pushing myself to the limits. I believe that my choice in goals have been shaped by the flow experience. Creating art and cycling are both activities I enjoy. In addition, I also enjoy trying and learning about new experiences. I believe that these goals will help me step out of my comfort zone of experiences I am used too and try something new and rewarding.

Posted on [September 20, 2015](#) Categories [Day2](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubrb3](#) [Comments on Day 2: Motivation 1](#)

# Day 1: Inspiration and Learning About Myself

Thinking about inspiration and learning about myself, my goals for the next few months are to try new things such as completing a large scaled water colored painting before December, complete/ train for the Monument Ave. 10K on April 9th, and be able to complete one slope without falling at winter green by the end of the snowboarding season. My top five personality strengths are judgment, teamwork, fairness, honest and love of learning. My bottom personality strengths are forgiveness, appreciation of beauty & excellence, humility, social intelligence, and self-regulation. My top character strengths will help me work towards completing my athletic goals by forming training teams that will help me push towards my goals. I think my love for learning will help me learn new ways to create art. I typically only do scrapbooks and crafts so I'm excited to try a large scaled painting. While I may face some setbacks with my bottoms personality strengths, I hope I can overcome in setbacks moving forward.

While reading the Heroes Blog by Scott Allison and friends it kind of reminded me of what a hero is. A hero is defined as a person who is admired for great or brave acts or fine qualities. When I think of a hero I think of someone who does so much to help other people, someone who puts other needs above there own and someone I admire and possess qualities that I want or would like to develop further. Some heroes that really inspired me included Emma Watson, Jimmy

Fallon and John F. Kennedy. I liked Emma Watson's story because I grew up watching her movies and was really impressed that she choose to go to Brown University in the United States instead of studying in the U.K. I really like how she tackled a challenge head on and I hope to use that kind of courage to tackle my new goals head on.

Posted on [September 19, 2015](#) Categories [Day1](#), [UNIV291-035](#) Tags [vcubrb9](#) [Comments](#)