2015

Motivation and Performance, Blog 4

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Here is my final project! Best of luck to all of you in accomplishing your goals.

Hey everyone! I’m Stacy and my goals are to write every day to finish a book I started years ago and to eat less sugar/processed foods.

For my final project, I am planning on including what I’ve done already to work toward my goals. I’m also planning on including the top information that I found really helpful.
from *Willpower*, such as monthly planning, the idea that goals should be intrinsically motivated, glucose effects, and more.

As for what I’m going to be doing for the project…there I could use some help! I liked the idea of using a software like Jing to narrate Powerpoint slides, but I also like the idea of Prezi because I think it’s fun to be able to customize it more and make it more enjoyable to watch. I also think those videos are cool where you see people in the corner while something else is happening on screen – I’ve seen them mostly when people are playing scary video games so I’m not sure how that works, but I’d love to find out! Any ideas?

DAY 9, UNIV291-035

**DAY 9: SETBACKS**

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015 | LEAVE A COMMENT

Hi everyone. I’m Stacy and my goals are to write everyday to complete a book that I started writing years ago and to eat less sugar and processed foods.

The chapter about Henry Morton Stanley was very interesting. I completely agree with the “hot-cold empathy gap” where you are unable in a normal, relaxed moment to predict how you’ll act in a charged situation. I always have to catch myself when people ask me what I would do in a certain situation, because I know that I don’t actually know the correct answer unless I’ve lived it. I think it is easy to say what we think we would do, but we could be all wrong and never know it until or unless the moment comes.

I think it’s a great idea to tell other people about what you’re doing (or use a website to tell them for you). That would really help if you experience a setback, because those people can reach out to you and ask you what’s going on. In fact, it could be helpful just to talk to someone anyway when you face a setback, whether they already know about it or not. Other people often have perception that you don’t because they are more removed from the situation, so they may have good advice for you. Also, the idea to have a penalty payment set up to donate to a charity you’d hate to support is really smart. I can see that being really motivating if you’re passionate about it.

I think it’s possible to face a setback and get down for a couple days, but I think a good way to come out of that is to remember why you’re working for your goal. If you wrote down a list before you started, it could be helpful to look at that. I also think that talking to friends or family would be a good idea if they know your goal and can offer some help. For my goals, experiencing a setback could be eating dessert or not writing one day. For me, if I get really upset about making a mistake I end up discouraging myself. I have to remind myself that it’s still one step at a time and I’ll do better, as well as distance myself from whatever distraction that caused me to stray in the first place.

DAY 8, UNIV291-035
DAY 8: FAMILY AND FRIENDS
SEPTEMBER 26, 2015 LEAVE A COMMENT

Good afternoon, everyone. I’m Stacy and my goals are to write every day to complete a book I started writing years ago and to eat less sugar and processed foods.

When it comes to family and friends, I think they can be very influential with our goals. As I don’t live with my parents anymore, they are not as influential on the above goals. I’m able to only buy healthier foods so I don’t have to be tempted by the junk food in the kitchen. However, I have been with my parents during bike race week and there have been some negative influences with food. As my family doesn’t eat in a healthy way, there are temptations with sweets and the foods that my mom makes. As for my writing goal, my parents don’t particularly understand why it’s something I want to do, but they are supportive anyway because they know I enjoy it.

Since I’m at VCU, my friends are more influential right now as I see them frequently. With my writing goal, they tend to try to pull me away from it so we can go out or do something. With eating less sugar/processed food, they tempt me with desserts as they aren’t trying to achieve the same goal. They like to say that one piece of chocolate cake won’t kill me…and while that is true, it’s not in line with my goal, so I have to decline. I think that once we firmly tell our friends and family that we have a goal we intend to stick to, they are more likely not to push it. If they see us slacking off, they probably assume we aren’t taking it very seriously so they don’t either.

I think it’s possible to minimize negative effects and get positive outcomes by telling them about your goals. By letting them know you really mean it, they should be respectful and understanding. I actually think that telling people your goals holds you more accountable. That way, you have someone who can remind you that you don’t want to do something that would hinder you in achieving your goals. Also, telling them your goals may prompt them to come up with some and tell you about them. You can create a sort of support system with your friends so you can help each other out. Of course, there will be some situations where you’re tempted to go against your goals. However, as long as you hold firm I think that you can still succeed.

DAY 7, UNIV291-035

DAY 7: COMPETITION AND COOPERATION
SEPTEMBER 25, 2015 3 COMMENTS

Hey everyone. I’m Stacy and my goals are to write everyday to finish a book I started years ago and to eat less sugar and processed foods.

Cooperation is needed for basically any task that involves two people, and competition can be a huge driving force in getting tasks done. I found some research that points out that these two ideas can be seen as opposites. I think that can be true, but I believe to really be successful you need to have both. There also needs to be a balance between the two, because having too much
of one or the other can be a negative thing. Too much competition can be harmful by hurting our health and “bring out the beast” in us.

Competition can be the driving force that makes people work harder and try to do more to be the best that they can be. With the cyclists, they are competing against other teams, but they need cooperation in order for any of them to succeed. After all, they all want to cross the finish line. They need to help each other so that their team can meet their goals. The team helps their leader as well as one another so that they can get ahead of the competition.

For my goals, there isn’t too much competition there with others, but I could see how some cooperation is involved as cooperation is “the process of working together to the same end”. I need cooperation from my roommate (who is trying to eat less sugar, as well) and cooperation from a writing “support” group (which I’m still looking for).

Overall, most of our goals and day-to-day life include competition and cooperation. They are extremely prevalent in sports, as seen with the cyclists.

DAY SIX: SELF-CONTROL
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 4 COMMENTS

Hi everyone. As a reminder, I’m Stacy and my goals are to write every day to finish a book I started years ago and to eat less sugar and processed foods.

Improving self-control is definitely important because it can help you stay focused and on track with your goals. For example, it would be helpful to have self-control with my goal to eat less sugar, because I could avoid reaching for a sweet snack. With my writing goal, it would be helpful in order to make sure I write every day and don’t put it off. It’s also helpful in general, in situations like doing your homework. Having self-control to stay off your phone and to avoid other distractions helps you get things done faster. Luckily, there are some ways we can improve self-control.

I definitely plan on using the advice to practice good posture to improve self-control. It’s a simple thing that we tend to forget about, but there are many benefits to practicing good posture even beyond improving self-control. I think this will be a bit difficult for me, but I’d like to see how it can help.

I would also like to try to use my left hand for more tasks. I like that it’s a challenge and it’s also improving self-control. As the book suggests, I think it’s a good idea to do it for a set period so I can allow myself to go back to my right hand at night as I will be depleted by that point. I think this will be interesting in general just to see how I do with it.
Doing these little tasks will be helpful in conquering bigger ones, as well. There is really no reason to not try these or other ideas because having more self-control and willpower that doesn’t deplete as quickly would be very beneficial in all aspects of life.

DAY5. UNIV291-035

DAY FIVE: EGO

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 2 COMMENTS

I’m Stacy, and my goals are writing every day to complete a book I started years ago and eating less sugar and processed foods.

It’s very interesting that all those little things we do every day add up and we don’t even think about them. There is a part in Willpower where the authors discuss how you go through the day by getting up earlier than you want, biting your tongue during an argument, trying to be patient in traffic or with people in front of you taking a long time… I can definitely relate to those situations and I never knew that they could be so depleting. However, when I look back on situations where I’ve felt ego depletion I can see why they say that. That is the time when someone asks me how my day was and I respond “not so great, just one of those days”. Just one of those days is my response when I’m feeling depleted from a lot of things that have built up over the day. I can relate to the part in Willpower where they tell you to watch for the symptoms. I’m more impulsive and I get frustrated or upset easily. Before this book, I never thought that it had anything to do with willpower or anything beyond the fact that I was just tired and had done a lot that day.

I think a great way to make sure I recover from ego depletion and making bad decisions when I’m depleted is to really weigh the choice out. I need to think about the long-term as well and taking a break to regroup could be really helpful. Honestly, if there is a choice I need to make soon and it has been a long day that has left me depleted, I think it’s a good idea to go to bed! We tend to underestimate how sleep can really help us. As long as I know I’m not avoiding the problem, it won’t get worse overnight, and I will deal with it as soon as I wake up, then I think that it’s a good idea. It’s also a great tip to pick your battles. When I’m depleted, I need to let things go sometimes because I will start to argue about things that really aren’t that important.

Another good idea is to eat a small healthy snack and relax a little bit until you feel that you’ll be able to make the decision.

Having a plan but being able to be flexible can prevent ego depletion. For example, if I made a plan for my day that is really strict down to the minute, it can be exhausting at the end of the day. This is true especially if you get off track which is likely to happen because you can’t control everything. Willpower also discusses how precommitment is a great tool. I agree with this completely. As one of my goals is to eat less sugar and processed foods, something that helps me to accomplish it is just not buying any. If it’s not in my kitchen then I won’t eat it, which prevents me from falling off track.
Hey everyone. I’m Stacy, and my goals include writing every day to finish a book I started years ago and eating less sugar/processed foods.

I found chapter 4 to be very interesting. I wasn’t very surprised that decisions are fatiguing, because I’ve experienced that before. One example I can think of is when something comes up suddenly and you need to buy a piece of clothing to attend the event. By the end of the day full of shopping, I’m ready to pick out whatever is easiest because I’m tired of trying to decide what to get and weigh my options.

I was honestly shocked at the story about judges. I suppose that I’ve never really thought about it, but it makes sense that those things happen if decision fatigue exists. It just seemed so surprising based on how similar the cases were, and I wondered if judges thought about their previous rulings. Also, it was interesting how the prisoners appearing after lunch break were more likely to get parole, which tied into the effects of glucose.

A relatable point in the chapter comes up where the authors discuss how if your work requires that you make hard decisions then you feel depleted at the end of the day. I see that a lot with family members. They are tired when they get home and don’t want to make any choices or talk about big decisions that are coming up. They probably don’t even realize that some of that comes from all of the decisions they make during the day, as they just chalk it up to being tired or having “a long day”.

I completely agree that I have a hard time giving up on options even if the other option isn’t that great. It’s hard to eliminate those other options and then feel like you will be left with no other choices. When the authors go into how we apply this to dating, I had to agree. Many people feel like there are so many other options out there and have a hard time settling down with one person because of this. There can be a thought that someone out there would be perfect for you, even better than the person who you’re currently with. It’s a trap that I’ve seen people fall into and it can cause a lot of complications in their romantic relationships.

As a reminder, I’m Stacy and my goals include writing every day in order to complete a book I started years ago and eating less sugar/processed food.

I found the chapter about to-do lists to be very relatable! I often have so many items on my to-do list that it seems like I will never get them all done…and it’s rare if I do! I agree that sometimes my goals are conflicting, which creates an issue in deciding which one I should aspire for and
leaves me feeling unsatisfied. I can also relate to the idea that a monthly plan can be better than a daily plan, because something could pop up one day that leaves you unable to work toward your goal. I think I can apply this to my writing goal because I can create a monthly goal that would allow me to “make up time” later if something happened one day that didn’t allow me to write as much as I would like to.

The story with Jim Carey felt very familiar, as he states that he couldn’t even relax and read a book without thinking of everything he hadn’t done yet. I’m similar in that I have a hard time relaxing when I know there are things I need to do. I definitely think I could implement the idea of writing down everything you need to do, including the next step. I think if you break down the list like that, it can be easier to get done.

Another thing I can include is making a plan, as they discuss with the Zeigarnik effect. As soon as you have a plan, the thought or task doesn’t just take over your mind. You know when and how you’re going to do that task, so you are better able to focus on what you’re doing in that moment without worrying about the unfinished business.

DAY TWO: SDT AND FLOW
SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 7 COMMENTS

According to the self-determination theory, my goals are examples of autonomous motivation. My goal of writing every day in order to complete a book is autonomous because my desire to do it is just coming from myself. I’m motivated to complete it because I think it will be beneficial for me and will be a nice outlet to express myself. As of now, I don’t have any plans to publish my work or receive pay for it, so I’m not looking for any approval from anyone else. My other goal to eat less sugar and processed foods is out of a desire to just feel better and be healthier. There is a small thought that it could improve how I look as well, which could be viewed as more extrinsic and therefore controlled, but because that isn’t my motivation for this goal I would still consider it to be autonomous. I think my goals include autonomy, competence, and relatedness as well.

A good example of a flow activity for me is dancing. When dancing, I completely let go of everything and the activity just takes over. It’s a lot of fun, and it’s rewarding as well as challenging. I don’t think about anything else than what I’m doing, which is what makes it so great. I always feel very energetic and happy when I’m done, as well. Another example could be when I’m baking. I don’t think about anything other than the ingredients and what I’m creating. It’s satisfying and rewarding after I’m done because I can receive positive feedback from others on how I did. I think these fit with my goals, particularly with my writing goal. When I’m writing, the story is the only thing I am thinking about and it’s a positive experience as I like to get my ideas out on the paper. It relaxes me and puts me in a good mood.
I have set two big goals for myself for the next few months. The first one involves writing more, because I love to write but I haven’t done it recently. I would like to finish something I’ve been working on for years and actually write every day. My second goal involves eating less sugar and processed foods, in an effort to be healthier and just generally improve my well-being.

The character strength quiz revealed my top five strengths to be perspective, judgment, honesty, perseverance, and appreciation of beauty and excellence. Out of those, I think perseverance will be the most helpful for achieving my goals. I always like to finish what I start and never give up, which will be beneficial in order to continue with my goals and eventually complete them. Judgment could also be helpful because it involves thinking things through, which can aid me in planning for my goals.

On the Heroes Blog, I found Hannah Taylor’s story very interesting. She saw a homeless man eating out of a trash can when she was 5 years old, and it drove her to organize bake sales and clothing drives. When she was 8, she created a registered charity with the goal to end homelessness. Overall, her story was really interesting and I found it inspiring for a couple reasons. I loved that her mother was completely supportive, even encouraging her daughter to do something. I think that having support from friends and family encourages us to reach our goals, and Hannah’s mother did just that. I also loved that Hannah created the charity. Instead of just doing the bake sale and the clothing drive, she went that extra step and created a charity, possibly creating her life work as well.

From Hannah’s story I would take away that even though there are factors that could hold you back from achieving your goals (like age, in her case) it is still possible to do, even if you need to work harder. I think it also shows that having support can be extremely beneficial.

Another hero I found inspiring was Welles Crowther, a 24 year old man who sacrificed his life to save others during the attack on September 11th, 2001. I find this inspiring because it was an incredible act of bravery to turn back around and go in with the firefighters many times in a quest to save lives, while knowing yours is in danger. It’s a heartbreaking story, especially thinking of his family, but it ultimately reminds us to think of others before ourselves.