

How's Your Motivation?

Admittedly, many of us have been struggling to stay motivated with some of our tasks and it's helpful to think about what has changed. Of course, there is COVID which has been impactful in so many ways, but there's more.

Motivation...many of us think of this word and its larger concept in terms of self-control and will-power. For example, we may think that if we are motivated to do something, it must be because we really want to do that task or activity. Similarly, we may think if we aren't motivated to participate, it is because we don't want to do it or don't like that activity. With both of these thoughts, we believe we are controlling our responses. If, for instance, the task at-hand is to do something we don't like, we might think we need to just force ourselves to do it. Mind over matter, right? What we need to focus on, though, is what really might be driving our motivation! As it turns out, science says our level of motivation is not just dependent upon us wanting to do something or not!

What research tells us is that it is all about the dopamine; ahh, we love brain science at Mosaic Group!

Dopamine is known as the neurotransmitter responsible for pleasure so it makes sense that it would be connected to motivation. However, the surprising fact is that current research indicates that dopamine is released before the pleasurable event. This means that the dopamine impacts our response and whether we take action to achieve something satisfying or avoid something that is perceived as negative (Science Daily, 2020). In reality, if we are motivated to do something, there are higher levels of dopamine that are encouraging (hear motivating) us to engage in the activity. Similarly, if we are not motivated to complete a task, the same level of dopamine may be present however, our past experience with that activity may cause us to avoid it. Just as the dopamine may motivate us to participate, it can also encourage us not to engage for the purpose of self-preservation.



Does this mean if we are struggling with motivation that we are destined to become slackers? Of course not!! There are ways to get the dopamine flowing, although it will take a little work. It is worth it to pay attention to the events and activities that we are unmotivated to engage in and begin to take steps to improve our motivation.

This research is enlightening, as it can help us to reshape our perspectives. Now that we understand the science, we have a better capacity to change our motivation! What do you think?

Coach-Connect



Becca Rigney from Carroll Hospital shared that she has been more motivated during COVID-19. Challenging times do not always have to have a negative

impact! Becca states, "during these trying times, I have actually become more motivated to work out at home because there are no more excuses since I am stuck here. I set small daily goals each day that keep me motivated to do more and leave me feeling accomplished at the end of the night. Since I am in school online, I also have that to focus on when I find myself wondering when this pandemic will end. Having things that keep me motivated to keep going is crucial right now because it not only helps me feel more accomplished, it helps me feel more positive. And at the end of the day, if I don't get done everything I had planned, it's okay! I'm not extra hard on myself if I am not super productive one day, because there is always tomorrow."

Self-Care Corner

Do you want to increase your dopamine and motivation...? If yes, there are some activities that you can engage in

- **Keep a list of things to do and record your accomplishments.** No task is too small and keeping track of your success is helpful as you will receive the dopamine increase as you see the progress.
- **Share with others!** Talk about your successes and your challenges, this is not bragging or complaining but is an opportunity to share results with your team. This communication provides an opportunity to hear positive reinforcement regarding your efforts and is good for increasing that dopamine.
- **Do not multitask.** Commit to working on the identified task and stay focused until that task is complete. This will allow you to get things done in a timely manner and also potentially come with better outcomes since multitasking can be problematic.
- **Focus on the end result.** It is encouraging to think of how great something will feel when we complete a task or achieve a desired outcome and this mindset provides the opportunity to look ahead and use those positive thoughts to drive our action.

(Lee & LeeFreelance, 2019)

References:

Asociación RUVID. (2013, January 10). Dopamine regulates the motivation to act, study shows. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved May 20, 2020 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/01/130110094415.htm

Lee, K., & LeeFreelance, K. (2019, April 9). The Science of Motivation: Your Brain on Dopamine. Retrieved May 20, 2020, from <http://blog.idonethis.com/the-science-of-motivation-your-brain-on-dopamine/>

In the News

For many, motivations may have changed in the months since the onset of restrictions put into place as a result of COVID-19. Activities that we previously found rewarding may no longer be available and after a prolonged period we begin to feel empty and struggle to find a purpose. It is important to remain connected and find other activities or ways to satisfy our needs that help us to be fulfilled.

Read the full story here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/18/well/mind/motivation-pandemic-coronavirus.html>

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