

# Habits for Motivation

## Introduction

### Grace

Welcome to "What's up!: Wellness from the third floor". This podcast is provided by the Wellness & Health Action Team, also known as WHAT, from Portland State University's Center for Student Health and Counseling, or SHAC. We're located in suite 340 on the third floor of the University Center Building on campus. Our purpose with this podcast is to discuss a variety of health-related topics in a way that will be accessible for our non-traditional campus. My name is Grace and my pronouns are she/her.

### Julie

And my name is Julie and my pronouns are she/her. We're all members of the Wellness & Health Action Team and we'll be the hosts of this podcast. Let's get into it!

*Soothing jazz music fades out*

## SPEAKERS

Julie, Grace

### Grace 00:00

Hi, good morning grace. How are you? Hi, Julie. I'm doing well. And you know, new term, new

### Julie 00:08

New term New Grace?

### Grace 00:09

Yeah, new term, you raise new set of rules for me. I'm a changed woman. Yeah, um, no, but I'm excited to be back. But it's hard to get into the groove of summer or of fall after summer. So, today, me and Julie are going to share some motivation tips and habits. You know, just things to keep in your tool belt. Yeah, a little kick start for fourth year in college still trying to find the motivation, it's fine, we're fine. So we're gonna start off answering the most simple question that is actually the main point of this episode is, what is motivation? I wouldn't know even at this point in my career. What is motivation? Um, so scientists define motivation as your general willingness to do something, it is the set of psychological forces that compel you to take action. That's nice and all but I think we can come up with a more useful definition for motivation, can we? I actually really like the science one. Yeah, just cut and dry, you know, very science goal was to like, there is something better for sure. But yeah, motivation is often the result of an action and not a cause of it. That's one thing that I learned about motivation, and motivation can be similar to other concepts, it can come in many different shapes or form, you know, and it can be interpreted in many different ways. So being able to know what motivation is to you, it's a really great

way when it comes to defining the term motivation totally, it is most difficult when we're starting, of course, even defining the word motivation, for me, it is a difficult start, but once we get a hang of it, it's more about like the progression and the maintenance of it. And so those are kind of like the prominent points of motivation. And there's this interconnectedness between motivation and habits. And so one thing that we found, or yeah, when we found while we were researching on kind of, like, the key and fundamental points of motivation is that there's like a process to it, you know, and how, by allowing motivation to progress, yeah, we should turn it into a habit, you know, and be able to integrate it into our routines. Because once we have a routine, we fall into this mentality of like, being able to maintain it. And that's our motivation, you know, like making a bed. Yeah, literally, it's like something that we will eventually do it like unconsciously. Yeah, totally. Because it has become, it became like a habit. So at that point, you're just doing it, but you're not, you don't really know you're doing it. Because it's like, so deeply rooted into your daily life. Yeah. Um, and so yeah, like many of us lose our motivation, because we're so focused on the progress, like the progress point is important. Okay, like, don't get me wrong. But like, some of us are so focused on that, that we're just like, we lose sight of our goals. And instead of our goals, we lose motivation. Julie just dropped a bomb on me. I couldn't say no, that makes so much sense. Because I really struggle with motivation and creating habits. I've never been good at it. You would think that as a very particular nitpicky Virgo that I am, I would have great routine and habits, but not for me. But yeah, that makes sense. No Julie, like what you're saying is, like, once, it's like the process of it, because I always get overwhelmed before, like, I make a to do list. And that's like the beginning of the process. And I think so much about what I have to do and how I'm going to do it. And, and then that just like, I put my anxious energy into doing that, rather than like, taking charge of what I'm about to do. So that does make sense. Like, I just, I've never heard that put into words. So I'm like processing that right now. Just like okay, but yeah, so Julie kind of talked about making a habit, and creating those patterns for motivation. But there are different types of motivations as well. So there's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. And it's really important to distinguish the two of them because they're very different and they come from different places. So as you could imagine, intrinsic motivation takes over when we have a deep and genuine interest in a task or topic. And it gives us that satisfaction from the work or learning ourselves. So it's kind of just like, you deeply want to do something you're deeply interested in it and like extra, extrinsic is like, outside force just kind of motivating you, as well as like the outcome. So yeah, like I was saying that intrinsic motivation takes over when you have a deep and genuine interest. And it's sincere and you celebrate the effort of it. For example, like you worked really hard versus you're so smart. And so that's like, kind of you communicating your encouragement, but not like pressuring, like, it's kind of the sort of thing, where it's like, you're doing really well, period, end of sentence rather than, like you're doing really well as I hoped you would have. It's kind of that like, distinction is really important. Because the, you're doing really well as I hoped you would, is not very encouraging. It just adds more pressure. Whereas if you're saying, like, you're doing really well, and if sentence, then that's, that's good. I always, I hear that kind of language, like, for babies as well, right? Have you heard of that? Like, yeah, if a baby's doing something wrong, or like a toddler, like, you don't necessarily have to, like, guide them on how to do it, because then it's gonna, like, they're gonna think that they're doing it wrong. Yeah, type of thing. Um, but yeah, and then Studies also indicate that if you have more, say, in your education, it tends to motivate you to do more work, because advocating for what's best for you, in terms of academia, will make it easier for you to learn the material, which I think is very interesting. Because I think a lot of people go into undergrad with just a degree in mind, because they think that that's the degree they're supposed to get, or you know what I mean, Julie, like, their

parents were like, you have to become a STEM major, like an engineering majors. But if you're not invested in your education, then it's just gonna be miserable, like I am on the public health track, and I minored in women's studies, and I really enjoy all my classes, because I enjoy those areas of academia. And that's just literally intrinsic motivation. Right there, right there for y'all is just like, for example, Grace, like what grace said she appreciates, like, public health, the concepts behind it, the materials are being taught in the public health field. And that kind of comes down to like advocating, you know, what she was just like, I think this is it. I like this, I'm interested in this. So I'm just going to advocate for whatever works best for me and kind of proceed with it. And that like desire, like what Grace was saying that genuine desire and satisfaction from your work kind of drives your motivation. Yeah, it's like an intrinsic, I guess, reward system that makes you feel better. Like I know that when I actually do my homework, I get a confidence boost from it, it's like, so that sort of intrinsic motivation is I know that it'll make myself feel better, like, on a psychological like mental level. And then like, extrinsic motivation, like I said earlier, it's kind of like an outside force outside influence, motivating you to do something. So that could be like a paycheck or a good grade. So I guess, like, a way to distinguish them in terms of grades would be like, an intrinsic motivation would be like, I just want to get this done. So I can feel better about myself. Versus like, I need to get this done, like an extrinsic would be like, I need to get this done so that I can get an A in the class, like that type of thing, which are similar, but like, different enough to be distinguishable. Yeah. Um, so yeah, like grades are important. But it's also important to recognize the effort and the work that you put into it, and not just like prioritizing the outcome, which I think can be confusing or conflicting for some people. Because an extrinsic motivation is kind of what we're taught is the only very true yeah, the only kind of reward that you should prioritize, rather than like prioritizing something that makes you feel better about yourself. It's like, you need to prioritize this class so that you can get a good grade, instead of so that you can feel proud of yourself, which I mean, you can feel proud of yourself getting extrinsic motivation as well. But it's like, I think it's good to have a balance, you know, kind of motivation, because, I mean, by all means, I think we all appreciate getting good grades, you know, like, we all want the good grades, but at the end of the day, like if you're not, if you think that you're just going to work hard just for the letter grade, it kind of it's undervalues your work. Yeah, exactly. We were just gonna say the same thing. And it's like, I'd rather get like, okay, it's not like I don't want good grades, obviously, to get like, a grade, like an okay, great, you know, but I know I like inside me. I'm like, I studied really hard. And hey, like, you finish the test, you know, like, Hey, you did it. Yeah. And I'm just like, Okay, now I know. And I'm, like, motivated to study for the next exam with the same habits, same patterns, but I don't know, just make little changes to get a better grade. Yeah, totally. It definitely depends on your mindset, for sure. But yeah, do you have any tips on how to, you know, start off off with motivation with fall term just starting off strong because I definitely need that. No for sure. Thanks for the question, Grace. I think this question is very pertinent among all of us, especially during the Fall term when we're coming back from such a well relaxed summer break. So I'm so sunburn, y'all, I didn't even listen to my own advice from last term. But the first tip is know your priorities. Right? See, like, see how you can be most efficient. I know that some people like me, I normally start with the easiest assignments. Yeah. And then I work towards the harder assignments because I just want to get the little stuff out of the way. And then like, I hate working on a time crunch. That's why and so I'm just like, Okay, I'm the only way I work is on a time crunch. Julie's like waking up at 5am The start of paper, I'm like, no end of it being like, I guess I'll start my 10 page paper at 11pm. It's do in an hour. What Yeah, and so um, that's how I normally like to get my shorter, easier assignments out of the ways. And then with the remaining of time, I can focus on the bigger

assignments, and basically putting all the effort and energy into those assignments. But I do know that some people work differently. And they prefer to work on bigger projects, like the essays and all that before they work on smaller assignments, which is totally fine, you know, find what makes you the most efficient, because if you're going to do for example, if you're a person like me, that I like working on easy assignments, like I decided to do the harder assignments, like I have zero motivation to do it, just because I know I have its more intimidating

**Julie 11:36**

Yeah, and I know that I have easier once I can get out of the way, you know, and so know what works best for you, and what makes you the most efficient. And like use this opportunity to explore studying methods to like what Grace was saying, we're starting a new term, you're taking new classes, try to explore different ways that you can study, because I don't think there's like a perfect way or like the right way to study. So

**Grace 11:58**

especially sorry, no, I don't want to interrupt, but ya know, just to finish up with for Grace essays, what she needs to say, but I'm basically just exploring stuff, you know, I mean, you can stick to the one that you like, right now, but it's good, because you might find another study method that it's better for you. Um, and so like I said, just like and also, starting with a different study method can also be motivating, because you're like, oh, my gosh, I'm interested in, you know, to see how this will work. And yeah, just making setting more interesting can definitely help motivate you to study. Yeah, what I was gonna say is like, especially after a year, like last year was hybrid, and like the year before, was just completely online, like, so everything is just kind of all over the place. So it's hard to keep that steady constant study time, like my freshman year before pandemic we had, like, we would go to class, and then it would just be like this kind of set thing where we would go study after. And that kind of got lost and all of the hybrid and online learning. So it's really up to you to find the schedule and the technique that works for you as well. And that can be a fun motivator to like coming up with a new study method, like my kind of technique right now is, each finals week, every time finals week, or like midterm comes around. Like I don't know if this is even smart, or if you should take my advice. But I always kind of, I kind of tried to do a new study method to see if it motivates me because like, it's can be motivating to start a new method, kind of like my winter term. Last year, I did the Pomodoro method, which is like, you do 20 minutes of work, or 25 minutes work, and then five minutes of rest. Yeah, and I did that for all of finals week. And it like really motivated me. But spring term, I did like a different technique, because I don't know, I have to like keep my brain like in check kind of, like on its toes. And then also making a list is really great because you can kind of see everything ahead of you and what you need to do, and it can be intimidating. So I know that I definitely fall into the trap of just being like, okay, um, I have all this to do, I'll just keep it in my brain, but then I always feel way better when it's all written out. So I need to start doing that. That's a good tool to have at the beginning of the term as well. You can just kind of like write out your due dates and everything. If you have weekly discussion posts, like I remember my spring term last year, I had classes where there was a different thing due every day of the week, but nothing was due on Sunday. So it was all kind of spread out which was nice because then I didn't have anything like because I know I myself would save everything till the last minute. So I would have like four different discussion posts. due on a Sunday, rather, it was just like a whole mess. But it was nice to have those things kind of laid out in different days. So making a list can be helpful. And also just like

adding little things to the list as well can be helpful like making my bed. And then it's like rewarding to have your time something checked off as well. But it's also important to you know, with that list in mind, you need to set attainable goals for yourself. And do you want to talk about that Julie, like setting attainable goals, Definitely. This one is probably one of my favorite when it comes to creating that motivational mentality. It's breaking down big assignments or tasks into smaller ones. Because when you do that things, of course, will be way more manageable. Like instead of like, an example of like, I have to sit down and type a 10 page essay, you don't have to do that, like plan ahead. Like what Grace was saying, make a list. You know, this is when planners come in handy, because you can plan out and be like, hey, I can type a paragraph a page a day, you know, and like breaking them down into smaller pieces will let definitely make it less intimidating, because would you rather look in your planner and be like, oh, what page? You know, double space, who knows? But it's just like so much better, like for me, because I tend to get overwhelmed like, yeah, easily. And so I always like to do that with bigger assignments. I'm like, Okay, today I'm going to do the introduction or like some kind of small parts, like a one page, I'm gonna read like 10 out of 50 pages that are due this week, instead of doing all at once, like setting attainable goals is very motivating. Because like, you'd rather do that than just like, kind of just sit there because like what Grace was saying, sometimes we think about the process, like shoot outs plan for this 10 page essay, way more discouraging and unmotivating than like just sitting down and be like, Okay, so today, I'm just going to brainstorm tomorrow, I'm going to start my first page that da da da so on, then having to just like, think of it all at once. Like, I guess like some of y'all like that might be productive. But I'm just saying like making it more manageable and more attainable will be way more motivating. Yeah, it just comes down to like, what you know about yourself and how you know how you operate, which was a huge learning curve for me when I started college, because the way I operated in high school, was not flying in college, and it was making my life stressful. And so I had to come up with different study methods and different homework techniques. And because I was definitely the type of person in high school where I just did everything last minute. But it's very, I didn't have any like things, I didn't have anything that didn't enforce that or reinforce it, I guess to change because I would do everything last minute, but then I would still get like good grades on it. And so like nothing like I was getting a reward for doing like, horrible work ethic type thing. I don't know if that makes sense. Do you know what I mean? Like, yeah, I was getting rewarded for procrastinating because I knew that even if I did start something late, I was still going to do well at it. And then I got to college, and that was not working. So it was just a matter of like learning your techniques and stuff. But yeah, so it's also important to find that balance, but it's also are kind of balanced, and like knowing yourself as well. But it's also important to find, you know, your social support, and you're asking for help, you know, you can't process everything you need to do by yourself. And if you can, that's amazing. But I know that I can't like I need to have someone hold me accountable or you know, have that sort of support. So reaching out to others, whether it's classmates or like, you know, online resources or resource centers, or you know, even professors, that is a really great thing to look out for and study groups as well. If you're in a class, it's like, I feel like study groups are really common in STEM courses as well. It's just like, For me, I personally really appreciate study groups. And I understand it was very difficult to have a study group during COVID. Because first of all, everyone was remote, and basically everything was closed. So it's really hard to meet up in a small space. And it's different on Zoom. It's not the same when you study with your group. But now that things are getting better, hopefully everyone feels more comfortable being in a group because study groups, I think we'd had an episode last year about benefits of studying in a group. There's a ton of things. You're just basically in a smaller



classroom because you're interacting with other students, sharing knowledge, exchanging work, and just be able to teach each other is a very beneficial way of learning. Yeah, so can I say I have never been second for studying in groups, like, it is a really valuable tool for some people. But when I do my homework, I literally it just needs to be me and Lo Fi girl, like that's, like, that's why that's why only study partners Lo Fi girl. But um, if you know that you work well in a group, then I applaud you. But also, you know, breaking things up, like Julie was saying, like, that really helps me. And even, I think also like, you could do a modification of a study group, like you could be a part and then just text your friends and be like, hey, text me in 30 minutes and make sure I've done this, like hold me accountable, like that type of thing. Because if I'm in a study group, I just end up talking to everyone, and then I waste two hours, because I'm not Chatty Cathy sometimes. But yeah. And then also, once you've got all that motivation and study down, and like everything like that, it's also really important to acknowledge your accomplishments and stay balanced and giving yourself a small reward. Whenever you complete an assignment or a task, no matter how big or small, it can really impact your motivation. Keep that up and running. You know, That's really true. And speaking of acknowledging your accomplishment, there's this thing called cue action reward. So this is the concept that helps form habits. So the cue is the reminder to do your to start or like initiate your new habit. And the action is the actual habit. And then the reward is treating yourself after doing the habit. So there's just like cycle also a shout out to there's his book, I don't know if you've read it great. Or if or have heard of it, it's called atomic habits. No, but you've told me about it. It's such a good book, you're trying to find a book that will like induce motivation within you atomic habits, such a good book. But um, basically, what we touched on at the beginning of the episode is about like, how it's important for us to kind of like form some kind of like habits, because then it like, helps you motivate. And the reward, or the the award part is like, pretty much 1/3 of like the process, it's really important for us to acknowledge our accomplishments, you know, it can be small, like what Grace was saying, or it can be like something big. But finding the right balance between, like, for me when I'm like working, I personally like going on a walk, like in between, especially if I'm working remote. Or if I know, I have a long day of study ahead of me, I try to make sure to fit in something like a walk out door. But luckily, I live close to a lot of like small stores, I would like walk and get a coffee, you know, or like, it can be as simple as just walking into a kitchen and grabbing myself some chocolate. But making sure that you kind of what is it? Like, I don't know, put in some kind of reward and in the process of study that like rewires your brain. Yeah. Like, literally gives you like a quick break. And it like motivates you. Because I wouldn't want to sit at a computer for five hours straight, because it would make me very unproductive. Yeah. And I know that when I do something like that, where I'm just like, Okay, I'll start my essay. And I like no plans for it. Um, I end up staring at my computer screen for five hours just being like, how do I start this? How do I do this? Because I have no set action plan. I have no like reward for myself. Yeah. So you know that cue action reward is really important. Yeah. And it's like, it's like a psychological thing to you. Yeah. Like tricking your brain.

**Julie 23:21**

No, literally, you do it once you're like, Oh, yep. Another page. No, it's I get another treat. Yeah,

**Grace 23:27**

a treat?

**Julie 23:27**

a treat? It becomes a cycle. And so that's also very importantly, yeah, working hard. All that. But make sure you just kind of take some time in finding the right balance when it comes to rewarding yourself.

**Grace 23:42**

And the cue can be as simple as just opening up your computer and logging into Canvas. But that can literally just be the cue to starting your homework. Like that's what I do when I don't want to start my homework. Yeah. Which is, you know, a constant struggle for me. But I always just kind of open up my computer, you know, get my trusted girly Lo Fi girl. Get her on there. And I open up canvas, and I just have to like, force myself to look at it. And then I'm like, Okay, well, this is like a 200 word discussion posts. I'll just start doing the smaller things before they do the larger ones. So yeah, it's cue action reward. Yes, yes. And lastly, we want to remind y'all that we're all human. So it's okay if we lose that motivation at times because especially entering fall term.

**Julie 24:32**

Uh huh.

**Grace 24:33**

It can be hard to, like the motivation just dissipates. Like, it's like middle of June and then I'm like, Well, I had never have to do anything ever again. And then three months later, I'm like, Oh, why am I why am I here? Um, but yeah, make sure you learn from your experience, you know, and plan to bounce back from it like yeah, there's some days a week you know, it's okay for you to have like one or two days where you're just like, I'm not on my A game like it's totally fine because we're all humans are certain times where we just feel so unmotivated and so discouraged. And like, let that be, you know, like, don't force yourself because you're probably going to be as unproductive if you're gonna push yourself. So like, it's really important to find that and like, acknowledge that and know that you're feeling some sort of way and making sure that, like I said, you can bounce back from it, and just gained that motivation again, and we gave some tips, you know, on how to develop and maintain that motivation. But we all understand that it's hard, especially what grace is saying it's full term. And it's also important to know that, even if you have an off day where you're not on your A game, the, if you have the capacity to just kind of, you know, realize I'm not gonna get this done, my brain is just not able to do this today, to take an intentional relaxation, even if it's just like 30 minutes or an hour to just intentionally relax, and then, you know, plan on doing better, not not better, but plan on doing your work later, or tomorrow is always great. Like, that's what I do. When I'm having a hard day. I'm like, Okay, I'm just going to acknowledge that I can't get this done today. So I'm going to make a reminder for myself tomorrow and take care of myself today. Because every day is a new day to do something different, you know, every day is a new opportunity to improve. So Go Grace. Yeah. What a motivational, motivational speaker we got here. But yeah, that's all we're gonna say. This is just a manifestation for a strong start for all of y'all. And that we're just wishing all y'all the best No. Happy fall term.

**Julie 26:42**

Yeah, happy fall term! Just know you have all the resources out there. And you got this podcast, you can always come back to if you want some motivational tips. But yeah, we're really hoping everyone had the best term ever. And we got this another term, another another term,

**Grace** 26:59

Julie's last term. But yeah, good luck, Grace. You gotta you gotta you got it to Julie. I'll see you next time. Okay, bye bye.

*Soothing jazz music fades out*

## **Outro**

### **Julie**

We hope you enjoyed this week's episode of the WHAT's Up Podcast!

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