

# MOTIVATION TOOLBOX

As we get back into the swing of classes, papers, and exams, many of us are likely to find ourselves struggling to stay motivated from time to time. Data from the 2020 National College Health Assessment at WWU indicates 81% of students reported experiencing problems with procrastination. Of that 81%, 63% said their problems with procrastination caused moderate to high levels of distress. You are not alone in your struggle! Check out the ideas below, and use the motivational tools that work best for you!



## ARE YOUR BASIC NEEDS COVERED?

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, developed in 1943, suggests we must meet our basic needs before moving on to higher goals and achievements. The levels, in order of need, are physiological (sleep, water), safety (feeling physically safe, access to resources), love and belonging (friendships, romance), esteem (confidence, achievement), and finally self-actualization (creativity, problem solving). In other words, you will be more successful at writing that five-page paper if you've eaten today and gotten enough sleep. If you're having trouble focusing on schoolwork, ask yourself if there is a level of need below self-esteem and self-actualization—where we are best able to produce work—that you are neglecting and take care of that need first.

**WHAT IS YOUR WHY?** Maybe statistics is not your favorite subject or activity. But, if you want to have the career in public health you've always dreamed of, you have to pass this class, which means you have to write this paper. Remind yourself of the long game, and what completing this task will get you.

**REFRAME** Try saying, "I choose to complete this assignment" rather than, "I have to complete this assignment." Everything in life is a choice, and no one can force you to do anything. Reminding yourself that you are in control, and reminding yourself of your why, can help reinvigorate you.

**BREAK IT DOWN** If a certain task feels overwhelming, try breaking it up into smaller steps. Don't fall into "all or nothing thinking"—the idea that you either finish the whole thing now or there's no point to doing any work at all. What small steps can you take today to make some progress toward the end goal?

**LINK THE TASK TO GOOD FEELINGS** When faced with a task you really don't want to do, combat that negative feeling with strong positive feelings. Play your favorite music while you study. Reward yourself with a special coffee that you get ONLY after writing essays for your least interesting class.

**REWARD YOURSELF!** There are two different types of motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when the satisfaction of achieving a goal or acquiring new knowledge is enough reward in itself. Extrinsic motivation means rewards that come from the outside when you complete something. Start a reward chart, or decide on a reward to "earn" by completing your project.

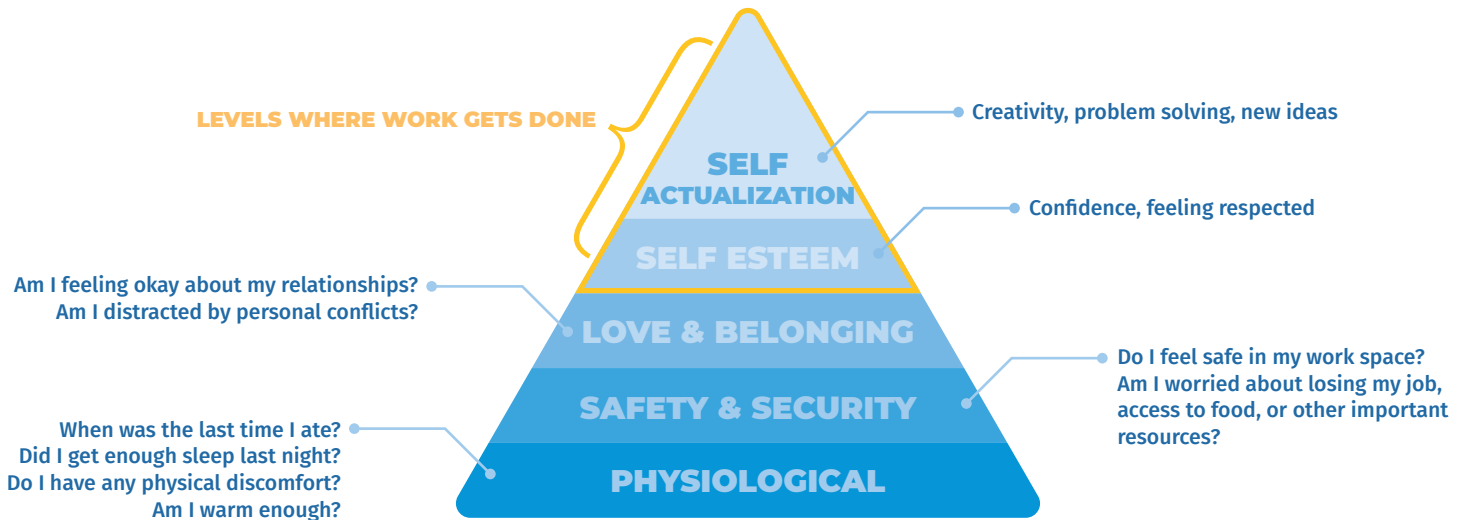
**PHONE A FRIEND** Have an accountability-a-buddy! This is someone who knows your goals and holds you accountable for reaching them. You can arrange how often you want them to check in with you and what questions you want them to ask.

**REACH OUT** Decreased feelings of motivation or trouble focusing on assignments can sometimes be a sign of depression or other mental health issues. Reach out to the Counseling Center here at WWU or try the Crisis Text Line (text "hello" to 741-741) if you think you may need support.

# CHOOSE YOUR MOTIVATION TOOLS!

## CHECK IN WITH YOUR NEEDS

If you're struggling to focus or complete something, check in with your levels of need.



### BREAK IT DOWN

Write your big goal, and then identify smaller steps to take to reach it.

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Steps:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### WHAT IS YOUR WHY?

If I complete \_\_\_\_\_,

I will be able to \_\_\_\_\_.

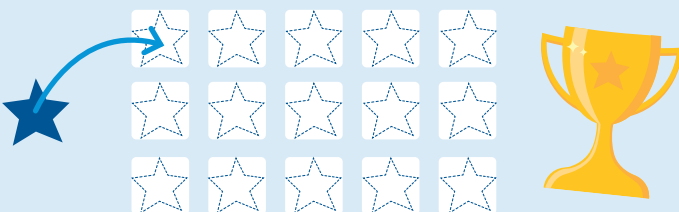
I choose to work toward my long term goal of \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_

**Example:** If I complete my physics lab, I will be able to graduate from college. I choose to work toward my long term goal of graduating from college by studying for this physics quiz.

### REWARD CHART!

An example of how to use this chart would be, for every hour I study Math, I get 1 star. Once I collect 15 stars, I get to \_\_\_\_\_ (insert your reward here)!



### ACCOUNTABIL-A-BUDDIES

Who are your accountabil-a-buddies? Write down who keeps you accountable for what goals and how often you have agreed they will check in on your progress.

**Example:** Rob, Anatomy paper, once a week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_