

# Understanding Motivation

## Learning Objectives

Read to answer these key questions:

- What do I want from college?
- What is the value of a college education?
- How do I choose my major and career?
- How can I motivate myself to be successful?
- How can I begin habits that lead to success?
- How can I be persistent in achieving my goal of a college education?

**M**ost students attend college with dreams of making their lives better. Some students are there to explore interests and possibilities, and others have more defined career goals. Being successful in college and attaining your dreams begin with motivation. It provides the energy or drive to find your direction and to reach your goals. Without motivation, it is difficult to accomplish anything.

Not everyone is successful in college. As a freshman in college, I attended an orientation in which I was told to look at the student to the left and the student to the right of me. The speaker said that one of us would not make it through the freshman year. I remember telling myself that the speaker must have been talking about one of the other two students and not me. That was the beginning of my motivation to be successful in college. Unfortunately, about one-third of college students drop out in the first year. Forty percent of students who start college do not finish their degrees. Having a good understanding of your gifts and talents, reasons for attending college, career goals, and how to motivate yourself will help you to reach your dreams.

## What Do I Want from College?

Succeeding in college requires time and effort. You will have to give up some of your time spent on leisure activities and working. You will give up some time spent with your friends and families. Making sacrifices and working hard are easier if you know what you want to achieve through your efforts. One of the first steps in motivating yourself to be successful in college is to have a clear and specific understanding of your reasons for attending college. Are you attending college as a way to obtain a satisfying career? Is financial security one of your goals? Will you feel more satisfied if you are living up to your potential? What are your hopes and dreams, and how will college help you to achieve your goals?

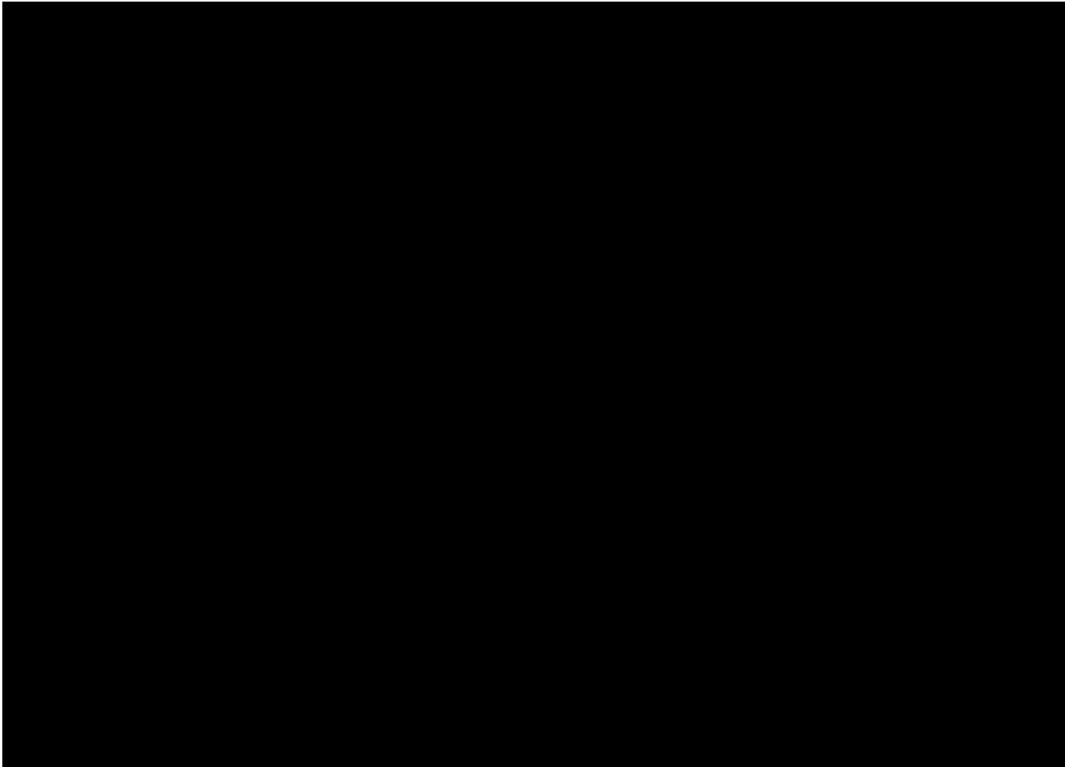
When you are having difficulties or doubts about your ability to finish your college education, remember your hopes and dreams and your plans for the future. It is a good idea to write these ideas down, think about them, and revise them from time to time.

## What Is the Value of a College Education?

Many college students say that getting a satisfying job that pays well and achieving financial security are important reasons for attending college. By going to college, you can get a job that pays more per hour. You can work fewer hours to earn a living and have more time for leisure activities. You can spend your time at work doing something that you like to do. A report issued by the Census Bureau in 2007 listed the following education and income statistics for all races and both genders throughout the United States.<sup>1</sup> Lifetime income assumes that a person works 30 years before retirement.

### Average Earnings Based on Education Level

Education	Yearly Income	Lifetime Income
High school graduate	\$31,286	\$938,580
Some college, no degree	\$33,009	\$990,270
Associate degree	\$39,746	\$1,192,380
Bachelor's degree	\$57,181	\$1,715,430
Master's degree	\$70,186	\$2,105,580
Professional degree	\$120,978	\$3,629,340



Notice that income rises with educational level. A person with a bachelor's degree earns almost twice as much as a high school graduate. Of course, these are average figures across the nation. Some individuals earn higher or lower salaries. People have assumed that you would certainly be rich if you were a millionaire. College won't make you an instant millionaire, but over a lifetime, you earn over a million dollars by having an associate's degree. People fantasize about winning the lottery. The reality is that the probability of winning the lottery is very low. In the long run, you have a better chance of improving your financial status by going to college.

Let's do some further comparisons. A high school graduate earns an average of \$938,580 over a lifetime. A college graduate with a bachelor's degree earns \$1,715,430 over a lifetime. A college graduate earns \$776,850 more than a high school graduate does over a lifetime. So, how much is a college degree worth? It is worth \$776,850 over a lifetime. Would you go to college if someone offered to pay you \$776,850? Here are some more interesting figures we can derive from the table on page 4:

Completing one college course is worth \$19,421.  
(\$776,850 divided by 40 courses in a bachelor's degree)

Going to class for one hour is worth \$405.  
(\$19,421 divided by 48 hours in a semester class)

Would you take a college class if someone offered to pay you \$19,421? Would you go to class today for one hour if someone offered to pay you \$405? Of course, if this sounds too good to be true, remember that you will receive these "payments" over a working lifetime of 30 years.

Money is only one of the values of going to college. Can you think of other reasons to attend college? Here are some less tangible reasons.

- College helps you to develop your potential.
- College opens the door to many satisfying careers.

- College prepares you to be an informed citizen and fully participate in the democratic process.
- College increases your understanding and widens your view of the world.
- College allows you to participate in a conversation with the great minds of all times and places. For example, reading the work of Plato is like having a conversation with that famous philosopher. You can continue great conversations with your faculty and fellow students.
- College helps to increase your confidence, self-esteem, and self-respect.

## Journal Entry #1

What are your dreams for the future? Write a paragraph about what you hope to accomplish by going to college.



Courtesy of Michael Dubois

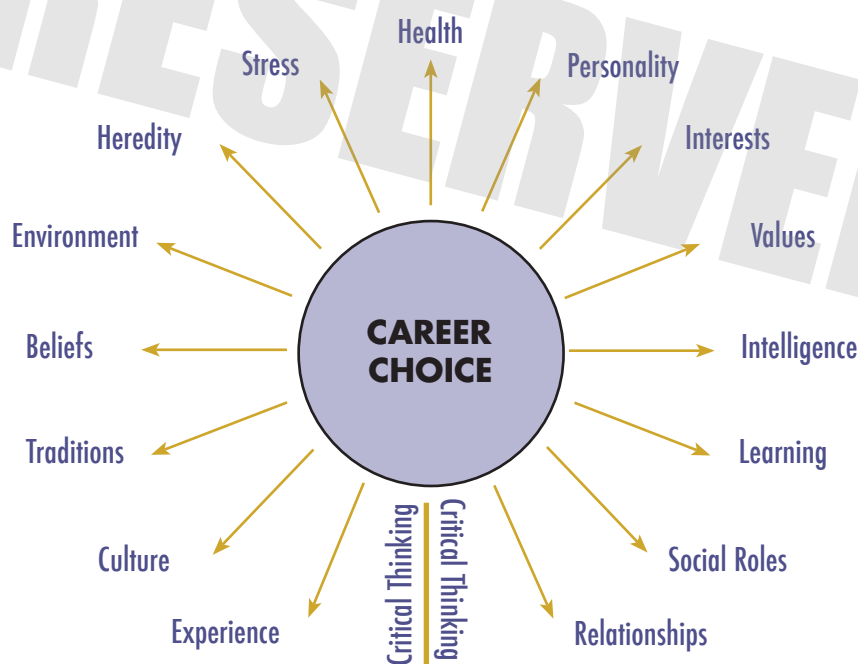
## Choosing a Major and Career

Having a definite major and career choice is a good motivation for completing your college education. It is difficult to put in the work necessary to be successful if you do not have a clear picture of your future career; however, three out of four college students are undecided about their major. For students who have chosen a major, 30 to 75 percent of a graduating class will change that major two or more times.<sup>2</sup> Unclear or indefinite career goals are some of the most significant factors that identify students at risk of dropping out of college.<sup>3</sup> Students often drop out or extend their stay in college because they are uncertain about their major or want to change their major. Choosing an appropriate college major is one of the most difficult and important decisions that college students can make.

How do people choose a career? There are many complex factors that go into your career choice. This course will help you to become aware of these factors and to think critically about them in order to make a good choice about your career. Some of the factors involved in choosing a career include:

- **Heredity.** You inherit genes from your parents that play a role in shaping who you are.
- **Intelligence.** Every person has a unique mixture of talents and skills. You can work to develop these skills.
- **Experience.** Your experiences can either build your self-confidence or cause you to doubt your abilities.

- **Environment.** What careers have you observed in your environment? Maybe your father was a doctor and you grew up familiar with careers in medicine. Your parents may have encouraged you to choose a particular career. You may want to learn about other possibilities.
- **Social roles.** Maybe you learned that men are engineers and women are teachers because your father is an engineer and your mother is a teacher. It is important to think critically about traditional roles so that your choices are not limited.
- **Learning.** What you have learned will play a part in your career decision. You may need to learn new behaviors and establish new habits.
- **Learning style.** Knowing how you like to learn can help you be successful in college as well as on the job. Your learning style may provide options for selecting a career as well.
- **Relationships.** We sometimes choose careers to enhance relationships. For example, you may choose a career that gives you time to spend with your family or with people who are important to you.
- **Stress.** Our ability to cope with stress plays a part in career choice. Some enjoy challenges; others value peace of mind.
- **Health.** Good health increases career options and enjoyment of life.
- **Personality.** Your personality is a major factor influencing which career you might enjoy.
- **Values.** What you value determines which career you will find satisfying.
- **Culture.** Your culture has an influence on which careers you value.
- **Traditions.** Traditions often guide career choice.
- **Beliefs.** Your beliefs about yourself and the world determine your behavior and career choice.
- **Interests.** If you choose a career that matches your interests, you can find satisfaction in your career.



**Figure 1.1** Factors in career choice.

How can you choose the major that is best for you? The best way is to first understand yourself: become aware of your personality traits, learning style, interests, preferred lifestyle, values, gifts, and talents. The next step is to do career research to determine the career that best matches your personal characteristics. Then, plan your education to prepare for your career. Here are some questions to answer to help you understand yourself and what career and major would be best for you.

To learn about yourself, explore these areas:

- **What is my personality type?** Assessing your personality type will help you to become more aware of your individual gifts and talents and some careers that will give you satisfaction.
- **What is my learning style?** Being aware of your learning style will help you identify learning strategies that work best for you and increase your productivity in college, on the job, and in your personal life.
- **What are my aptitudes?** Focus on your strengths by identifying your multiple intelligences.
- **What are my interests?** Knowing about your interests is important in choosing a satisfying career.
- **What kind of lifestyle do I prefer?** Think about how you want to balance work, leisure, and family.
- **What are my values?** Knowing what you value (what is most important to you) will help you make good decisions about your life.

To learn about career possibilities, research the following:

- **What careers match my personality, learning style, aptitudes, interests, lifestyle, and values?** Learn how to do career research to find the best career for you. Find a career that has a good outlook for the future.
- **How can I plan my education to get the career I want?** Once you have identified a career that matches your personal strengths and interests, consult your college catalog or advisor to make an educational plan that matches your career goals.

By following the above steps, you can find the major that is best for you and minimize the time you spend in college.

## Journal Entry #2

Write a paragraph about deciding on your ideal major and career. Use any of these questions to guide your thinking: If you have chosen a major, why is it the best major for you? How does it match your interests, aptitudes, and values (what is most important to you)? Does this major help you to live your preferred lifestyle? If you have not chosen a major, what are some steps in choosing the right major and career? What qualities would you look for in an ideal career? Can you describe some of your interests, aptitudes, and values? What is your preferred lifestyle?

## How to Be Motivated

There are many ways to be motivated.

- You can **think positively about the future** and take the steps necessary to accomplish your goals.
- You can begin your studies by **looking for what is interesting** to you.
- You can **improve your concentration** and motivation for studying by managing your external and internal distractions.
- You can be motivated by internal or external factors called **intrinsic or extrinsic motivation**.
- You can become aware of your **locus of control**, or where you place the responsibility for control over your life. If you are in control, you are more likely to be motivated to succeed.
- You can join a club, organization, or athletic team. **Affiliation motivation** involves taking part in school activities that increase your motivation to stay in college.
- **Achievement** and competition are motivating to some students.
- You can **use rewards** as a motivation to establish desirable behaviors.

Let's examine each type of motivation in more detail and see if some of these ideas can be useful to you.

### Thinking Positively about the Future

You can motivate yourself to complete your education by thinking positively about the future. If you believe that your chances of graduating from college are good, you can be motivated to take the steps necessary to achieve your goals. Conversely, if you think that your chances of graduating are poor, it is difficult to motivate yourself to continue. The degree of optimism that you possess is greatly influenced by past experiences. For example, if you were a good student in the past, you are likely to be optimistic about the future. If you struggled with your education, you may have some negative experiences that you will need to overcome. Negative thoughts can often become a self-fulfilling prophecy: what we think becomes true.

How can you train yourself to think more optimistically? First, become aware of your thought patterns. Are they mostly negative or positive? If they are negative, rewind the tape and make them more positive. Here is an example.

#### **Pessimism**

*I failed the test. I guess I am just not college material. I feel really stupid. I just can't do this. College is too hard for me. My (teacher, father, mother, friend, boss) told me I would never make it. Maybe I should just drop out of college and do something else.*

#### **Optimism**

*I failed the test. Let's take a look at what went wrong, so I can do better next time. Did I study enough? Did I study the right material? Maybe I should take this a little slower. How can I get help so that I can understand? I plan to do better next time.*

Can a person be too optimistic? In some circumstances, this is true. There is a difference between optimism and wishful thinking, for example. Wishful thinking does not include plans for accomplishing goals and can be a distraction from achieving them. Working toward unattainable goals can be exhausting and demoralizing, especially when the resources for attaining them are lacking. Goals must be realistic and achievable. Psychologists recommend that "people should be optimistic when the future can be changed

"The purpose of our lives is to give birth to the best which is within us."

Marianne Williamson

by positive thinking, but not otherwise.”<sup>4</sup> Using optimism requires some judgment about possible outcomes in the future.

There are some good reasons to think more positively. Psychologists have done long-term studies showing that people who use positive thinking have many benefits over a lifetime, including good health, longevity, happiness, perseverance, improved problem solving, and enhanced ability to learn. Optimism is also related to goal achievement. If you are optimistic and believe a goal is achievable, you are more likely to take the steps necessary to accomplish the goal. If you do not believe that a goal is achievable, you are likely to give up trying to achieve it. Being optimistic is closely related to being hopeful about the future. If you are hopeful about the future, you are likely to be more determined to reach your goals and to make plans for reaching them. Be optimistic about graduating from college, find the resources necessary to accomplish your goal, and start taking the steps to create your success.

## ACTIVITY

Are you generally an optimist or pessimist about the future? Read the following items and rate your level of agreement or disagreement:

Rate the following items using this scale:

- 5 I definitely agree
- 4 I agree
- 3 I neither agree or disagree (neutral)
- 2 I disagree
- 1 I strongly disagree

- \_\_\_\_\_ My chances of graduating from college are good.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am confident that I can overcome any obstacles to my success.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Things generally turn out well for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I believe that positive results will eventually come from most problem situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If I work hard enough, I will eventually achieve my goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Although I have faced some problems in the past, the future will be better.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I expect that most things will go as planned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Good things will happen to me in the future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am generally persistent in reaching my goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at finding solutions to the problems I face in life.

Add up your total points and multiply by two. My total points ( $\times 2$ ) are \_\_\_\_\_.

- 90–100 You are an excellent positive thinker.
- 80–89 You are a good positive thinker.
- 70–79 Sometimes you think positively, and sometimes not. Can you re-evaluate your thinking?
- 60 and below Work on positive thinking.

## Journal Entry #3

Write five positive statements about your college education and your future.

### Find Something Interesting in Your Studies

If you can think positively about what you are studying, it makes the job easier and more satisfying. Begin your studies by finding something interesting in the course and your textbook. Contrast these two ideas:

*I have to take economics. It is going to be difficult and boring. What do I need economics for anyway? I'll just need to get through it so I can get my degree.*

*I have to take economics. I wonder about the course content. I often hear about it on the news. How can I use this information in my future? What can I find that is interesting?*

Make sure to attend the first class meeting. Remember that the professor is very knowledgeable about the subject and finds the content interesting and exciting. At the first class meeting, the professor will give you an overview of the course and should provide some motivation for studying the material in the course. Look at the course syllabus to find what the course is about and to begin to look for something that could be interesting or useful to you.

Skimming a textbook before you begin a course is a good way to find something interesting and to prepare for learning. Skimming will give you an organized preview of what's ahead. Here are the steps to skimming a new text:

- 1. Quickly read the preface or introduction.** Read as if you were having a conversation with the author of the text. In the preface or introduction, you will find out how the author has organized the material, the key ideas, and his or her purpose in writing the text.
- 2. Look at the major topics in the table of contents.** You can use the table of contents as a window into the book. It gives a quick outline of every topic in the text. As you read the table of contents, look for topics of special interest to you.
- 3. Spend five to 15 minutes quickly looking over the book.** Turn the pages quickly, noticing boldfaced topics, pictures, and anything else that catches your attention. Again, look for important or interesting topics. Do not spend too much time on this step. If your textbook is online, skim through the website.
- 4. What resources are included?** Is there an index, glossary of terms, answers to quiz questions, or solutions to math problems? These sections will be of use to you as you read. If your book is online, explore the website to find useful features and content.

Skimming a text or website before you begin to read has several important benefits. The first benefit is that it gets you started in the learning process. It is an easy and quick step that can help you avoid procrastination. It increases motivation by helping you notice items that have appeal to you. Previewing the content will help you to relax as you study and remember the information. Early in the course, this step will help you verify that you have chosen the correct course and that you have the prerequisites to be successful in the class.

"No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit."

Helen Keller

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Winston Churchill

## Improving Your Concentration

Have you ever watched lion tamers concentrate? If their attention wanders, they are likely to become the lion's dinner. Skilled athletes, musicians, and artists don't have any trouble concentrating. They are motivated to concentrate. Think about a time when you were totally focused on what you were doing. You were motivated to continue. You can improve your concentration and motivation for studying by managing your external and internal distractions.

**Manage your external environment.** Your environment will either help you to study or distract you from studying. We are all creatures of habit. If you try to study in front of the TV, you will watch TV because that is what you are accustomed to doing in front of the TV. If you study in bed, you will fall asleep because your body associates the bed with sleeping. If you study in the kitchen, you will eat. Find an environment that minimizes distractions. One idea is to study in the library. In the library, there are many cues that tell you to study. There are books and learning resources and other people studying. It will be easier to concentrate in that environment. You may be able to set up a learning environment in your home. Find a place where you can place a desk or table, your computer, and your materials for learning. When you are in this place, use it for learning and studying only.

Increase your concentration and motivation as well as your retention by varying the places where you study and the content of what you are studying. Study at home, in the library, outside, in a coffee shop or any place where you can focus your attention on your studies. You can also increase learning effectiveness by varying the content and subjects that you are studying. Athletes maintain concentration and motivation by including strength, speed and skill practice in each workout. Musicians practice scales, different musical pieces and rhythm exercises in one practice session. In your studies you can do the same. For example, when studying a foreign language, spend some time on reading, some time on learning vocabulary and some practice in speaking the language. Then do some problems for your math class.

**Manage your internal distractions.** Many of our distractions come from within. Here are some techniques for managing these internal distractions:

- 1. Be here now.** Choose where you will place your attention. As I'm sure you have experienced, your body can be attending a lecture or at the desk reading, but your mind can be in lots of different and exciting places. You can tell yourself, "Be here now." You cannot force yourself to pay attention. When your mind wanders, notice that you have drifted off and gently return your attention to your lecture or reading. This will take some practice, since attention tends to wander often.
- 2. The spider technique.** If you hold a tuning fork to a spider web, the web vibrates and the spider senses that it has caught a tasty morsel and goes seeking the food. After a while, the spider discovers that there is no food and learns to ignore the vibrations caused by the tuning fork. When you are sitting in the library studying and someone walks in talking and laughing, you can choose to pay attention either to the distraction or to studying. Decide to continue to pay attention to studying.
- 3. Set up a worry time.** Many times worries interfere with concentration. Some people have been successful in setting up a worry time. Here's how it works:
  - a.** Set a specific time each day for worrying.
  - b.** When worries distract you from your studies, remind yourself that you have set aside time for worrying.

### Managing Internal Distractions

1. Be here now
2. Spider technique
3. Worry time
4. Checkmark technique
5. Increase activity
6. Find an incentive
7. Change topics

- c. Tell yourself, “Be here now.”
  - d. Keep your worry appointment.
  - e. During your worry time, try to find some solutions or take some steps to resolve the things that cause you to worry.
4. **Take steps to solve personal problems.** If you are bothered by personal problems, take steps to solve them. See your college counselor for assistance. Another strategy is to make a plan to deal with the problem later so that you can study now.
  5. **Use the checkmark technique.** When you find yourself distracted from a lecture or from studying, place a checkmark on a piece of paper and refocus your attention on the task at hand. You will find that your checkmarks decrease over time.
  6. **Increase your activity.** Take a break. Stretch and move. Read and listen actively by asking questions about the material and answering them as you read or listen.
  7. **Find an incentive or reward.** Tell yourself that when you finish, you will do something enjoyable.
  8. **Change topics.** Changing study topics may help you to concentrate and avoid fatigue.

## Intrinsic or Extrinsic Motivation

**Intrinsic motivation** comes from within. It means that you do an activity because you enjoy it or find personal meaning in it. With intrinsic motivation, the nature of the activity itself or the consequences of the activity motivate you. For example, let’s say that I am interested in learning to play the piano. I am motivated to practice playing the piano because I like the sound of the piano and feel very satisfied when I can play music that I enjoy. I practice because I like to practice, not because I have to practice. When I get tired or frustrated, I work through it or put it aside and come back to it because I want to learn to play the piano well.

You can be intrinsically motivated to continue in college because you enjoy learning and find the college experience satisfying. Look for ways to enjoy college and to find some personal satisfaction in it. If you enjoy college, it becomes easier to do the work required to be successful. Think about what you say to yourself about college. If you are saying negative things such as “I don’t want to be here,” it will be difficult to continue.

**Extrinsic motivation** comes as a result of an external reward from someone else. Examples of extrinsic rewards are certificates, bonuses, money, praise, and recognition. Taking the piano example again, let’s say that I want my child to play the piano. The child does not know if he or she would like to play the piano. I give the child a reward for practicing the piano. I could pay the child for practicing or give praise for doing a good job. There are two possible outcomes of the extrinsic reward. After a while, the child may gain skills and confidence and come to enjoy playing the piano. The extrinsic reward is no longer necessary because the child is now intrinsically motivated. Or the child may decide that he or she does not like to play the piano. The extrinsic reward is no longer effective in motivating the child to play the piano.

You can use extrinsic rewards to motivate yourself to be successful in college. Remind yourself of the payoff for getting a college degree: earning more money, having a satisfying career, being able to purchase a car and a house. Extrinsic rewards can be a first step in motivating yourself to attend college. With experience and achievement, you may come to like going to college and may become intrinsically motivated to continue your college education.

If you use intrinsic motivation to achieve your goal, you will be happier and more successful. If you do something like playing the piano because you enjoy it, you are more likely to spend the time necessary to practice to achieve your goal. If you view college

as something that you enjoy and as valuable to you, it is easier to spend the time to do the required studying. When you get tired or frustrated, tell yourself that you are doing a good job (praise yourself) and think of the positive reasons that you want to get a college education.

## Locus of Control

Being aware of the concept of locus of control is another way of understanding motivation. The word **locus** means place. The locus of control is where you place the responsibility for control over your life. In other words, who is in charge? If you place the responsibility on yourself and believe that you have control over your life, you have an internal locus of control. If you place the responsibility on others and think that luck or fate determines your future, you have an external locus of control. Some people use the internal and external locus of control in combination or favor one type in certain situations. If you favor an internal locus of control, you believe that to a great extent your actions determine your future. Studies have shown that students who use an internal locus of control are likely to have higher achievement in college.<sup>5</sup> The characteristics of students with internal and external loci of control are listed below.

Students with an internal locus of control:

- Believe that they are in control of their lives.
- Understand that grades are directly related to the amount of study invested.
- Are self-motivated.
- Learn from their mistakes by figuring out what went wrong and how to fix the problem.
- Think positively and try to make the best of each situation.
- Rely on themselves to find something interesting in the class and learn the material.

Students with an external locus of control:

- Believe that their lives are largely a result of luck, fate, or chance.
- Think that teachers give grades rather than students earning grades.
- Rely on external motivation from teachers or others.
- Look for someone to blame when they make a mistake.
- Think negatively and believe they are victims of circumstance.
- Rely on the teacher to make the class interesting and to teach the material.

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

Lou Holtz

## ACTIVITY

### Internal or External Locus of Control

Decide whether the statement represents an internal or external locus of control and put a checkmark in the appropriate column.

Internal	External	
_____	_____	1. Much of what happens to us is due to fate, chance, or luck.
_____	_____	2. Grades depend on how much work you put into it.
_____	_____	3. If I do badly on the test, it is usually because the teacher is unfair.
_____	_____	4. If I do badly on the test, it is because I didn't study or didn't understand the material.
_____	_____	5. I often get blamed for things that are not my fault.
_____	_____	6. I try to make the best of the situation.
_____	_____	7. It is impossible to get a good grade if you have a bad instructor.
_____	_____	8. I can be successful through hard work.
_____	_____	9. If the teacher is not there telling me what to do, I have a hard time doing my work.
_____	_____	10. I can motivate myself to study.
_____	_____	11. If the teacher is boring, I probably won't do well in class.
_____	_____	12. I can find something interesting about each class.
_____	_____	13. When bad things are going to happen, there is not much you can do about it.
_____	_____	14. I create my own destiny.
_____	_____	15. Teachers should motivate the students to study.
_____	_____	16. I have a lot of choice about what happens in my life.

As you probably noticed, the even-numbered statements represent internal locus of control. The odd-numbered statements represent external locus of control. Remember that students with an internal locus of control have a greater chance of success in college. It is important to see yourself as responsible for your own success and achievement and to believe that with effort you can achieve your goals.

### Affiliation

Human beings are social creatures who generally feel the need to be part of a group. This tendency is called affiliation motivation. People like to be part of a community, family, organization, or culture. You can apply this motivation technique in college by participating in student activities on campus. Join an athletic team, participate in a club, or join the student government. In this way, you will feel like you are part of a group and will have a

"I am a great believer in luck, and I find that the harder I work, the more I have of it."

Thomas Jefferson

sense of belonging. College is more than going to class: it is participating in social activities, making new friends, and sharing new ideas. Twenty years after you graduate from college, you are more likely to remember the conversations held with college friends than the detailed content of classes. College provides the opportunity to become part of a new group and to start lifelong friendships.

## Achievement

Some students are motivated by achievement. Individuals who are achievement-motivated have a need for success in school, sports, careers, and other competitive situations. These individuals enjoy getting recognition for their success. They are often known as the best student, the outstanding athlete, or the employee of the year. These people are attracted to careers that provide rewards for individual achievement, such as sales, law, architecture, engineering, and business. They work hard in order to enjoy the rewards of their efforts. In college, some students work very hard to achieve high grades and then take pride in their accomplishments. One disadvantage of using this type of motivation is that it can lead to excess stress. These students often need to remember to balance their time between work, school, family, and leisure so that they do not become too stressed by the need to achieve.

## Using a Reward

You can use rewards to manage your own behavior. If you want to increase your studying behavior, follow it by a positive consequence or a reward. Think about what is rewarding to you (watching TV, playing sports, enjoying your favorite music). You could study (your behavior) and then watch a TV program (the reward). The timing of your reward is important. To be effective, it must immediately follow the behavior. If you watch TV and then study, you may not get around to studying. If you watch the TV program tomorrow or next week, it is not a strong reinforcement because it is not an immediate reward.

Be careful about the kinds of rewards you use so that you do not get into habits that are detrimental to your health. If you use food as a reward for studying, you may increase your studying behavior, but you may also gain a few pounds. Using alcohol or drugs as a reward can start an addiction. Buying yourself a reward can ruin your budget. Good rewards do not involve too many calories, cost too much money, or involve alcohol or drugs.

You can also use a negative consequence to decrease a behavior. If you touch a hot stove and get burned, you quickly learn not to do it again. You could decide to miss your favorite television program if you do not complete your studying. However, this is not fun and you may feel deprived. You might even rebel and watch your favorite TV show anyway. See if you can find a way to use positive reinforcement (a reward) for increasing a behavior that is beneficial to you rather than using a negative consequence.

When we are young, our attitudes toward education are largely shaped by positive or negative rewards. If you were praised for being a good reader as a child, it is likely that you enjoyed reading and developed good reading skills. Maybe a teacher embarrassed you because of your math skills and you learned to be anxious about math. Think about areas of your education in which you excel, and see if you can recall someone praising or otherwise reinforcing that behavior. If you are a good athlete, did someone praise your athletic ability when you were younger? How was it rewarded? If you are not good at math, what were some early messages about your math performance? These early messages have a powerful influence on later behavior. You may need to put in some effort to learn new and more beneficial behaviors.

As a college student, you can use a reward as a powerful motivator. Praise yourself and think positively about your achievements in college even if the achievements come in small steps.

## Journal Entry #4

Write a paragraph with at least three ideas about how you can motivate yourself to be successful in college. Use any of the following questions to think about your answer: How can you use positive thinking to be successful? How can you find something interesting in your studies? How can you improve your concentration? What are your intrinsic motivators for attending college? Remember that intrinsic motivators are those activities that you do because you enjoy them or they are personally meaningful to you. What are some extrinsic motivators? Are you motivated by money or achievement? How can you use the concept of locus of control to improve your chances of success in college? Do you believe that you create your own success? What are some rewards you can use to increase your positive behavior?

## Success Is a Habit

We establish habits by taking small actions each day. Through repetition, these individual actions become habits. I once visited the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and saw a cross section of the cable used to support the bridge. It was made of small metal strands twisted with other strands; then those cables were twisted together to make a stronger cable. Habits are a lot like cables. We start with one small action, and each successive action makes the habit stronger. Have you ever stopped to think that success can be a habit? We all have learned patterns of behavior that either help us to be successful or interfere with our success. With some effort and some basic understanding of behavior modification, you can choose to establish some new behaviors that lead to success or to get rid of behaviors that interfere with it.

“Habits are first cobwebs,  
then cables.”  
Spanish Proverb

“We are what we  
repeatedly do. Excellence,  
then, is not an act but a  
habit.”  
Aristotle

## Seven Steps to Change a Habit

You can establish new habits that lead to your success. Once a habit is established, it can become a pattern of behavior that you do not need to think about very much. For example, new students often need to get into the habit of studying. Following is an outline of steps that can be helpful to establish new behaviors.

- 1. State the problem.** What new habit would you like to start? What are your roadblocks or obstacles? What bad habit would you like to change? Be truthful about it. This is sometimes the most difficult step. Here are two different examples:
  - I need to study to be successful in college. I am not in the habit of studying. I easily get distracted by work, family, friends, and other things I need to do. At the end of the day, I am too tired to study.
  - I need to improve my diet. I am overweight. I eat too much fast food and am not careful about what I eat. I have no time for exercise.
- 2. Change one small behavior at a time.** If you think about climbing a mountain, the task can seem overwhelming. However, you can take the first step. If you can change one small behavior, you can gain the confidence to change another. For example:
  - I plan to study at least one hour each day on Mondays through Fridays.
  - I plan to eat more fruits and vegetables each day.

## Seven Steps to Change a Habit

1. State the problem
2. Change one small behavior at a time
3. Be positive
4. Count the behavior
5. Picture the change
6. Practice the behavior
7. Reward yourself

State the behavior you would like to change. Make it small.

3. **State in a positive way the behavior you wish to establish.** For example, instead of the negative statements “I will not waste my time” or “I will not eat junk food,” say, “I plan to study each day” or “I plan to eat fruits and vegetables each day.”
4. **Count the behavior.** How often do you do this behavior? If you are trying to establish a pattern of studying, write down how much time you spend studying each day. If you are trying to improve your diet, write down everything that you eat each day. Sometimes just getting an awareness of your habit is enough to begin to make some changes.

## Ten Habits of Successful College Students

Starting your college education will require you to establish some new habits to be successful.

### 1. Attend class.

College lectures supplement the material in the text, so it is important to attend class. Many college instructors will drop you if you miss three hours of class. After three absences, most students do not return to class. If your class is online, log in frequently.

### 2. Read the textbook.

Start early and read a little at a time. If you have a text with 400 pages, read 25 pages a week rather than trying to read it all at once.

### 3. Have an educational plan.

Counselors or advisors can assist you in making an educational plan so that you take the right classes and accomplish your educational goal as soon as possible.

### 4. Use college services.

Colleges offer valuable free services that help you to be successful. Take advantage of tutoring, counseling, health services, financial aid, the learning resources center (library) and many other services.

### 5. Get to know the faculty.

You can get to know the faculty by asking questions in class or meeting with your instructors during office hours. Your instructors can provide extra assistance and write letters of recommendation for scholarships, future employment, or graduate school.

### 6. Don't work too much.

Research has shown that full-time students should have no more than 20 hours of outside employment a week to be successful in college. If you have to work more than 20 hours a week, reduce your college load. If you are working 40 hours a week or more, take only one or two classes.

### 7. Take one step at a time.

If you are anxious about going to college, remember that each class you attend takes you another step toward your goal. If you take too many classes, especially in the beginning, you may become overwhelmed.

### 8. Have a goal for the future.

Know why you are in college and what you hope to accomplish. What career will you have in the future? Imagine your future lifestyle.

### 9. Visualize your success.

See yourself walking across the stage and receiving your college diploma. See yourself working at a job you enjoy.

### 10. Ask questions if you don't understand.

Asking questions not only helps you to find the answers, but it shows you are motivated to be successful. Starting your college education will require you to establish some new habits to be successful.

**5. Picture in your mind the actions you might take.** For example:

- I picture myself finding time to study in the library. I see myself walking to the library. I can see myself in the library studying.
- I see myself in the grocery store buying fruits and vegetables. I see myself packing these fruits and vegetables in my lunch. I see myself putting these foods in a place where I will notice them.

**6. Practice the behavior for 10 days.** In 10 days, you can get started on a new pattern of behavior. Once you have started, keep practicing the behavior for about a month to firmly establish your new pattern of behavior. The first three days are the most difficult. If you fail, don't give up. Just realize that you are human and keep trying for 10 days. Think positively that you can be successful. Write a journal entry or note on your calendar about what you have accomplished each day.

**7. Find a reward for your behavior.** Remember that we tend to repeat behaviors that are rewarded. Find rewards that do not involve too many calories, don't cost too much money, and don't involve alcohol or drugs. Also, rewards are most effective if they directly follow the behavior you wish to reinforce.

"The difference in winning and losing is most often . . . not quitting."

Walt Disney

"It's not that I'm so smart; it's just that I stay with problems longer."

Albert Einstein

## QUIZ

### Motivation

Test what you have learned by selecting the correct answers to the following questions:

1. If the behavior is followed by a reward
  - a. it is likely to be increased.
  - b. it is likely to be decreased.
  - c. there will probably be no effect.
2. For rewards to be effective, they must occur
  - a. before the behavior.
  - b. immediately after the behavior.
  - c. either before or after the behavior.
3. Manage your internal distractions by
  - a. forcing yourself to concentrate.
  - b. telling yourself not to worry about your problems.
  - c. noticing when your attention has wandered and choosing where you want to focus your attention.

4. To be successful in college, it is best to use

- a. intrinsic motivation.
- b. extrinsic motivation.
- c. an external locus of control.

5. To change a habit,

- a. set high goals.
- b. focus on negative behavior.
- c. begin with a concrete behavior that can be counted.

How did you do on the quiz? Check your answers: 1. a, 2. b, 3. c, 4. a, 5. c

There is an old saying that persistence will get you almost anything eventually. This saying applies to your success in life as well as in college. The first two to six weeks of college are a critical time in which many students drop out. Realize that college is a new experience and that you will face new challenges and growth experiences. Make plans to persist, especially in the first few weeks. Get to know a college counselor or advisor. These professionals can help you to get started in the right classes and answer any questions you might have. It is important to make a connection with a counselor or faculty member so that you feel comfortable in college and have the resources to obtain needed help. Plan to enroll on time so that you do not have to register late. It is crucial to attend the first class. In the first class, the professor explains the class requirements and expectations and sets the tone for the class. You may even get dropped from the class if you are not there on the first day. Get into the habit of studying right away. Make studying a habit that you start immediately at the beginning of the semester or quarter. If you can make it through the first six weeks, it is likely that you can finish the semester and complete your college education.

It has been said that 90 percent of success is just showing up. Any faculty member will tell you that the number one reason for students dropping out of college is lack of attendance. They know that when students miss three classes in a row, they are not likely to return. Even very capable students who miss class may find that they are lost when they come back. Many students are simply afraid to return. Classes such as math and foreign languages are sequential, and it is very difficult to make up work after an absence. One of the most important ways you can be successful is to make a habit of consistently showing up for class.

You will also need commitment to be successful. Commitment is a promise to yourself to follow through with something. In athletics, it is not necessarily the one with the best physical skills who makes the best athlete. Commitment and practice make a great athlete. Commitment means doing whatever is necessary to succeed. Like the good athlete, make a commitment to accomplishing

your goals. Spend the time necessary to be successful in your studies.

When you face difficulties, persistence and commitment are especially important. History is full of famous people who contributed to society through persistence and commitment. Consider the following facts about Abraham Lincoln, for example.

- Failed in business at age 21.
- Was defeated in a legislative race at age 22.
- Failed again in business at age 24.
- Overcame the death of his sweetheart at age 26.
- Had a nervous breakdown at age 27.
- Lost a congressional race at age 34.
- Lost a congressional race at age 36.
- Lost a senatorial race at age 45.
- Failed in an effort to become vice president at age 47.
- Lost a senatorial race at age 49.
- Was elected president of the United States at age 52.<sup>6</sup>

You will face difficulties along the way in any worthwhile venture. The successful person keeps on trying. There are some precautions about persistence, however. Make sure that the goal you are trying to reach is attainable and valuable to you. As you learn more about yourself, you may want to change your goals. Also, persistence can be misguided if it involves other people. For example, if you decide that you want to marry someone and this someone does not want to marry you, it is better to focus your energy and attention on a different goal.

One of the best ways to be persistent is to accomplish your goals one step at a time. If you look at a mountain, it may seem too high to climb, but you can do it one step at a time. Araceli Segarra became the first Spanish woman to climb Mount Everest. At 29,028 feet, Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. It is so high that you need an oxygen tank to breathe at the top. So how did Araceli climb the mountain? She says that it took strength and concentration. She put one foot in front of the other. When she was near the top of the mountain, she was more tired

*continued*

than she had ever been in her life. She told herself that she would take 10 more steps. When she had taken 10 steps, she said, "I'm OK. I made it." Then she took 10 more steps until she reached the top of the mountain.

The goal of getting a college education may seem like a mountain that is difficult to climb. Break it into smaller steps that you can accomplish. See your college counselor or advisor, register for classes, attend the first class, read the first chapter, do the first assignment, and you will be on the road to your success. Then continue to break tasks into small, achievable steps and continue from one step to the next. And remember, persistence will get you almost anything eventually.



Courtesy of Michael Dubois

### Journal Entry #5

What will you do if you are tempted to drop out of college? What steps can you take to be persistent in achieving your college goals? Are there times when it is best to change goals rather than to be persistent if your efforts are not working? Write a paragraph about how you will be persistent in reaching your college goals.

## JOURNAL ENTRIES

### Understanding Motivation

Go to <http://www.collegesuccess1.com/JournalEntries.htm> for Word files of the Journal Entries

### Stories from the Elders

This chapter has focused upon several important principles that can either improve or hinder your ability to stay the course and reach your goals. You have been asked to consider, "Why am I in college?" and "What's involved with choosing a major?" or "What are my interests and my values?" Once you begin to answer these questions you will need to consider, "How do I maintain my locus of control and stay motivated, focused, and responsible for my success?"

This is an exciting time in your life. You have the ability to choose to become a stronger, more focused individual. You may believe that your success is part of a larger success—one that impacts your family and your community. You may be the first in your family to attend college, or you might feel community pressure to become an educational role model and an example for others to follow. These types of expectations can create greater motivation for success as long as you remain true to your own self-assessment of your interests and your values.

To bring forth a new perspective on learning strategies and techniques for college success, we have woven traditional Native-American stories into the heart of each chapter. The oral tradition of storytelling is an ancient practice that all indigenous cultures embrace. Some stories focus upon creation and the spiritual beliefs of the tribe, while others teach a moral lesson. Stories can be historical, can depict a special and sacred geographic characteristic, or impart important cultural knowledge and history to its people. Stories are entertaining and sometimes comical, but all will usually promote a beneficial change in attitude toward a basic value or responsibility as members of that community. Some stories teach about relationships with other living creatures including people, animals, and elements like the wind, water, and the universe. All stories are intergenerational and intra-familial in that stories are passed down from grandfather to child and so on.

Some tribes are willing to share their stories for the good of all and some nations are quite protective and believe that stories can only be shared with others when given as gifts. One of the co-authors of this textbook, Larry Gauthier, is a Woodland Cree and he has asked the elders for permission to use their stories. One of the elders “took the tobacco and prayed that their students and those who use the text will find value and meaning in the stories.” The stories take on a spirit of their own and, in a way, define a shared cultural experience and belief system of a community. With that in mind, we share with you a collection of stories.

The story you are about to read is one that is shared with us from the Maidu Tribe located in Northern California. The story of “To’lowim Woman and Butterfly Man” has as its main intention to teach about self-control and to be faithful and dedicated to the family. Within this story are several ideas that correlate to the subject of motivation as discussed in this chapter.

## To’lowim Woman and Butterfly Man

Based on a Maidu story

In the old days, during the time of the Deer Drive, To’lowim Man was fishing and hunting with his tribal brothers and when they returned home they would begin ceremonies to give thanks. To’lowim Woman was a good wife and mother, but she was bored during these days when women were to keep their distance from the men.

On a bright and sunny day, To’lowim Woman decided to take a walk with her baby. She carried her baby in a cradleboard, strapped to her back, and walked out to see the beautiful flowers that were in bloom. Along the way, she looked for berries and roots, and eventually saw various brightly colored flowers. After awhile, she sat beside a shady bush to rest, while her baby laid

safely asleep in his cradleboard. Soon a large and brightly colored butterfly flew by her.

To’lowim Woman was amazed by the butterfly’s beauty. She had never seen a butterfly so large, so strong, and with such vibrant colors like blues as deep as turquoise, yellows like the golden poppies, and greens like the iridescence of the abalone shell. To’lowim Woman was mesmerized by its beauty. She reached out to touch the butterfly and it stroked her hand as it flew by, sending a shiver through her body.

Without thinking much about her baby and knowing that the baby would sleep safely under the shady bush, To’lowim Woman ran after the butterfly. She hadn’t felt the ticklish feel of passion for some time and she knew she had to catch this butterfly for her own. She ran this way and

that way following the fluttering butterfly. Each time she stretched to catch the butterfly, it flittered further away and To'lowim Woman lost all sense of time and distance.

As the day turned to dusk, To'lowim Woman found herself in a valley she had never seen before and she dropped to the ground with exhaustion. Soon the butterfly landed next to To'lowim Woman to keep her safe through the dark night. When she awoke as the morning sun warmed her face, she found a handsome and strong man holding her in his arms. He said, "I am Butterfly Man and you have followed me to this Butterfly Valley. Come with me and we will have a happy and safe life together." To'lowim Woman could not resist the passion she felt for Butterfly Man, so she agreed to follow him. He warned her to hold on to his belt. He told her she would be enchanted by other butterflies along the way, but if she held on tightly and stayed the course, they would reach his home before sunset.

As they traveled through the beautiful valley, filled with flowers that To'lowim Woman had never gazed upon before, she became very excited about her new life. She knew she would be happy with her Butterfly Man and that she would never feel the boredom of the past. They wove through the valley swiftly, and butterflies approached. Many

of vibrant virile colors like red, purple, and orange flew close to To'lowim Woman, taunting her to reach out for just one touch. She tried to stay the course, but could no longer restrain herself and reached out with one hand to touch a huge butterfly. She lost her hold of Butterfly Man and soon found herself in a whirlwind of thousands of butterflies leading her in every direction.

Butterfly Man continued on his journey and To'lowim Woman could not reach him, even though she tried. The butterflies clouded her vision and eventually, she lost all sight of Butterfly Man. To'lowim Woman kept chasing her butterfly dreams, but could never catch one. Her clothes became tattered and torn as she brushed against thorny bushes and trees, and eventually To'lowim Woman found herself nearly naked. The people say To'lowim Woman lost her way in the valley and never returned home.

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect. We are a part of the earth and it is part of us."

Chief Seattle, Suquamis

"Everything a power does, it does in a circle."

Lakota

## Notes

For more information about the Maidu Tribe of California, visit their website at [www.maidu.com](http://www.maidu.com).

## References

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- Woodhead, Henry, and Jane Edwin. 1994. *The American Indians: The Indians of California*. Richmond, Virginia: Time Life Books series.

## Talking Circle

Use these questions for discussion in a talking circle or consider at least one of these questions as you respond in a journal entry. For the talking circle, students sit in a circle and one student speaks at a time. The professor asks a question and the first student on the left responds. Then move to the next student on the left to continue the discussion. Students may pass if they do not wish to speak. It is important to listen carefully and respect the contributions of each student.

"Every fire is the same size when it starts."

Seneca

1. What are some of the possible challenges you will encounter with self-control as you begin to focus more time and energy toward your study?
2. How will your family, friends, or community respond to your time away from them?
3. How can you help your family, friends, and community to better understand and appreciate the educational/career goals you have set for yourself?
4. What characteristics do you share with To'lowim Woman?
5. To'lowim Woman struggles with creating balance in her life and she lets passion take control. How is passion related to your life's goals on a personal and educational level?
6. What will it mean to you if you are pulled in other directions by the butterflies? Can this be a positive reaction?

## Success over the Internet

Visit the *College Success Website* at <http://www.collegesuccess1.com/>

The *College Success Website* is continually updated with new topics and links to the material presented in this chapter. Topics include:

- How to improve concentration
- Motivation
- Positive attitude
- Balancing work, school, and social life
- Success factors for new college students
- How to change a habit
- Dealing with cravings and urges

Contact your instructor if you have any problems accessing the *College Success Website*.

## Notes

1. W. Lewallen, "The Impact of Being Undecided on College Persistence," *Journal of College Student Development* 34 (1993): 103–12.
2. Marsha Fralick, "College Success: A Study of Positive and Negative Attrition," *Community College Review* 20 (1993): 29–36.
3. Ideas from Lina Rocha, Personal Development Instructor, Cuyamaca College, El Cajon, CA.
4. Christopher Peterson, *A Primer in Positive Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 127.
5. M. J. Findlay and H. M. Cooper, "Locus of Control and Academic Achievement: A Literature Review," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 44 (1983): 419–27.
6. Anthony Robbins, *Unlimited Power* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), 73.

# Begin with Self-Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

A good way to begin your success in college is to assess your present skills to determine your strengths and areas that need improvement. Complete the following assessment to get an overview of the topics presented in the textbook and to measure your present skills.

## Measure Your Success

The following statements represent major topics included in the textbook. Read the following statements and rate how true they are for you at the present time. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to complete this assessment again to measure your progress.

- 5 Definitely true
- 4 Mostly true
- 3 Somewhat true
- 2 Seldom true
- 1 Never true

\_\_\_\_\_ I am motivated to be successful in college.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know the value of a college education.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know how to establish successful patterns of behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can concentrate on an important task until it is completed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am attending college to accomplish my own personal goals.

\_\_\_\_\_ I believe to a great extent that my actions determine my future.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am persistent in achieving my goals.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Motivation**

\_\_\_\_\_ I can describe my personality type.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can list careers that match my personality type.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can describe my personal strengths and talents based on my personality type.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand how my personality type affects how I manage my time and money.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know what college majors are most in demand.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am confident that I have chosen the best major for myself.

\_\_\_\_\_ Courses related to my major are interesting and exciting to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Personality and Major**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I can describe my learning style.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can list study techniques that match my learning style.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand how my personality affects my learning style.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the connection between learning and teaching style.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the concept of multiple intelligences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can list my multiple intelligences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I create my own success.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Learning Style and Intelligence**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I can describe my vocational interests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can list careers that match my vocational interests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can list my top five values.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I generally consider my most important values when making decisions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My actions are generally guided by my personal values.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My personal values motivate me to be successful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can balance work, study, and leisure activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Interests and Values**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand how current employment trends will affect my future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know what work skills will be most important for the 21st century.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have an educational plan that matches my academic and career goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know the steps in making a good career decision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a good resume.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to interview for a job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to choose a satisfying career.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Career and Education**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a list or mental picture of my lifetime goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know what I would like to accomplish in the next four years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I spend my time on activities that help me accomplish my lifetime goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I effectively use priorities in managing my time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can balance study, work, and recreation time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I generally avoid procrastination on important tasks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at managing my money.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Managing Time and Money**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I know memory techniques and can apply them to my college studies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can read a college textbook and remember the important points.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to effectively mark a college textbook.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can quickly survey a college text and select the main ideas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I generally have good reading comprehension.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can concentrate on the material I am reading.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am confident in my ability to read and remember college-level material.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Memory and Reading**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to listen for the main points in a college lecture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am familiar with note-taking systems for college lectures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to review my lecture notes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I feel comfortable with writing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know the steps in writing a college term paper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to prepare a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable with public speaking.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to adequately prepare for a test.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can predict the questions that are likely to be on the test.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to deal with test anxiety.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am successful on math exams.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to make a reasonable guess if I am uncertain about the answer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am confident of my ability to take objective tests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can write a good essay answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Test Taking**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand how my personality affects my communication style.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to be a good listener.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can use some basic techniques for good communication.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can identify some barriers to effective communication.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to deal with conflict.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I feel confident about making new friends in college and on the job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am generally a good communicator.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Communication and Relationships**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have the skills to analyze data, generate alternatives, and solve problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can identify fallacies in reasoning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can apply the steps of critical thinking to analyze a complex issue.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am willing to consider different points of view.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can use brainstorming to generate a variety of ideas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at visualization and creative imagination.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am generally curious about the world and can spot problems and opportunities.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Critical and Creative Thinking**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the basics of good nutrition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand how to maintain my ideal body weight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I exercise regularly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I avoid addictions to smoking, alcohol, and drugs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I protect myself from sexually transmitted diseases.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I generally get enough sleep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at managing stress.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Health**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the concept of diversity and know why it is important.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the basics of communicating with a person from a different culture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand how the global economy will affect my future career.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand how the concept of the electronic village will affect my future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am familiar with the basic vocabulary of diversity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I try to avoid stereotypes when dealing with others who are different than me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I try to understand and appreciate those who are different from me.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Diversity**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the theories of life stages.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can describe my present developmental stage in life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have self-confidence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I use positive self-talk and affirmations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a visual picture of my future success.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a clear idea of what happiness means to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I usually practice positive thinking.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total points for Future**

\_\_\_\_\_ I am confident of my ability to succeed in college.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am confident that my choice of a major is the best one for me.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total additional points**

**Total your points:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Motivation

\_\_\_\_\_ Personality and Major

\_\_\_\_\_ Learning Style and Intelligence

\_\_\_\_\_ Interests and Values

\_\_\_\_\_ Career and Education

\_\_\_\_\_ Managing Time and Money

\_\_\_\_\_ Memory and Reading

\_\_\_\_\_ Taking Notes, Writing, and Speaking

\_\_\_\_\_ Test Taking

\_\_\_\_\_ Communication and Relationships

\_\_\_\_\_ Critical and Creative Thinking

\_\_\_\_\_ Health

\_\_\_\_\_ Diversity

\_\_\_\_\_ Future

\_\_\_\_\_ Additional Points

\_\_\_\_\_ **Grand total points**

**If you scored**

450–500 You are very confident of your skills for success in college. Maybe you do not need this class?

400–449 You have good skills for success in college. You can always improve.

350–399 You have average skills for success in college. You will definitely benefit from taking this course.

Below 350 You need some help to survive in college. You are in the right place to begin.

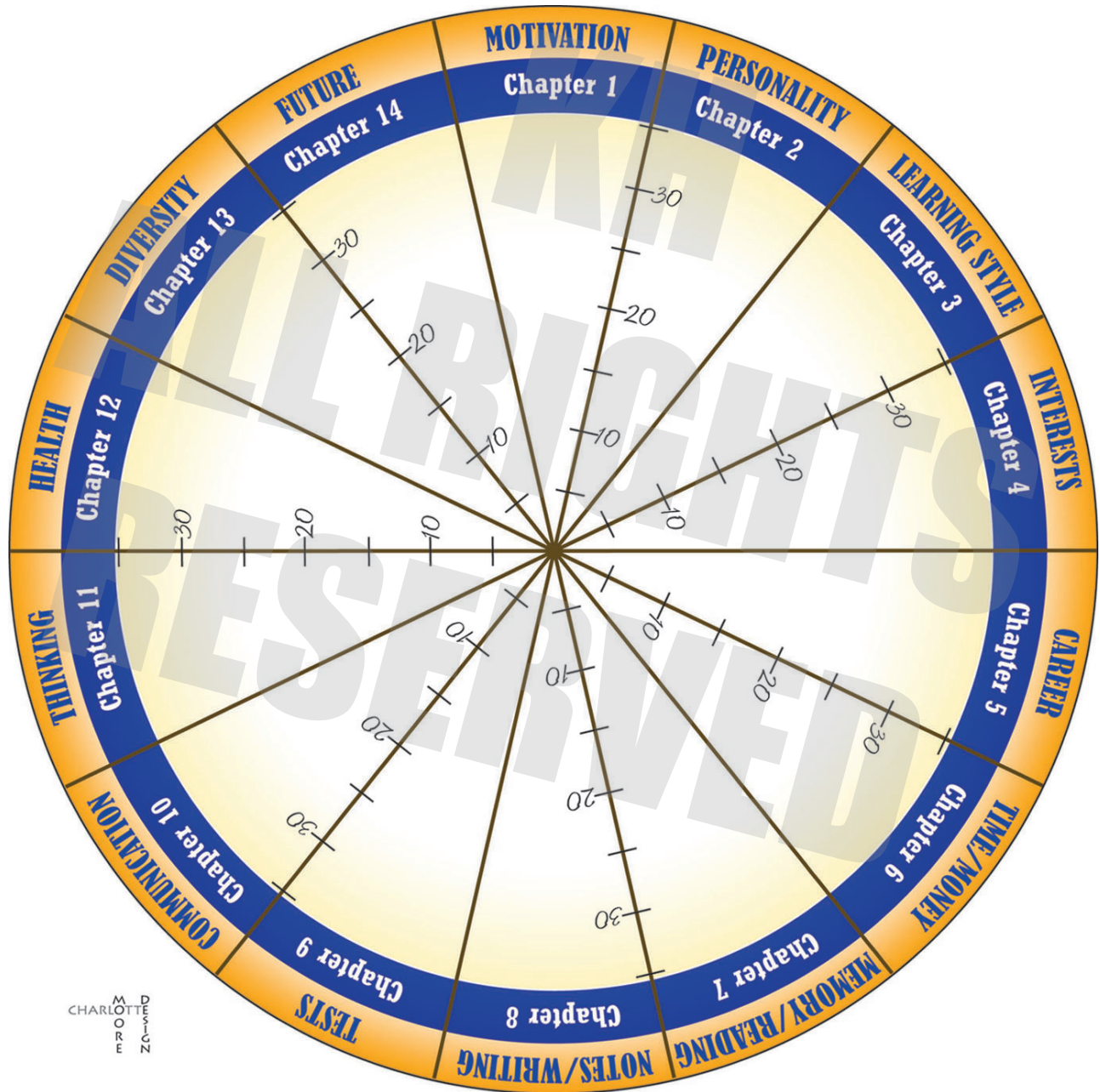
Use these scores to complete the Success Wheel that follows this assessment. Note that the additional points are not used in the chart.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use your scores from the Measure Your Success assessment to complete the following Success Wheel. Use different colored markers to shade in each section of the wheel.



CHARLOTTED  
PROOFED  
ZC

1. What are your best areas?

2. What are areas that need improvement?

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# What Do I Want from College?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following list and place checkmarks next to your reasons for attending college. Think about why you are attending college and add your own personal reasons to the list.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. To have financial security
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. To find a satisfying career
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. To explore possibilities provided by college
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. To expand my options
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. To become an educated person
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. To figure out what I want to do with my life
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. To develop my potential
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. To become a role model for my children
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. To make my parents happy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. To respect myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. To feel good about myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. To see if I can do it
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. To meet interesting people
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. To have something to do and prevent boredom
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. To become the best I can be
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. To have better job opportunities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. To have no regrets later on
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. To prepare for a good job or profession
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. To have job security
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. To gain confidence in myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. To get a degree
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. To gain a greater understanding of the world
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. To have fun

- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. To understand myself
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. To learn how to think
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. To enjoy what I do for a living
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. To reach my potential
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Because my parents want me to get a degree
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. For my own personal satisfaction
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. To make a difference in other people's lives
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. To have a position of power
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. To have respect
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. To have prestige
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. To have time and money for travel
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. To acquire knowledge
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. \_\_\_\_\_

What are your top six reasons for attending college? You may include reasons not listed above. If you are tempted to give up on your college education, read this list and think about the reasons you have listed below.

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

# How to Change a Habit

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The following exercise will help you to practice the process of beginning successful new habits. Choose *one* of these simple 10-day projects:

- Monitor how many minutes you study each day.
- Monitor how many minutes you exercise each day.
- Monitor how you spend your money each day. Write down all your expenditures.
- Make a goal of eating breakfast. Write down what you eat for breakfast each day.
- Keep a list of the fruits and vegetables you eat each day.
- Count how many sodas you drink each day.
- Keep a log of time you sleep each night and make a note of how rested you feel the next day.
- Make a goal of making your bed or picking up your clothes. Record your progress each day.
- You can choose another behavior as long as it is realistic and achievable. You must be able to count it or describe the outcome. Consult with your instructor if you choose this option.

1. First, state the problem. Describe the behavior you want to change. What are your roadblocks or obstacles?

**For example:** I get stressed when I run out of money before my next paycheck. I would like to manage my money better. One obstacle is my attitude that if I have money, I can spend it.

2. Choose one small behavior at a time. If you can change one small behavior, you can gain the confidence to change another.

**For example:** A goal like improving money management is broad and vague. A good way to begin is to choose a small first step. A good first step is to keep track of expenditures so that you can begin to understand how you spend your money. The projects listed earlier are examples of small behaviors. If you are working on a different project, is it a small behavior that can be counted and one that can realistically be accomplished? List the small behavior that you will use for this project.

3. State in a positive way the behavior you wish to establish.

**For example:** Instead of saying, “I will not spend all of my money before payday,” say, “I will keep a money monitor for 10 days.” Of course, the next step would be to work on a budget. If necessary, rewrite your goal in a positive way.

4. Count the behavior. Sometimes just becoming aware of your habit is enough to begin making some changes.

**For example:** For the next 10 days, I will write down all my expenditures.

5. Picture in your mind the actions you might take to accomplish your goal and write them down in the following space.

**For example:** I see myself writing down all my expenses on a sheet of paper. I will do this each day so that I can find out where I spend my money and begin to manage my money better. I see myself less stressed because I will have money for the things I need.

6. What reward will you use to reinforce the behavior? Rewards are most effective if they directly follow the behavior you wish to reinforce. Remember that good rewards do not have too many calories, cost too much money, or involve alcohol or drugs. List your rewards.

7. Practice the behavior for *10 days*. The first three days are the most difficult. If you fail, don't give up. Just realize that you are human and keep trying for 10 days. Think positively that you can be successful. Use the space below or a separate sheet of paper to count how many times you did the behavior each day and what happened. Remember, you can get started on a new habit in 10 days, but you will need to continue for about a month to firmly establish your new pattern of behavior.

Day 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 4: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 5: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 6: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 7: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 8: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 9: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Day 10: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did this project work for you?

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## Textbook Skimming

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use this text or any new text to answer the following questions. Challenge yourself to do this exercise quickly. Remember that a textbook survey should take no longer than five to 15 minutes. Try to complete this exercise in 15 minutes to allow time for writing. Notice the time when you start and finish.

1. Write two key ideas found in the introduction or preface to the book.
2. Looking at the table of contents, list the first five main ideas covered in the text.
3. Write down five interesting topics that you found in the book.
4. What did you find at the back of the book (e.g., index, glossary, appendixes)?
5. How long did it take you to do this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Briefly, what did you think of this textbook skimming exercise?