Cognitive Restructuring:
It is easy to secure and sustain motivation when it is something we enjoy, but it is much more difficult to muster the motivation for things we find boring or challenging. However, even though it is difficult to find motivation, it is not impossible. We can actually rework the way we think and change the things on which we dwell, so that we can achieve motivation for all areas of our lives, especially academics. This reworking or changing is called cognitive restructuring.

Cognitive Restructuring Strategies:
- **Journaling**—Write down the negative, self-defeating thoughts then restructure those thoughts to motivate yourself
- **Set Goals**—create short and long term goals that are achievable. Goals and objectives should be SMART
  1. Specific—articulated in a clear and simple statement
  2. Measurable—for a goal to be reached, you have to be able to measure it along the way
  3. Attainable—you have to be realistic. Under some circumstances, optimism is helpful, but if you set a goal of reading two chapters in economics in an hour, you are setting yourself up for failure.
  4. Relevant—your objective must match up with your end goal.
  5. Time-based—sometimes it is hard for individuals to predict how much time it will take to achieve a particular goal. Once you’ve determined what you will be doing in a daily study session, give yourself a time deadline to complete your task.
- **Understand the phases of motivation**—consistently high motivation is almost impossible to maintain. You need to realize that your motivation may start out high, wane a little as the thrill diminishes, pick up again as you restructure your thinking, and reach another high as you have renewed resolve to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Self-Talk Traps</th>
<th>How to Restructure the way you think:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I am a terrible student.”</td>
<td>“Although I have not done great in school so far, I know I can get better and begin by trying some new approaches to studying and learning. It is worth a try.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I MUST get an “A” in this class no matter what.”</td>
<td>“I would love to earn an “A” in the course, but I am going to release myself from the pressure of a grade, and focus my energy on learning the material. I also know that my worth is not based on my grades.”</td>
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<td>“I have no idea what I am doing at college.”</td>
<td>“It is time I figure out what I am doing with my life and where I am going in my life.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I am not into this subject, but I have to be here.”</td>
<td>“I may not be enjoying this class, but rather than dwell in this negative place, I am going to take some action and find a way to learn and enjoy the material.”</td>
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</table>
“MOTIVATION IS A FIRE FROM WITHIN. IF SOMEONE ELSE TRIES TO LIGHT THAT FIRE UNDER YOU, CHANCES ARE IT WILL BURN VERY BRIEFLY.”

- STEPHEN R. COVEY

- Get out of the rut! Do not continue to use the same study strategies (or worse yet no strategies) if they are not helping you succeed. Use the study cycle and intense study sessions to help you achieve meaningful learning.

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**The Study Cycle**

A continuous process of learning

Try the following system of studying for each class you are currently taking. You will notice the short preview and review sessions are more powerful for memory and retention than you may have anticipated. You will also find the Intense Study Sessions allow you to get more done in less time. We guarantee this works.

**Step 1:** Preview

10 min

Preview the assigned material either the night before or the day of the class. (You can call it a mental “warm up”) Look over bold and italicized print, headings, outlines, formulas, images and graphs. Read over the summary and other material offered at the end of the chapter. As you “skim” the chapter ask yourself questions you would like answered in class.

**Step 2:** Attend

Class Time

Attend class. Ask questions, take creative, meaningful notes. Due to the preview, you will find yourself feeling more confident and “connected” to what is going on. Your notes will be more meaningful and clear.

**Step 3:** Review

10 min

Review as soon after class as possible. (This is your “cool down”) Look over your class notes, make sure they are complete and accurate. Make note anything that was confusing.

**Utilize Intense Study Sessions:**

- Set a goal for the next 30-50 minutes
- Study with focus and action (organize, map, summarize) to accomplish your goal for 30-50 minutes.
- Take a 5-10 minute break
- Review what you just studied

Do you have more time? Start again with a new goal...

Do several sessions each day based on your class needs. They are designed to allow you to accomplish more in shorter, more intense periods of focused study time.

Refresh your memory! At least once a week look over your notes from the entire week.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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**No More EXCUSES!**

- Get positive! Decide that you and your future are worth making the investment NOW!
- Realize that every hour wasted today will significantly decrease your career success and earning potential later.
- Surround yourself with friends who are supportive of your academic pursuits; drop the negative, self-centered ones with all of the issues!

Adapted from: [http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/lsoweb.nsf/$Content/Motivation/$file/motivation.pdf](http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/lsoweb.nsf/$Content/Motivation/$file/motivation.pdf)