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2015

Motivation and Performance, Blog 2

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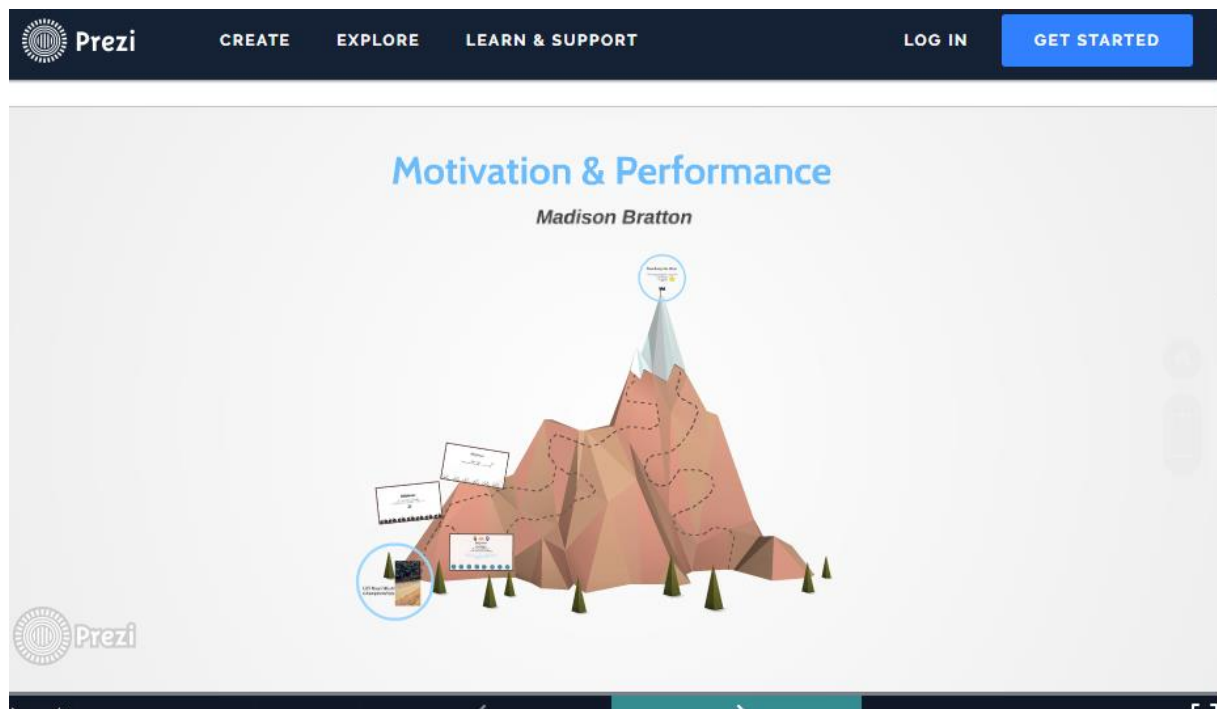
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MBratton

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Madison Bratton



Final Project

To see my presentation, please click on the link below:

Final Project <https://prezi.com/hskkcdsphpv/motivation-performance>

OCTOBER 3, 2015 BY MLB7

Day 10



My name is Madison Bratton, and the two goals I focused on throughout this course were sticking with a strict workout program, and eating healthy. As I have mentioned before, these have been goals that I have tried before but never together. After reading *Willpower*, I can honestly say that I feel like I understand and can apply strategies that will help me reach these goals for the first time. I really enjoyed reading the book, and felt like I can apply the information to practically any area of my life. For my final project, I would like to first talk about my personal experience with the bike race and how it inspired/motivated me. I already had an interest in it before taking this class, but learning more about it helped me to push me further towards my goals. I haven't decided exactly what format my project will be in, but it will either be Prezi or Jing. I haven't had any exposure to either of these, but I plan on experimenting with it! If all fails, I will simply do a classic video, even though I hope I will be able to figure it out. After opening with the bike race, I will explain the workout program goal and share how it has gone so far. There has been a lot of progress, but it has definitely not been easy.

Finally, I want to talk about what I learned from the book that I will actually apply to my life going forward. The three main points I want to discuss are: writing down the very next action, changing a habitual behavior, and use the precommitment strategy. All of these can be applied to not only my two main goals, but my life in general. I want to include some pictures and videos that I took while watching the time-trials from my neighborhood, as well as cool pictures my dad took.

Day 9



My name is Madison Bratton, and my goals include sticking to an exercise plan and eating healthy. After reading the book *Willpower*, there were many insightful things that stuck with me. The “hot-cold empathy gap” explains how we are unable to recognize how we will behave in the heat of temptation, during the cool state of relaxation. Often times we will make unrealistic commitments. This is very understandable, just like the books says, it is easy to agree to a diet when we’re not hungry. The book also gives strategies to help us not only overcome, but avoid setbacks. The one I enjoyed reading about the most was precommitment. This strategy is essentially saying to lock yourself into the path you want to go. You basically make yourself believe you will face terrible temptation if you begin to stray away from your path, and it will weaken your willpower. Therefore, you want to make it unthinkable to leave your path. There is also a different form of precommitment which is preventing yourself from being tempted at all. For me, this would be not having any unhealthy food in my house at all. This would be the safer of the two, but it is not practical for me since I live with other people.

The setbacks that I am most likely to experience may be the temptation of always being around food I shouldn’t eat, or finding the motivation to wake up earlier to go to the gym when I just want to sleep in. These are two that I have run into in the past. In the book, it explained that Stanley no matter what situation he was in, always shaved. It seemed so unimportant given the situations he was put in, but it actually helped improve his self-control. The book says “orderly habits like that can actually improve self-control in the long-run by triggering automatic mental processes that don’t require much energy”. That being said, I could exercise my self-control with an orderly habit, so in the long-run it will help me overcome setbacks. Although, since my goals are short-term, I will just have to keep the desired result in mind and refer back to the strategy of precommitment.

Day 8



My name is Madison Bratton and the two goals I have set for myself are: sticking to a strict workout plan, and eating healthy. As I've mentioned before, I have attempted both of these goals before, but never at the same time. Personally, if I am serious about a goal and really want to achieve it, I have to tell the people who are close to me. The reason for this is because I don't want to let my family or friends down, so if they see me getting off track I would feel guilty. Also, if they knew about a goal they would ask me how it was going, and I would not want to tell them that I gave up. Therefore, yes I did tell them about these two goals, because they unintentionally push me to reach them.

After telling my parents about the goals I've set for myself they were excited for me, especially my dad. He works out all the time, so he was asking me a lot of questions about what I'll be doing. It made me feel even better when he told me it was a great plan for me, because he is not one to beat around the bush- he would tell me if he thought it was too hard or easy for me. My family and friends are very supportive, which I know will help me reach my goals.

On the other hand, eating healthy will actually be more difficult for me. The reason for this is because everyone around me eats junk food. This is something that could potentially hinder me from reaching that goal. Since I am currently living with my parents, I can't get rid of the junk food and replace it with healthy. Therefore we are left with both healthy and unhealthy foods, so it takes a lot of self-control to stay away from the bad.

Given the fact that my family is always on the go, they tend to choose quick and easy meals. Quick meals are not always the healthiest choice. In order to minimize the negative influence of unhealthy food being so readily available, I can start cooking more healthy meals. If I am the one cooking healthy meals, I am sure that they will start eating it, and maybe it will become a trend! As far as sticking to my exercise plan, I can maximize the positive influence of my dad working out by going to the gym when he goes. I feel when there is someone else involved in your goal, it gives

you the extra push you need because naturally you are not going to want to let them down. SEPTEMBER 26, 2015 BY MLB7

Day 7



During the UCI Road World Championships, all of the teams will experience competition and cooperation to a certain point. These terms seem to go hand in hand when referring to the bike race. They are competing with people from all over the world, this is a very large amount of competition. Going up against so many people can be a great thing, which as a result can cause them to push their teams to a great win. After reading more about competition, I learned it may not be as great as people make it out to be, too much competing can be bad for your health.

Cooperation, on the other hand, doesn't seem to get as much credit as it should. Working with a team, or just a group in general, is known to increase creativity. There have been studies that show people learn best when they work cooperatively with each other, which is a quality that these teams display. One of the best examples for how overall cyclists, not only those in the race, cooperate with each other is by drafting. Drafting is a technique that road bikes use, and there really is a science to it. Basically, if you are following a bicyclist and can move into the wind behind the front bicyclist, you can gain an advantage. The low pressure moves you forward and helps you save energy. Professionals get only inches away from the bike in front of them, because they have learned and mastered the skill. The shorter the distance the larger decrease in wind resistance.

Competition and cooperation also influence us trying to reach our goals, whether it is personal or team goals. With the personal goals I set, working out and eating healthy, I am basically competing with myself. I am following an exercise plan, but I am pushing myself to go further when I know that I can. Cooperation, on the other hand, is something that I need in order to achieve both of my goals. I have to cooperate with the rules that I have given myself from the beginning when I set these goals. If I don't cooperate, then I would always be giving into the temptation of unhealthy foods or being able to sleep longer and skip the gym. -Madison Bratton SEPTEMBER 25, 2015 BY MLB7

Day 6



My name is Madison Bratton, and currently I am focusing on two major goals: sticking to a workout routine, and eating healthy. With goals comes self-control, and the need to be able to understand how it works. While reading the book *Willpower*, I learned a lot that I never knew before. I didn't know what willpower really was until reading about all the research and experiments that have gone into it. As I was reading and learning, I kept thinking to myself "how do I gain willpower?! Can you control it?" then finally I found out that you can.

Learning about David Blaine was very interesting to me, and oddly enough I can relate to him. He works as an endurance artist, doing unheard-of stunts, basically seeing what his body was capable of. For example, he was put in a coffin with six inches of head room for a week, with nothing but water. He also went on a forty-four day fast only consuming water. On top of all that, he would take ice baths regularly, and sometimes go on a run with no shoes in the snow. These are just a few examples of some of the extreme things he has done, all of which require an immense amount of self-control. Now, I cannot relate to any of those things he has done, but I can relate to some of the small steps he took to get there. He explains that he makes tons of "weird" little goals for himself, like when he is running in the bike lane he will have to step on every drawing of a biker. "Getting your brain wired into little goals and achieving them, that helps you achieve the bigger things you shouldn't be able to do" he goes on to say that it's not only practicing the little things, it is making things more difficult than they should be and never falling short. I make small uncommon goals for myself all the time, I don't even know why but hearing about his made me think of mine.

Personally, I will increase my self-control by concentrating on changing a habitual behavior. I like the idea of using my left hand more throughout the day, even though I am right-handed. I know this will be challenging, but it's important to me because with practice and repetition it will exercise my willpower.

Day 5



My name is Madison Bratton, and I have created two goals for myself. I am now on a strict workout plan that requires six days in the gym, and I am also eating healthy. I got the workout plan off of the internet and am following along with it completely. Eating healthy goes along with working out, because I will need both to actually see the results that I want. I have learned that being healthy is a lifestyle, which I have never fully committed to until now, I have always just done working out or eating healthy and never both. Having goals that require willpower, for example watching what you eat, can lead to ego depletion. Besides my actual goals leading to it, another situation in which I experience ego depletion would be after a long day of school or work, coming home to do homework or study for a test. The reason for this is because after a long tiring day of using willpower and making decisions, my body is more tired than I would like to believe. I do not consider this to be true when it is time to get more work done, but whether I know it or not I am not putting in my best work.

Another time that I experience ego depletion is surprisingly after babysitting my cousins. The reason for this is because they are young and have countless questions for me. Not only am I being quizzed all day, attempting to answer their questions as appropriately as possible, but I'm also having to monitor things that I say. Not that I have bad language all the time, but it's making sure I respect what their parents don't want them to hear. For example, "butt" needs to be changed to "bottom", or not allowing them to say "shut up" when these are things I wouldn't usually think twice about.

Ego depletion seems pretty inevitable to people who are always busy, and not able to change that. However, this is something that can be solved and maintained. In the book *Willpower*, it explains how important glucose is for your body when it is going through ego depletion. Glucose has been proven to restore energy in the body, which as a result will lead to stronger willpower and better decision making. When going through this, even if you don't necessarily realize it, you are not at your full potential and are more likely to give into your temptations (as a result of no willpower). That being said, to recover from ego depletion you will need to restore your body of glucose. On the other hand, to prevent or reduce it you just have to be aware that this

is bound to happen. Before reading this book, I would have never known that thinking will essentially make you tired and not able to make proper decisions or calls. Now I know that the body needs a break as much as we want it to keep going. The first step would be glucose intake, but that will only go so far before you realize you actually need to take a break.

SEPTEMBER 23, 2015 BY MLB7

Day 4



In the book *Willpower*, there is a chapter focused on decision fatigue. I was very surprised that making decisions could lead to careless mistakes due to fatigue. After reading into it, you start to recognize it in yourself and others. An example in the book that best explained it for me was registering for wedding gifts. For many people, picking out gifts for themselves seems enjoyable! The thought of this being tiring does not come to mind, but coming from a witness to this experience, you really can talk a bride into practically anything towards the end.

This led me to believe that once you start making a lot of decisions, you tend to say “yes” to anything, but that’s not the case. Decision fatigue explains that after having to make a lot of decisions your willpower is depleted. Which as a result, will cause you to not only give in to things you want to avoid, but also give up options. For instance, if something is offered to you that requires you to change something now in order for it to pay off later, you are less likely to accept that.

There is a lot that goes in to decision making that I was not previously aware of. Decisions can even vary depending on the time of day when we make them. Eating can even have an effect on decisions. If someone hasn’t eaten in a while, they are likely to be more careless than someone who has. What interested me the most about decision fatigue, is that the same amount of decisions can affect people differently. For example, if I genuinely enjoy what I am making decisions on, my willpower will not be depleted. That being said, if I had a lot of decisions to make on the topic I enjoy, it would deplete my willpower, but a few decisions will not.

Knowing all of this will make me more aware of when I should and should not make important decisions. It is valuable to realize what your mind is capable of, and when it needs a break. I would be more likely to fail at achieving my goals of exercising and eating better, if I was not able to recognize this theory. Understanding decision fatigue will allow me to realize the times I will be the most tired (mentally), which will then help avoid putting myself in a vulnerable state of mind where I'm more likely to get off-track.

-Madison Bratton SEPTEMBER 22, 2015 BY MLB7

Day 3



My name is Madison Bratton, and the goals I am focusing on include a strict workout routine and eating “clean”. The book *Willpower* contains a lot of useful tips, which I will use in order to reach my goals. In the to-do list chapter I learned many things that are opposite to what I've been taught in the past. For example, I have always been told that you will be more productive if you make a to-do list daily. This method will keep you on track and well-organized. However, this chapter shares an experiment proving this theory to be false. It goes on to say that those who plan for the month without daily details tend to get more done. The reason for this is because it takes up a lot of time planning each individual day, and as mentioned in the book, life often doesn't go according to plan. I will start incorporating this theory into my life, being that it makes logical sense and will be more efficient.

Another thing this chapter taught me, goes against what I have always been told. David Allen talks about to-do lists and he says you should not only put what you need to do on them, but also specify the very next action. I always thought these lists should be short, you should be able to look at a task that needs to be completed, and then go do it. However, I can't find a flaw in David Allen's reasoning; he says “if your list has ‘write thank-you notes,’ that's a fine next action as long as you have a pen and cards, but if you don't have cards, you'll know subliminally that you can't write notes, so you'll avoid the list and procrastinate”. This will help when trying to achieve my goal. Yes, thinking about the end result is great, but you need to write out the actions you will have to take in order to make the goal possible.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2015 BY MLB7

Day 2



The motivations for my goals are autonomous. I chose these goals in order to live a better lifestyle, and I am eager to see them through! In the article, it explains how autonomous motivation is made up of intrinsic and identified motivation. Intrinsic involves doing a task because it is interesting and satisfying, which who wouldn't be satisfied with seeing positive results in your health/body/life? Secondly, identified motivation involves doing a task because it feels personally important. The article also talks about the fundamental needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence which can all be linked to the goals I have set for myself. I feel independent in the aspect that I have set these goals for myself, they were not assigned to me. Lastly, relatedness is a very important need when setting goals and sticking with them. Having people who know and care about the goals you set for yourself can really motivate and make all the difference on how you perform.

Flow experiences are extremely powerful, your mind becomes so absorbed in whatever you are doing that you begin to act effortlessly. The two activities that came to mind after reading about flow are dirt bike riding and cooking.

Growing up with two very active brothers and my dad always led me to try new things. They were always at the dirt bike track, and I started going with them and wanted to get my own bike. Learning how to ride was difficult, not because I was scared, but learning the gears and shifting. I had no concept of shifting, because it was years before I learned how to drive a car. So after many weekends of practice with them, I started to become really comfortable. It became effortless, and there wasn't any worry in my mind that I was going to screw up. This led to me wanting to experiment more. I started hitting the jumps and after doing that for a while was able to clear them! This is when I had a flow experience, being able to hit and clear a double without thinking twice about whether I could or not. It became second nature.

Another example of an activity where I experience flow is cooking. Again, this is something that did not come easy for me! Lots of weird-tasting, or burnt dishes/desserts but I really enjoyed doing it. There is a lot of science in cooking, and after a lot of trial and error I began to recognize what certain ingredients did for the food. After understanding the concept of what makes a certain taste or consistency, it

is a lot of fun to experiment with it! When I first started cooking I would get so wrapped up in how much is needed of all the ingredients and end up looking at the recipe countless times, now I am at the point where I look at it once and can make sense of how much needs to be added (for the most part).

These experiences led me to choose a strict workout program and clean eating because it strikes my interest. After experimenting with activities that you want to pick up, you will eventually learn to cater them specifically to what works for you, and with time it will become second nature!

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015 BY MLB7

Day 1



Over the course of the next couple months I will be focusing on personal development. Although these goals may not be the most original, they are challenges I have never been able to maintain. I will be sticking to a strict six-week workout program, as well as eating clean. I feel like these goals go hand-in-hand, and to get the best results you need to do both. Being that this course requires us to set and discuss our journey towards reaching these short-term goals, I know that I will stick to it. This is the right push that I need, and although they aren't necessarily the most creative, it will be beneficial to my overall health versus something that I just choose in order to pass this class.

After taking the character strengths quiz, I was surprised by my results. My top five character strengths included: kindness, honesty, humor, perspective, and perseverance. The reason this surprised me is merely because I would have never chosen these specifically to describe myself. Out of these results honesty, perspective, and perseverance could be linked to the main goals I'm trying to accomplish. Honesty is important in this circumstance because I will not only need to be honest with what I am saying in my blogs, but with myself so that I will actually be able to see results. Perspective is also a needed characteristic in self-improvement, for instance I will do my best to maintain a positive outlook and keep in mind the benefits that could come from sticking to regular exercise and healthy eating. Lastly, perseverance is most

obviously related to achieving my goals, because obstacles and difficulty are bound to occur when changing my daily routines this much.

Lastly, the Heroes blog was very insightful. I read quite a few summaries about these heroes and was shocked by the one that influenced me the most, Spiderman. Who would have thought? The authors that wrote about Spiderman being a hero brought up great points, and really made me look up to this superhero. For example, “powers are not what make the hero- the mindset is. What makes someone a hero is how they use their knowledge and natural abilities to improve the world, thus giving others the courage and inspiration to do the same”. When watching this movie as a kid I would have not thought about it like that, but this character is one who can truly be looked up to as a hero. This perspective will help me reach my goals by maintaining a strong mindset.

SEPTEMBER 19, 2015 BY MLB7GOALS, MOTIVATION, UNIV291-035