

Pepperdine Graziadio Business School
Student Success Tips:
Self-Motivation or Self-Discipline?



When you feel motivated, anything can seem possible. A burst of motivation can help you accomplish a large cleaning project or a difficult class assignment. However, motivation can be used up. We all know how hard it can be to get things done when you don't feel motivated to do it. Thus, you need to rely on something beyond motivation to be successful.

[Self-motivation](#) requires an active initiative to continue a task or activity without another person overseeing it whereas [self-discipline](#) is the ability to pursue something despite how tempting it may be to abandon it. Discipline can keep you going when motivation leaves you because discipline helps you to stay consistent and build habits.

So how do you develop consistency? To form consistent habits, you can use the “Three Rs” - routine, reminder, and reward.

- Set yourself on something that you want to be more consistent at, such as studying at least 6 nights per week at the same time. This is your “**routine**” that you want to implement.
- Set a **reminder** for yourself to accomplish this (a notification on your phone, a planner, etc).

- Give yourself a **reward** every time you complete your routine, such as watching a [cute animal video](#) or getting a piece of your favorite candy.

Once you complete your routine regularly, it will become a habit, and you will develop discipline. You will not need to rely on motivation or rely on “feeling” like you can study; you just need to start your routine.

Tips to increase your self-discipline:

1. Pick one thing at a time to focus on. Add on one habit per week instead of trying to change them all at once. You will not become an extremely disciplined person overnight.
2. Keep your WHY in mind. If you are trying to become a more disciplined student, think of the end result. Picture yourself in your cap and gown, graduating with your degree.
3. Schedule it - write things down. When you put your habits on paper, you start the process of being disciplined. It can be very satisfying to cross off your habit on your [to-do list](#) once you complete it, and this will help encourage you to stay with your habit.
4. Use some free apps to track your habits - [Coach.me](#), [Habit Streak](#), or [Way of Life](#)