



On Course with the ZSB (Issue 2)

Hello!

Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter. This time, it's all about **motivation and the right mindset for keeping moving towards your goals.**



The early bird can get lost...

It's a dark, cold, grey, wet Monday morning and it's so warm and comfortable in bed – and that seminar today isn't really all that important – you haven't prepared, anyway. Actually, you can't really be bothered with anything at the moment – you think 'whatever, I'll just go back to sleep'.

Have you ever felt like this? If you have, you'll probably know that it seems like the thing to do at the time, but making a habit of it isn't a good idea. But how to overcome that inner inertia? First of all, it helps to work out exactly what's behind it.

What does my attitude to my studies have to do with my motivation (or lack of it)?

You could ask yourself questions like these:

- Am I scared of 'failing'?
- Am I sometimes dishonest with myself when I try to justify why I've missed, forgotten or not done something?
- Do I tend to focus on my more negative ideas about my studies, or do I prioritise awareness of my strengths?
- Do I take responsibility for my studies, or am I really waiting for someone else to tell me what to do?
- Am I aware that doing a degree means making sacrifices?

Failure isn't the opposite of success...

...it's an important part of it.

Fear of making a mistake or of 'failure' can be a powerful obstacle to success. We usually don't realise that we're scared of failing, because this fear often comes in disguise – as a feeling of inertia, as a lack of get-up-and-go, as a struggle with concentration, and sometimes as tiredness and 'feeling down'. We make up excuses for not doing a task because deep down inside we're scared (or convinced) that we won't be able to manage it.

But seeing something as a failure, defeat or disaster is a matter of attitude. This means that you can change the way you view things that didn't go to plan and see them from another perspective. If you're able to regard 'failure' as just a necessary component of life, learning and growth, you'll find it easier to be brave and tackle difficult challenges.

Don't be put off by setbacks – use them as motivational fuel. Because someone who's never failed is someone who's never tried.

Seeing your successes

There is a great deal of power in thoughts – both negative and positive ones. The good news is that we're not passive victims of our thoughts – we can control them, at least to a certain degree. We can choose to focus on positive things or on difficulties and troubles. In order to do this, we need to be aware of what we're thinking and not believe every thought that comes into our heads. We can take up a sort of observer's position to look at our thoughts.

This doesn't mean painting things in a more positive light than they deserve, but rather focusing on our strengths as opposed to our weaknesses. When you're faced with a difficult task, you can ask yourself: 'What am I good at? What inner resources do I have that can help me do this task?', rather than thinking, 'I didn't manage this yesterday, it won't be any different today.'

If you like, you can write down your positive thoughts in a 'positivity diary' – this can help them to take hold, and you can look at your diary whenever you feel yourself focusing excessively on difficulties and problems.

You can also practise positive thinking: Every morning, think of three things you're grateful for, and every evening, remember three things you were able to do well during the day. What do you think a friend of yours would praise you for?

Find your guiding star

But how can you motivate yourself in the face of the (at least in the short term) much more pleasant prospect of going back to sleep, or watching the next episode of your favourite series, instead of getting on with that difficult task?

You need an idea that's stronger than that momentary pleasure – one that you draw from your deep-seated attitudes and values. Something to guide you through difficult times – like the way a bright star in the sky guided travellers long ago. It wasn't the end point or the finishing line, but it showed the way.

Perhaps you already have a vision for your life:

You've chosen to do a degree, and perhaps you have had to give things up along the way, or work very hard. Maybe you know what career you want to have after you graduate. Or you'd like to spend a semester abroad and can see yourself in a city you've always loved the idea of. You might visualise yourself coming out of an exam, happy because you're certain you've passed. The more detailed your vision is, the more powerful it can be.

Why not ask yourself:

- Where am I right now? And where do I want to be?
- Why do I want to achieve this aim? When and how do I see myself doing it?
- Am I prepared to do what needs to be done so that I can move towards the things that matter to me?

Follow this link for resources around ['My values, my aims'](#)

Give yourself an instant motivational boost

Need a shot of motivation? Here are some ideas:

1. **Reward yourself.** Make sure you have clear boundaries in place between work and leisure time. Do something you enjoy once you have finished your work. Make a list of motivating 'rewards'.
2. **Inspire yourself.** Ask yourself how you might be able to apply the knowledge you're acquiring in a real-life context and think about what you already know about the topic.
3. **Team up with others.** Arrange to check in with other students at getting-up time, for revision and breaks, and form 'mutual-support teams'.
4. **Get support.** If you're struggling and not sure what to do, you could talk to a peer tutor, another student, or a member of academic staff – or book an appointment with us at the ZSB.

The Toolbox

Featuring in this issue:
The 5-minute rule

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Have you seen...?

...the range of seminars and workshops on offer at the ZSB? There are a few places left – use your chance!

What's next?

Our next newsletter will revolve around how to revise effectively and make your exams stress-free (sort of).

Missed one of our issues?

Don't worry – just message us on Instagram or email us at studienberatung@haw-hamburg.de and we'll send you our first issue, on how to plan your semester.

On Course with the ZSB

The [Student Counselling Office \(ZSB\)](#) team is here to support you through your degree course, whatever situation you find yourself in.

We've launched this **newsletter, *On Course with the ZSB***, to provide you with ideas, information and inspiration that will help you to manage your studies successfully.

See you next issue! Until then – stay safe and study smart!



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