



Stay Motivated

Doing your best all day, every day, all year, requires a great deal of effort. You will need to keep yourself motivated—no one else can do this for you.

Stay Positive

Review Your Goals

Think of the big goals you've set for yourself. If you've already completed a goal setting activity, look back at it to remind yourself what you're working toward. If you haven't set long-term goals yet, do it now. What kind of life do you want? What kind of career choices do you have? Consider how what you do each day contributes to these goals.



Use Tool [Getting Along with Others](#).

Find out what inspires you

Look for music, poems and stories that make you feel strong and upbeat. Find quotes and pictures that speak to your heart. Tape a copy of an inspirational quote or poem on the inside of your binder; sing part of a favourite song to yourself, or recall a favourite story or character as you face challenges throughout the day.

Use self-talk¹

Self-talk is the things you say about yourself and the work you're doing. You may say these things out loud or in your head. Negative statements such as "I can't do it!" or "It's too hard!" are self-defeating. Instead, find and use positive statements, such as, "I can do it if I try!," "I am a hard worker!" or "I can use my strategies!"

Say hopeful and encouraging statements to yourself throughout the day. Positive self-talk can help you think differently about yourself and your abilities.

1. From Dana Antayá-Moore and Catherine M. Walker, *Smart Learning: Strategies for Parents, Teachers and Kids* (Edmonton, AB: Smart Learning, 1996), p. 4. Reproduced with permission. For ordering information, fax 780-439-3915.

Self-talk can also help you work through learning tasks step-by-step. You have more control when you break tasks into smaller parts. For instance, when doing a math problem, you might say, “I’ve read it over. Now I have to figure out what the question is asking.”

Celebrate your successes

Notice when you are doing well. Give yourself small rewards for completing work or meeting goals. Hang certificates above your desk and highlight positive teacher comments on assignments. Make a list of 10 things you did well over the last month.

Let go of your mistakes

Think about your successes and stop dwelling on past mistakes. Take a recent situation that is bothering you and figure out what you learned from it. Then, visualize that mistake flying off.

Look on the lighter side

Make an effort to see the humour in things. Try turning an embarrassing experience into a funny story. The physical act of smiling makes people more relaxed and open to learning.

Get on Track

Think of school as your workplace

Going to school is your job right now, so try to be business-like. Think of what an employer would expect—arriving on time, giving your best effort, completing all tasks. A teacher expects no less.



Know what counts

Make sure you understand what is expected in each of your courses. Write out the mark breakdown for the course and calculate how you are doing. Know what a zero (as in a missed assignment) really means.

Work within time limits

Before starting a task, estimate how long it will take. Set a timer. At the mid-way point, check to see if you are on target. Analyze your own work habits. Identify any time-wasting habits and develop ways to work faster and meet deadlines.

Monitor your television viewing

Make sure you are not wasting your time passively watching television. If you watch more than 10–15 hours a week, you watch too much.

Get Active

Assess your own work

Before you hand in an assignment, evaluate it yourself—what would you have to add or change to earn a higher mark?

Keep working when you are stuck²

- Read the directions TWO more times.
- Highlight keywords.
- Look at an example and talk through the steps in your mind.
- Copy the sample question and work through it on your own.
- Give yourself a fresh start. Recopy the question or write your answer on another piece of paper. Then, work through it by yourself.
- Mark the question with a star (*) and come back later.

Learn about learning

Learn more about learning. Find out about the seven different kinds of smarts. Check out a library book on study skills or watch a documentary about how the brain works. Ask a teacher or counsellor what they've read lately about ways to improve learning. See what new ideas work for you.



Take learning risks

Try something you haven't tried before. Volunteer when the teacher asks for a student to come to the front of the room for a demonstration. Work with a partner that you don't know. Use these opportunities to find out new information about yourself.

Share your skills and knowledge

If there is a subject you are particularly good at and really enjoy, use your expertise to help a friend, teach a younger brother or sister, or tutor another student.

Find Support

Expand your network

Talk to someone in class that you would like to get to know better. Choose a teacher that you trust and ask for feedback on an assignment you would like to improve. Consider joining an extracurricular group where you can make new friends.

2. From Dana Antayá-Moore and Catherine M. Walker, *Smart Learning: Strategies for Parents, Teachers and Kids* (Edmonton, AB: Smart Learning, 1996), p. 5. Reproduced with permission. For ordering information, fax 780-439-3915.

Ask for feedback

Ask other students, your parents or siblings to read over assignments and make suggestions on how to improve them. Practise a presentation with a friend and ask for constructive feedback.

Find out what's new in technology

Check out computer stores and Web sites to see what new developments might help you. Talk with your school's computer teacher to see if there is new software that would work for you.

Deal with Stress

Recognize causes of stress³

Some common situations that can lead to stress and frustration include:

- enrolling in courses that are not suited to you; for example, if you have difficulty reading, you might not have the background to do well in ELA 30-2.
- thinking you are doing okay in a course and not realizing you are in trouble until it is too late to solve the problem
- not seeking the help you need to overcome academic and social difficulties; for example, you might need to take a study skills course or extra tutoring at different points throughout high school
- taking bad advice from friends
- not knowing about the course demands and teacher expectations before a course begins
- refusing to accept the fact that you may have to work longer and harder than other students in order to reach your goals
- not having enough time to relax and have fun.

Handle stress

- Take a reduced course load. For example, you might take four courses instead of five during the term and take a summer school course.
- Match your strengths to your course selection.
- Begin an assignment right after the teacher gives it to the class.
- Break up assignments into smaller, more manageable parts.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Look at how you spend your time and make some changes.
- Build in regular ways to relax and have fun.

3. Adapted with permission from Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, *Together for Success: A Road Map for Post-secondary Students with Learning Disabilities* (Ottawa, ON: Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 1994), p. 47.