

What motivates you?

Do you do something for a prize, recognition or a reward? Or, are your actions motivated by how you feel. Extrinsic motivation is outward while intrinsic motivation is internal.

I'm preparing my marketing effort for the upcoming 8 week Walk Kansas program. For many years we have offered participant prizes and recognition as teams accomplish goals for minutes of physical activity, days of strength training, cups of fruits and vegetables consumed and drinking water. But after the 8 week program, what keeps people going? The answer is intrinsic motivation - they feel better and that positivity translates into other areas of their life.

I've decided to practice some ideas to foster intrinsic motivation with my teenagers as test subjects. Are my children motivated to clean because of a financial reward (extrinsic)? Would they be motivated to clean because it is nice to walk into a clean bathroom and bedroom?

If you are trying to help someone (or yourself) with intrinsic motivation, consider the steps below. My efforts for the teenagers are in italics:

Use positive messages that build confidence. *“Flushing is the first step to a clean bathroom.” This is a behavior the teenagers already do, but I can reinforce that I notice. (Maybe I should add “and the toilet cleaner is under the sink.”)*

Find out what obstacles exist (*do they not have enough time to clean their room or do they need a new laundry hamper?*) Address what the obstacles are and find potential solutions.

Consider incremental steps that build on skills and confidence acquired by previous successes. *For the teenagers, this might be dealing with laundry on day 1, removing clutter on day 2, dusting on day 3 and vacuuming on day 4.*

Provide skill-building activities. *“Here is a wet scrubber and squeegee that will make cleaning windows easy. Let's see who is faster without making streaks.”*

Focus on immediate rewards. *“Look, you found that missing library book!” Or “You can walk into your room without breaking something!”*

Not all of these ideas have to be implemented at once, but some may help you find intrinsic motivation. I do hope something helps with the teenagers!

Source: Health Enhancement System White Paper: Intrinsic Motivation - The foundation of outstanding well-being programs

Upcoming K-State Research and Extension Events

For more information or to pre-register, call 221-5450.

Now Available: Walk Kansas registration open at walkkansas.org (or get a packet from our office)

January 28 - Cooking Under Pressure, Udall High School, 5:30-7 p.m., \$5

March 15-May 9 - Walk Kansas

March 19 - Grant Writing Workshop, Arkansas City, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., \$30

March 24 - Dining with Diabetes, Winfield Public Library, 5:30-7:30 p.m., \$25

April 4 - Mental Health First Aid, Cowley County Courthouse, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. (registration fee \$35)

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