

The Quick and Easy Guide to Motivating Yourself to Studying Smarter

By

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Stud · y (stud´ē) **1.** application of the mind to the acquisition of knowledge, as by reading, investigation, or reflection. **2.** The acquisition of knowledge or skill in a particular branch of learning.

Hab · it (hab´it). N. an acquired pattern of behavior that has become almost involuntary as a result of frequent repetition.

Webster's Universal College Dictionary

Introduction

Contained in this book are the secrets of studying with maximum efficiency and with the best possible attitude, so you can get excellent grades and still have time left over for the “college experience”. Many of these techniques are my own unique methods of creating an enthusiastic outlook towards your studies and of creating the right environment in which to study with peak performance. I firmly believe the time spent in this book looking at the “why” of each situation will benefit you greatly. There are traditional study habit tips in this book, but I’ve tried to go beyond these and I believe I have succeeded. I encourage your feedback and discussion via e-mail at study@cjohnson.com.

The college years are looked back on throughout life as some of the best years of our lives. Learning to accomplish more in less time so you can have BOTH excellent grades and a life outside of class will help you in more ways than you can possibly imagine.

My goal with this book is to assist you with your study habits. And that’s just what these need to be! Habits. The only way for these techniques to become habit is for you to practice them repeatedly until they become automatic. Then it is a habit.

Best of luck with your college career and I truly hope this information helps you.

C.J. Johnson

The Importance of Setting Goals

It is a commonly known fact that a set of written goals is one of the most important steps of success, not just in school but in life.

There's a popular story about a study of Yale Seniors in the 1950's who were asked a series of questions before they graduated. One of the questions was "Do you have a set of *written* goals?" Only 2% of those seniors did. When they followed up on that group 25 years later they discovered something amazing: The 2% who had written goals had accomplished more, financially, than the other 98% of the class *combined!* This is an amazing testimonial to the power of goals.

I am constantly amazed how people go through life without goals. They go where life may take them, never steering life where they want to go. It's the equivalent of getting in a car and driving without any idea where you are going.

Would you get on an airplane with a pilot whom you knew had not filed a flight plan? Whose attitude is "let's just take her up and see where we end up?" You might, but not if you actually have a specific destination in mind. It's the same with goals. You

may know where you want to go, but unless you “map it out” on paper, chances are you’ll never get there.

Without specific, written goals we are pilots without flight plans. You’ll spend your entire life being reactionary instead of going and doing what you want to do.

If you don’t already have a set of WRITTEN goals (they must be written or they are merely dreams) write them NOW. I’ve provide space at the end of this book to do this. Don’t put it off another minute. You can change your goals later - and you will, but get something on paper now.

Write goals for all areas of your life.

What do you want out of life. Where do you want to be in 5 years? In 10 years?

What do you want financially?

What do you want spiritually?

What do you want out of relationships?

What do you want to give back to society?

Where do you want to live?

Where do you want to travel?

What charities do you want to support?

Who do you want to prove something to?

Seriously, if you haven’t turned to page 47

and written your goals do it now.

I'll wait...

Got it done? Great, I'm going to take your word for it that you now have a set of written goals. Refer to them often. Feel free to change them, you're young, you don't have to keep them rigid and follow them blindly, but you now have an idea of what you, at this point in time, want out of life.

Why am I having you do this at the very beginning of a book on study habits?

Simple. What I want you to do now is to look at every subject you are taking and figure out, no matter how obscure or difficult, how this subject will help you achieve what you want out of life. It's much easier to study with enthusiasm a subject that you can see will help you in life.

Be creative. Every subject you're taking will be able to help you in some way. If you're unable to figure something out then ask your teacher how he or she sees the information helping you in life – especially if the class is outside of your major field of

studies. You'll be amazed at the ways they'll be able to assist you in developing a passion for a subject that you may not have had an interest in before.

The point of this exercise is to appeal to each of our desires to serve our own needs. When we're working towards our goals it's much easier to do it with passion than it is when we're only working towards another persons goals.

For example two gas stations are side by side and it's 11:00 at night, closing time, and I drove up to the first one. The door was locked, though the clerk was still there and all the lights were on. I needed gas and a drink. The clerk pointed to the "closed" sign and shrugged.

In desperation I drove to the station next door, also with a "closed" sign and walked up to the door. The man inside saw me, came to the door and asked what I needed. I told him I needed gas and a drink. Even though it was after closing time, he unlocked the door, turned on the pump and let me grab a drink.

The difference? At station 1 was an “employee”, working his shift and now his shift was over. The station turning a profit meant nothing to him, he was just collecting a paycheck. At station 2 I dealt with the owner of the station. His profit for the day increased because he was willing to stay an extra couple of minutes to help a customer. While he was serving my needs, he was also serving HIS needs by putting money in his pocket. Money he would not have had if he had turned me away as the other station had.

This is why we started this book by setting goals and by figuring out how the classes you are taking will help you reach your goals. To help you take advantage of the innate human desire to serve ourselves. By seeing how your classes will serve you in achieving your goals they gain importance in your life.

Accept Responsibility

We live, unfortunately, in a time where no one seems to be willing to accept responsibility for their own actions. People sue each other left and right. They complain if they get their coffee too cold and they sue if it's too hot and they burn the roof of their mouth.

This is not for you. This is not the way college works.

**You are the only person responsible
for learning and completing
assignments.**

It's your job to learn, it's your job to keep up, it's your job to show up to class. No one else will be able to take the fall if you don't follow through on your responsibilities. No one is going to hold your hand in college. Accept that now and avoid the disappointment later.

First things first. You've got to show up to class. The professor may not take role, you may have the syllabus that outlines everything, but you WILL do better by taking the very first step and showing up to class. To many this sounds so very basic, but I assure you that I took classes in college that less than 50% of the enrolled students showed up for! But those who did regularly attend class got better grades for several reasons.

Attending class serves several purposes. First it makes sure that you are there for any changes in the published schedule, for pop quizzes and for information that the lecturer considers important, but that may not be in the book.

You are also more than just a name in the

grade book to the teacher—you are a face and that familiar face can make the difference of as much as 2 letter grades, as we'll discuss towards the end of this book.

Speaking of your responsibilities, one of the most important things you'll get out of this book is the importance of keeping up with your daily work.

Read the above box again and make sure it

**It's easier to *keep*
up than it is to
*catch up.***

sinks in.

Think of it this way; if you can't make the time to do today's work today, how are you going to be able to make time to do today's work and tomorrow's work tomorrow? Getting behind in your work is demoralizing, adds unneeded stress and is very difficult to get back on top of. Keep up with your homework, your reading, your notes and your other studies and you'll find there is much less stress involved in your school-

work.

I've always found it interesting that print shops, VCR repair shops and other service providers say it will take 2-3 weeks to get to a project that will actually take only an hour to complete. Somewhere they got 2-3 weeks behind in their work and now it's just "policy" that work takes that long. Meanwhile, a competitor provides the same service, but in one day. He gets more business, especially from impatient people who don't want to wait.

On the same note, it's fun to notice how many people take their film from Christmas to the one hour photo developer – in June!

The bottom line is to keep up, on a daily basis with your assignments. It will make your life much, much easier.

Preparedness is vitally important to saving

Pre • pare - to put ones self in readiness.

Webster's Universal College Dictionary

time with your studies and with improving your retention from lectures. It's amazing

how much clearer a subject is during a lecture when you already have a basic understanding of the material.

Check your syllabus. Read your reading assignment and come to class prepared.

If you want to read faster the one thing that

**Overwhelmed with reading assignments?
Want to read faster?
Here's a quick and easy tip to help you increase your reading speed & comprehension.**

will help you do this is to pace yourself using your finger! I know, I know, in grade school they taught us NOT to use our fingers to read, but they were wrong. In fact, now they teach kids TO use their fingers.

When I was a kid, perhaps in 5th or 6th grade my Mom signed me up for a very popular speed reading course. They charged hundreds of dollars for the course—but the basic strategy they taught was to use your finger to read. Wow! I just saved you hundreds of dollars!

Here's why using our fingers helps us read

faster; when we learn to read, we learn to read aloud, each word. Then we're taught to "read to ourselves" so we do just that. We read every word and say it to ourselves, at first by moving our lips and not making sound and then in our minds.

In truth, our minds can process information much, much faster than we can speak. By "pushing ourselves" by using our fingers to "scan" each line and letting our brains sort out the words and their meanings we read faster, yet still understand everything. The human brain is an amazing thing.

There have been full volumes of books written on speed reading, and many of them are worth picking up and practicing their techniques, however, I've just summed up what most of them say in a page and a half!

Why do you want to learn?

This question is directly linked to the earlier discussion of setting goals and linking to them what benefit, in relation to your personal goals, you are getting from each of your subjects.

At the risk of seeming repetitive I stress again that if you know WHY and HOW each subject you are studying will help you achieve what you want out of life then you will have more DESIRE to study each subject you have to take.

Make sure that at the beginning of each semester you spend a few minutes writing out (again - write this stuff down!) how each course will benefit you in life, in the overall

achievement of your goals and in the overall balance of your education.

It has been years since I've been in school and since I've had to study, though I've been a student many, many times since I got out of college. My studies are now generally related to hypnosis and NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) or to magic, juggling or computer skills.

The reason I decided to start this book the way I did, with knowing the WHY of studying, is that in preparation for this book I realized that the studies I did after school were all studies I WANTED to do and that I was passionate about. I chose to take on each of these projects and I approached them with passion. I did not approach my school work with the same passion because I, often times, did not see the WHY of a class.

Those classes that were within my major (Construction Management) I kicked butt in. I was excited to go to class, I talked about the subject outside of class, I knew the teachers and they knew me.

The classes I didn't care for or didn't see the need to be taking, I didn't do as well in,

and in many cases, I did terrible in.

The difference was PASSION and interest. I firmly believe that by changing your outlook on a class you can change your passion for that subject and you will learn more and have more fun doing so!

Traditional Study Habits!

So far I've talked about goals and attitude, and I assure you that the time spent talking about them was very worthwhile. But this book is about more than just motivation, so now that you've got the right attitude about learning, you know why you're learning and you know what personal benefits you will gain from learning, let's discuss the habits that educators around the country agree are the most important habits you can develop.

When I was asked to tackle a study habits workshop and book I turned to the Internet just as I do when I tackle any new subject. I found dozens of sites with lists of what to do to study efficiently and the topics we're about to discuss were on almost every single list. I've expanded on them to give you useful tools to use and examples. From

time to time I may wander, but trust me that my straying from the subject is always done with a point in mind.

Prioritize

You've got a lot to do. Let's face it, college can be hard work. Without priorities and direction you may soon be overwhelmed. Prioritize what you have to do and do the most important work first.

Start with homework and papers that have a deadline and get this work done first. Stay on top of this everyday work. Don't get behind. It's difficult to catch up. On the other hand, if you are always caught up or ahead of the others in your class you'll soon find yourself excited about class and feeling great about your progress. Others in the class may be complaining about how far behind they are. Not you. You're on top of it.

The second priority is to do what you find LEAST interesting. Don't put this off until last when you are tired and losing focus. Get it out of the way and save the work you find most interesting for the times when you may be tired or losing enthusiasm. It's easier to find energy to do something you enjoy

than it is to do something you dread.

Be sure to know what is truly most important in your studies and in your life and take care of the true priorities first. Remember that these are YOUR priorities, not those of your friends, your roommates or your family. You are in charge of you. Focus on what is most important to you and don't allow outside influences to change your priorities.

Schedule Your Time

Create a schedule for your day and stick to it. A written schedule is very much like a written goal, having it on paper makes it much more concrete. I'm sure you've heard the expression "If you want something done ask a busy person". I assure you that people who are busy have a schedule made so they CAN get everything done that needs to be done.

By putting a schedule on paper you quickly discover blocks of time that were previously wasted and you end up with more "free time" at the end of the day! The secret, of course, is to stick to your schedule.

It's commonly said that you should allow

about 2 hours outside of class for each hour in class. When preparing your schedule use this formula as a starting point. You'll quickly discover which classes actually need more and which ones need less. You can then adjust the schedule accordingly.

Keep up with your schedule. Don't procrastinate. Your goal should always be to be completely caught up or even ahead with your studies. It feels so much better to be on top of things than it does to have old work weighing you down.

By keeping with your study schedule (don't forget to schedule social and recreation time as well) you'll find that it's much easier to stay on top of your studies and you won't have to pull all-nighters before your tests. We'll talk more about all-nighters later, but let's just say that they are something you want to avoid.

Time Management Tools

Do you ever wish you had an extra hour during each day? You probably do, you're just not using that hour. Here's how you can find that extra hour each day; use the dead

time or waiting time you have each day to do some of your work. Each day we spend a lot of time waiting in lines, waiting for buses or waiting for class to start. These waits usually come in 5-15 minute chunks. Much of this book and others I've written were done on my laptop while sitting in the airport waiting for airplanes. This time would have otherwise been wasted. Instead of losing this time *use* this time.

One of the best things to do with this waiting time is to review notes or spend time doing rote memorization.

If you are like most college students you probably carry a backpack with you, but even if you don't, it's easy to carry some of your studies with you everywhere you go. If you have notes from a class you just left, review them at once, while it's still fresh in your mind. If you have formulas, dates, definitions or other chunks of information to

The person who said "*Time is Money*" seriously underestimated the value of time.

- Unknown -

memorize, write them onto 3x5 cards (the

mere act of writing these cards helps you memorize the info) and carry them with you. Use the found time to memorize this info instead of trying to do it all at once at the end of the day.

Why Do We Take Notes?

You may notice that I spend a lot of time on the why of a situation. I find it interesting and useful to know why. It helps me understand things more clearly and hopefully it will help you too.

We take notes for several reasons. Remember these reasons as you are taking and reviewing your notes, it will help you take better, more informative notes.

One reason we take notes is because it forces us to listen to what the lecturer is saying. If we are trying to capture what she's saying on paper we must listen. From another point of view taking notes forces us to use more of our senses to learn the information; Listening (auditory), reading (visual) and writing (kinesthetic/visual). The more senses involved in the learning process, the more likely you are to retain the informa-

tion.

Taking notes also helps to clarify ideas that may not be clear, or even present, in the textbook. The lecture and the notes give you a good idea of what's important to the lecturer and what you may find on the tests.

Reviewing Notes

If you want to spend less time reviewing notes then do it as soon as possible after the lecture, preferably immediately afterwards. Go over your notes as soon as possible. Review, rewrite or clarify as quickly as you can while the information is still fresh in your mind. Make sure the notes are legible for review, even a few days or even weeks after the lecture.

Many people find it useful to rewrite their notes and fill in information or details they remember from the lecture or from the reading, but failed to include in the initial note taking.

When reviewing your notes make notations by what you don't understand and either look it up in the text, ask a classmate for

clarification or ask for help from the professor, lecturer or TA.

Using Your Body and Your Environment to Maximize Your Efforts

The environment around us and the ways we use our bodies can have a significant impact on our performance. Use these techniques to improve your study effectiveness.

Analyze Yourself

What makes you tick? What makes you take action? One theory is that we only do things for two reasons; 1.) To avoid pain and 2.) To gain pleasure. How can you use the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure to assist you in working harder (and smarter) on your school work?

Some examples of pain you could experi-

ence in school: You could fail out of school and have to go to work. You could disappoint your parents. You could be embarrassed by lower grades. You could lose the privilege to participate in extra-curricular activities. You could lower your value in the post school marketplace. You could lose financial aid. There are many other ways that low grades could cause you great pains, many of them specific only to you.

Now what about the flipside, the pursuit of pleasure? What pleasure can good grades get you? Recognition for Dean's list or other such academic accolades. Higher value in the post school marketplace. Praise and approval from family. Envy of your peers. Increased opportunity for advancement and scholarships. Graduation with honors. Membership in honor societies or classes.

These are just a few examples. You know what makes you tick. Do you avoid pain more or chase pleasure more? Most people have a bit of both but tend to favor one over the other.

Have You Ever Felt Totally in Control?

Think back to a time when you were totally in control. A time when you were excited about the project you were involved with and a time when you felt passion. How did you hold your head? How did you sit or stand? How did you breathe? How did you speak? How did you physically feel when excited about a project.

Take a minute and answer the above questions. I mean it. Do it now. This is very important.

What you've just done is remembered a time when you were excited and you accessed your key physical traits of excitement and passion. This is an important step in recreating that excitement and passion.

On the flipside of this; remember a time when you had no energy at all. A time when you felt terrible and unresourceful, a time when you felt overwhelm and doom in the situation. A time when you felt helpless and lost when you were totally bewildered by the subject matter being presented.

Notice the differences in the way each of these feels. Notice how you hold your eyes, your head, your face. Notice the posture of your body, your breathing and the tone and tempo of your voice when speaking.

Which way do you prefer to feel? My guess is the first way, the time when you were in control and resourceful. Before we go too far, get yourself out of the feeling of helplessness you were just experiencing by recalling a time of enthusiasm and energy.

Sit up in your chair. Straighten your spine. Sit like you are about to strut. Put a smile on your face and make a big one. Widen your eyes, make them wide open and alert. You'll notice that as you do this your smile gets bigger almost automatically. Take a deep breath in and hold it for a moment and then exhale deeply. Repeat this a few times to get a good flow of oxygen to your body.

Putting your face into an expression of excitement and enthusiasm carries more blood to the face, blood carries oxygen and oxygen makes you feel better. It's an easy recipe for making yourself feel better.

When you assume the physiology of someone in who feels great you tend to feel great.

When you feel great it shows in your face. This not only makes you feel better, but it make those around you feel better towards you. Who would you rather spend time with; someone who looks like they are in a bad mood, or someone who looks like they love their life?

These techniques help you access a more productive state of mind. A state of mind that IS resourceful and a state of mind that is more receptive to learning.

We feel better and more “in the mood” for learning when we are in an environment of learning. We’ve been conditioned to sit up at a desk or table to do our studies and, while this was not known when the custom came into being, it does put you into the best physical posture to learn and be alert. When you settle in to study - do so at a desk or in a chair where your posture is upright, similar to how you sit in during class or testing. Through years of repetition, this is the posture you have become accustomed to learning in.

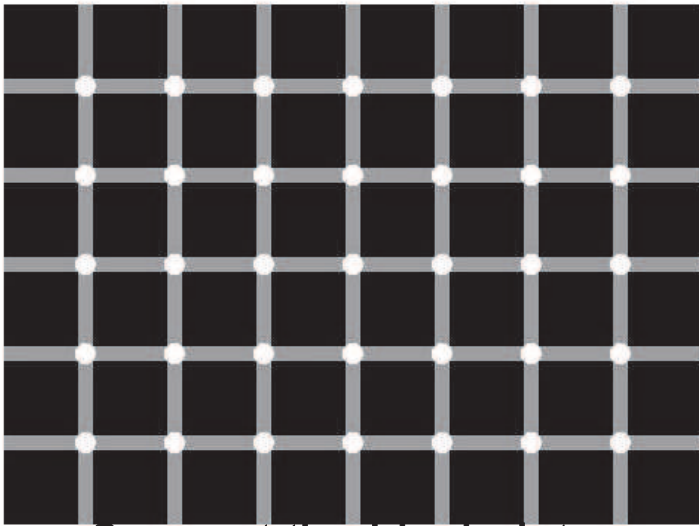
The Best Environment For Studying

To maximize your effectiveness when you study, stack the deck in your favor. Take control of your environment. You want to replicate, as much as possible, the environment where you will be taking your tests.

- Be aware of the lighting, if at all possible, study in the same light as your class or testing room.
- Make yourself comfortable, you'll be at this a while, but don't get too comfortable and drift off to sleep.
- Study in a chair or at a desk. Bed is not the place to study and your desk is not the place to sleep.
- If you listen to music make it classical music or music without words. There won't be music at test time or in class. Listening only to music without words keeps you focused on the words you're reading, not the ones you're hearing.

Studying is Like Beer

You know the ad that says “Know when to say when!” The same is true with studying. We’ve all been there. We’ve been at the books for hours, the letters on the page are all swimming around on the page like the black dots on the illustration below.



Connect the black dots

You find yourself drifting. Nothing makes sense anymore. You are no longer being productive. So go to bed. Recognize the signs of fatigue and when you see these signs it's either time to take a break, or time

to call it a night.

When you stop for the night stop on a project that interests you. It's much easier to come back to a subject you are interested in than to something you dislike or find difficult. Set yourself up to come back to your studying with enthusiasm.

Knowing When to Stop is a Two-Way Street

Many times we get caught in the trap of trying to make it “perfect”. Imagine, in the software business, a company trying to get all of the “bugs” in a piece of software perfect before they issued it. If they waited for the software to be perfect it would never stop changing and it would never be ready for the marketplace. Eventually they have to call a “design freeze” and issue the product.

The same is true with studying. Understand that I am not saying you shouldn't strive for “A” papers - you should. But perfection is virtually unattainable. Recognize when the time you are spending to perfect is no longer improving the quality of the work in proportion to the effort you are putting into it. Be

willing to stop when you have a good paper or project. Don't demand perfection, you're setting yourself up for disappointment.

Keeping Up is Twice as Easy as Catching Up!

I said it earlier and if you take nothing else away from this book make sure you understand the key principle above.

Do not get behind in your classes. Keep up. As much FUN as college is, remember why you're there. If you get behind it adds pressure, additional work and a feeling of overwhelm. While with the exact same effort, spread out over time, you can keep up with your work, be more relaxed and learn more! If for some reason you do get slightly behind be sure to get caught up immediately.

It's a great feeling to have a major project done a week before it's due instead of waiting until the night before and working with the rest of the class on the project. Imagine how it will feel to talk to your classmates who are all "sweating" the deadline. Imagine the envy they'll feel when you proudly announce that you are already done.

The All-Nighter

If you keep up with your work you will find your classes much more enjoyable and even fun. At the same time you'll avoid the dreaded "all-nighter", a great thing to avoid.

Let's take a look at what REALLY happens when you pull an all-nighter. When you stay up all night studying it is usually the night before a test or the night before a major project. In all honesty, I don't have nearly as much of a problem with pulling an all-nighter finishing a project as I do to spending all night preparing for a test. Though, of course, getting projects done early is always preferred.

When you stay up all night preparing for a test you drain your body of energy, and thus, intellect. You end up being tired the day of the test and tired is NOT how you are most resourceful. When the body is tired it is more difficult to focus. Not only do you lose this ability to focus during the test, but also during the studying itself.

An additional effect of the all-nighter is that it throws off your schedule for more than just one day. Pulling one all-nighter can af-

fect your body for several days after. This is a high price to pay for procrastination.

In short, whenever possible, avoid the all-nighter.

Avoid Distractions During YOUR Study Time

Notice that I've emphasized the word "your" in the above heading. I want to stress, time and again, that it is your time. Do not allow the priorities of others to supersede your own priorities.

Your dorm room, apartment or home may not be the best place for you to study. It is true that you feel secure there, all of your study materials are there, but so are all of your distractions. Some common distractions are; TV, radio, the Internet, the computer, the telephone, friends, roommates, pets and family. These distractions you may not find somewhere other than home. If you can control these, then by all means study at home, if not, don't.

Here are a few ways to make it easier to deal with other people you share living space with when you are studying.

- Put a “do not disturb” sign on the door.
- Have a special article of clothing to wear such as a hat, sweater or neckwear. This gives a prearranged signal to others that you are not to be bothered.
- Turn off the phone and turn on the answering machine. Keep the volume of on the machine off so you are not tempted to pick up the phone. Don’t look at caller ID either.
- Avoid the “sock on the door knob” as a signal you are studying. That signals something else entirely!
- Remember to respect other people’s study time too. What goes around ...

Alternate Places to Study

If you are having difficulty focusing or avoiding distractions in your room or apartment then you need to find another place to study. You know your campus better than I do, but here are a few suggestions which may work.

The library - Be careful though, on some campuses the library can be one of the most

distracting places there is, more of a social environment than a study environment. If this is the case on your campus see if there are study lounges in the library. A proper studying atmosphere is usually observed in these.

Other study lounges - Check out other study lounges on campus and find one that you feel comfortable in and that is convenient for you to use.

Public libraries - not on campus - These tend to maintain a level of “libraryness” (I just invented a word to suit my needs!). You can find good chairs, good tables a comfortable atmosphere and quiet here.

Buddy Up With Someone Else

Working with someone else is often times highly advantageous to both of you. The benefits are multi-fold.

Teaming up with another student can make the process more fun and enjoyable and you can feed off of the other student’s enthusiasm. You can also help each other fill in the blank spots in your notes. It is best if this

buddy-study time is preceded by time spent studying on your own and then together. Each of you will then bring to the table unique takes on the material to be reviewed. You'll be prepared and preparation makes everything easier.

It's been said that the best way to learn is to teach. Helping another student to understand material that is unclear to them will also help you understand the material better. Everyone in this situation wins. You gain better understanding through teaching and the student gains better understanding through reintroduction to the material or through a different approach he got in class.

CAUTION: If you are going to study with someone who you are “interested” in make sure the session is not a total flirt session or, if it is, don't count it as study time and then make sure you get your studying done on your own time. It is possible to study with someone who you have a romantic interest in, but for some strange reason there are always distractions. Know the right time for these distractions to be appropriate, and when you need to study with a different person or on your own.

Know the Expected Outcome

Many times you'll sit down to study without ever knowing exactly what you are going to accomplish in that study period. Are you going to study for a set period of time? Are you going to read a particular assignment? Is it your goal to memorize the first 30 dates for a history exam?

Knowing what you are going to get done helps you to recognize when you ARE done

In other words, if you don't know where you're going, how will you know you've arrived?

Get Organized

Organization is one of the best time savers you can have. Notebooks and folders for each subject you are taking are essential as is a calendar/schedule. If you can't find your notes, syllabus and your assignments you can't study them.

Each notebook or folder should have a reminder pad or a pad of Post-it notes® to jot

down anything you are having questions about or that you need to research further. Don't count on your memory. Write it down. This is also good as a time saver because if you think of something not related to studying that you need to do, you can write it down and know that you'll follow up later.

Reward Yourself

I am possibly the worlds strongest believer in rewarding yourself. When I finish a project, there's a reward in it. When I'm on the road doing performances I reward myself with good meals and the occasional movie or good book. When there is something I really want I make it a reward for completing a project I've been postponing.

You can do this too. It doesn't have to be a material reward, it can be spending a hour playing basketball, laying in the sun or an extra long, hot bath. Don't mistreat yourself. Spoil yourself and make this a lifelong habit.

Rewards help give you an attitude of wanting to get a project done, and anything you

can do to increase your desire to learn and accomplish is something worth doing. Rewards appeal directly to the pursuit of pleasure discussed earlier. Be honest with your self. Don't cheat to get the reward. Make sure the project is done, and done right, before the reward.

Treat Your Body Right

You only have one body, it's the one you'll have forever, though I can assure you it will change with time, if you treat it right it will treat you right.

Light exercise is a perfect way to get your energy level back up after a long period of studying. When you take a break go out for a 5-10 minute brisk walk. Get your blood pumping, get oxygen into your system. It will revitalize you and get you ready to attack your studies again.

Especially during exams be sure to eat well and don't over do the stimulants such as alcohol or caffeine.

Tips For Relaxation

During tests or long periods of studying or other stress (and let's face it, studying can be stressful) it's important to relax. You can train yourself to relax just as you can train yourself to run faster, jump higher, ride a bike or even juggle three or more balls.

Relaxation just happens to be my particular area of expertise. As a hypnotist, my job is to get people to relax completely. Here are a few ways to relax.

- Take slow, long, deep breaths.
- Concentrate on your breathing.
- Imagine a time when you were totally relaxed.
- Close your eyes and roll your eyes upward in your head.
- Imagine a serene environment like a calm lake or a gentle flowing stream.
- Listen to self hypnosis tapes if you have them.
- While you are relaxed repeat positive statements to yourself about what you want to accomplish in the project you are working on.
- Avoid anxiety in the first place.

Avoid Anxiety

“You have nothing to fear but fear itself.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

So why worry? Does worrying REALLY help? Of course not. Let's look at the phenomenon of worry. Ask yourself these three questions:

- How many things that I've worried about have ever actually been as bad as they were in my thoughts?
- Did my worrying change the outcome in any way?
- How much time have I wasted worrying about what “might” happen when the odds were that this worse case scenario would never occur?

I'm not saying that worry is totally useless. But I will say it's way overused.

Tips for Relaxation

Here are a few methods to avoid worry or anxiety. Use these tools if you find yourself getting a little uptight especially during or

just before a test.

- Breathe deeply.
- Avoid inactivity. As they say “the idle mind is the devil’s playground.” Make sure that if you get stuck during a test you don’t sit and fret over a question. Mark the question, move on and come back to the problem later.
- Be well prepared.
- Don’t talk about a test with other students just before the test. It serves no purpose except to raise your anxiety level.
- Be on time. Not too early, but certainly a little early. Rushing to get to a class for a test adds stress that you don’t need.
- If you don’t understand a question ask for clarification from the lecturer or proctor.
- Don’t worry about being the first or the last person to finish.
- Worry about you and only you during the test. What others are doing is of no consequence to you.
- Be well rested.
- Be well prepared. Nothing can reduce stress like preparedness.
- Don’t worry. It won’t help. Focus on the problem at hand and do it rationally.
- Don’t concern yourself with the “what ifs” of a situation.

Hot Tips to Get Ahead Beyond Studying!

1. Find past exams from your professors. Check around and see what has been done in the past. This will give you an idea of the testing style of the professor. Take this as a mock exam and see how you do. Sometimes you may even get exactly the same exam - though be careful, professors know that students do this and sometimes they'll change only one word, which, in turn, changes an answer. Use this to practice, not to try to see the exact exam. If the exam looks familiar be sure to read each question very carefully.
2. Know your professor, teaching assistant or lecturer and make sure they know you. If they can put a face to your name in the grade book you are more likely to get the benefit of the doubt in a judgment call.
3. Ask for a higher grade. When I was in college I actually got a two letter grade increase (I only asked for one!) because I talked with my professor and explained why I needed a higher grade than I had earned on the final. It's worth asking.

There's an old saying in the sales world that you have to A•S•K to G•E•T Don't be shy. If you need the grade, ask for it and be prepared to plead your case. You have nothing to lose so ask. This is strongly linked to the previous tip of knowing your professor. You will have a much better chance of catching a break if you already have a relationship with her.

4. Pick your classes wisely. If you go to a larger school where several classes are offered that meet the same requirements then seek out the right professor. Talk to other students to see what they think of the profs, sit in on a class if possible and check their office doors for grades to see how hard they grade their current students.
5. If possible, make sure you get teachers you have good rapport with or respect greatly. The right teacher can make the difference between loving a class and forcing yourself to attend a class.
6. Have fun. Figure out what makes learning fun for you individually and then do it. Life is too short to not have fun every day.

Parting Words From C.J.

In closing let me say congratulations on taking steps towards improving yourself. You are in the minority in life by doing this. You've made an investment of time, and of money, in this book, now be sure to take the time to use these principles.

I firmly believe in, and live by, the concepts described in the first half of this book. I am living proof that by changing your passions you can change your life.

I encourage you to follow the paths in life that give you passion and excitement. Find out what it is that you love to do, do it, and you WILL figure out a way to make a good living doing it. Follow your heart in life. Do what you know "in your gut" is right for YOU and you will accomplish amazing things.

Keep up the great work, best of luck in college and in life, and I hope our paths cross again sometime in the future. You can get in touch with me through e-mail at study@cjjohnson.com I personally respond to all e-mail I get and if I cannot answer your questions, I'll do my best to send you to someplace that can.

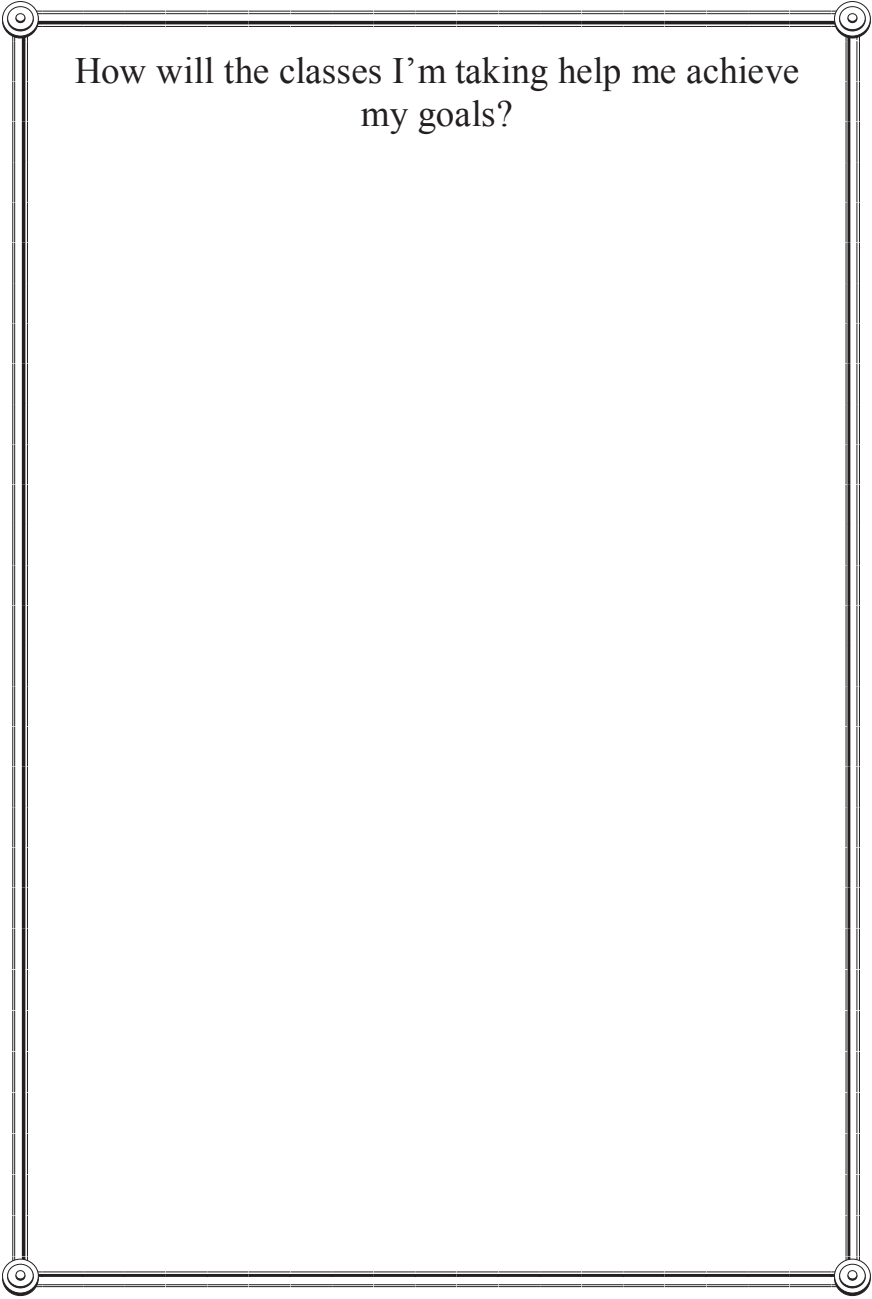
C.J. Johnson, January 2001, Leander, TX USA



Notes



My Personal Goals



How will the classes I'm taking help me achieve my goals?