

# Motivation Skills for Researchers



## Motivation

- Outline
- Self-awareness – understanding your motivation
- Basic motivational concepts
- Setting goals
- Procrastination
- Action plan



# “The Merchant of Death is Dead”

Dr AN, who became rich by finding ways to kill more people faster than ever before, died yesterday

# What?

Take a minute to consider what you consider to be success as post doctoral researcher.



# Why



Write a few sentences that capture why you want to be a successful researcher.

What are you motivated by? Intellectual curiosity, results, fame...? And why does it matter?





- Of the motivations you just listed, which would you say is the most powerful?
- However challenging, most researchers can distil their motivation down to a single thing. It can be rewarding in itself to be reminded of what this is (stick it on the wall)
- To what extent is your current work addressing and aligned to your key career motivation?



# Taking stock

- What type of research are you doing?  
Is it what you want to do?
- What is your research context?  
Are you where you should be?

Are you starting to think about where you want to go? Also, knowing where you want to get to is fine – but do you know how you're going to get there? Or maybe you don't know what you want to do?

# How to discover your passion

1. What are your talents?
2. What annoys you (or makes you jealous)?
3. What did you love doing as a child?
4. What kinds of things make you lose track of time?
5. Try new things





# Exercise

1. Write down 10 things you want to do  
It might be something you started but didn't finish ,are scared of, enjoyed doing as a child.....
2. Show the list to someone else
5. Use the “5 whys” to delve deeper



# Definition

Conventional definitions typically include

- Internal and external factors
- Prompt desire / energy / enthusiasm /interest...
- Goal orientated
- both conscious and unconscious factors

Motivation is derived from the Latin *movere* meaning “to move” or “to energise” or “to activate”

**Reasons for acting in a particular way**



# Why consider motivation?



- To enhance our experience at work it is important to understand what motivates us
- When we are motivated, we can influence others in a constructive way
- Important to understand that motivations vary between people and by understanding others' motivations we can work more effectively together





## What motivation is not



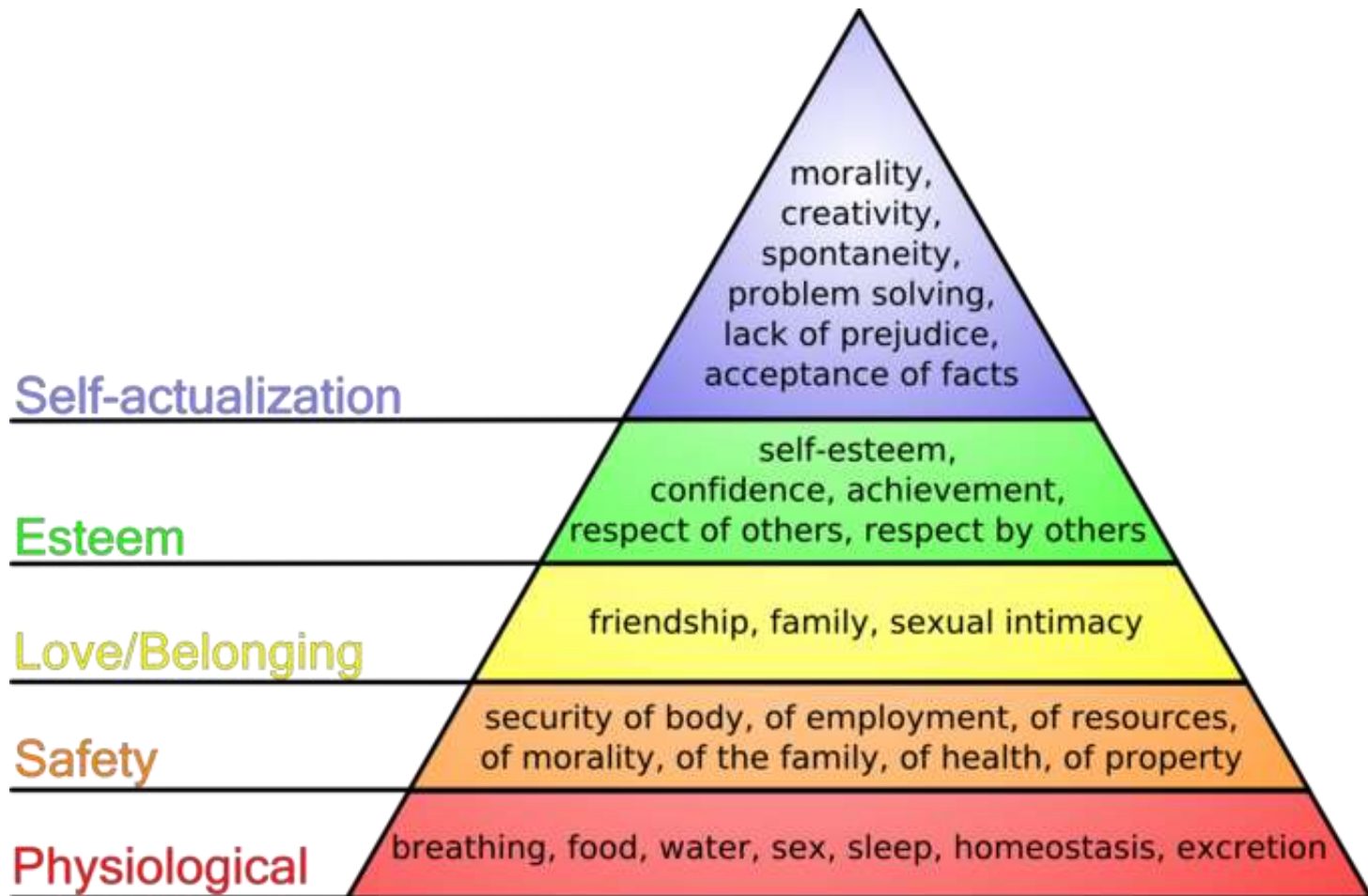
- Directly observable
- The same as satisfaction
- Always conscious
- Directly controllable

# Theories of motivations

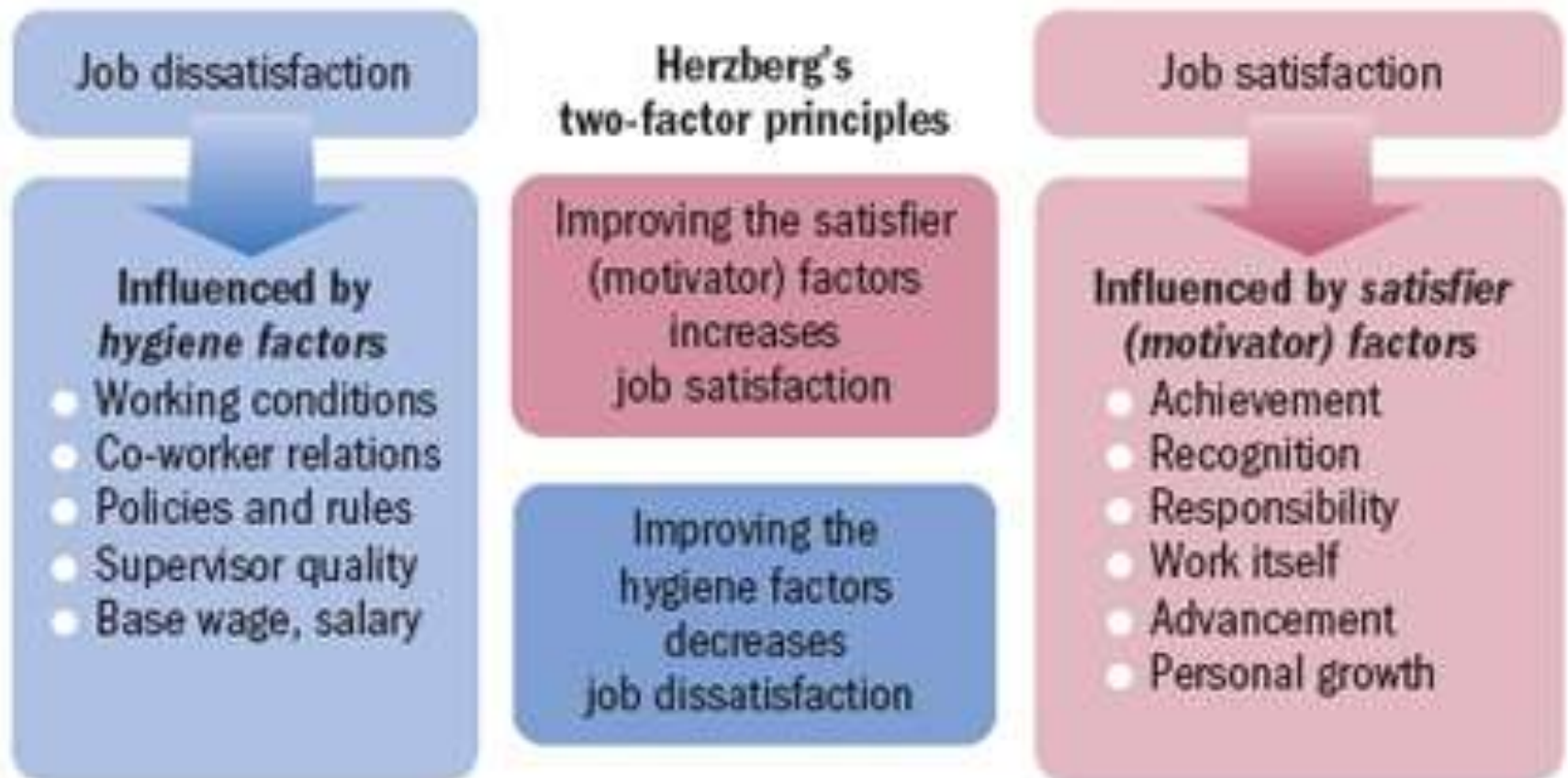
- There are over 50 theories of motivation
- No one accepted meaning but some commonality
  - Motivation is goal directed
  - Motivation is limited by the situation people find themselves in
- We will look at a few theories



# Maslow's hierarchy of needs

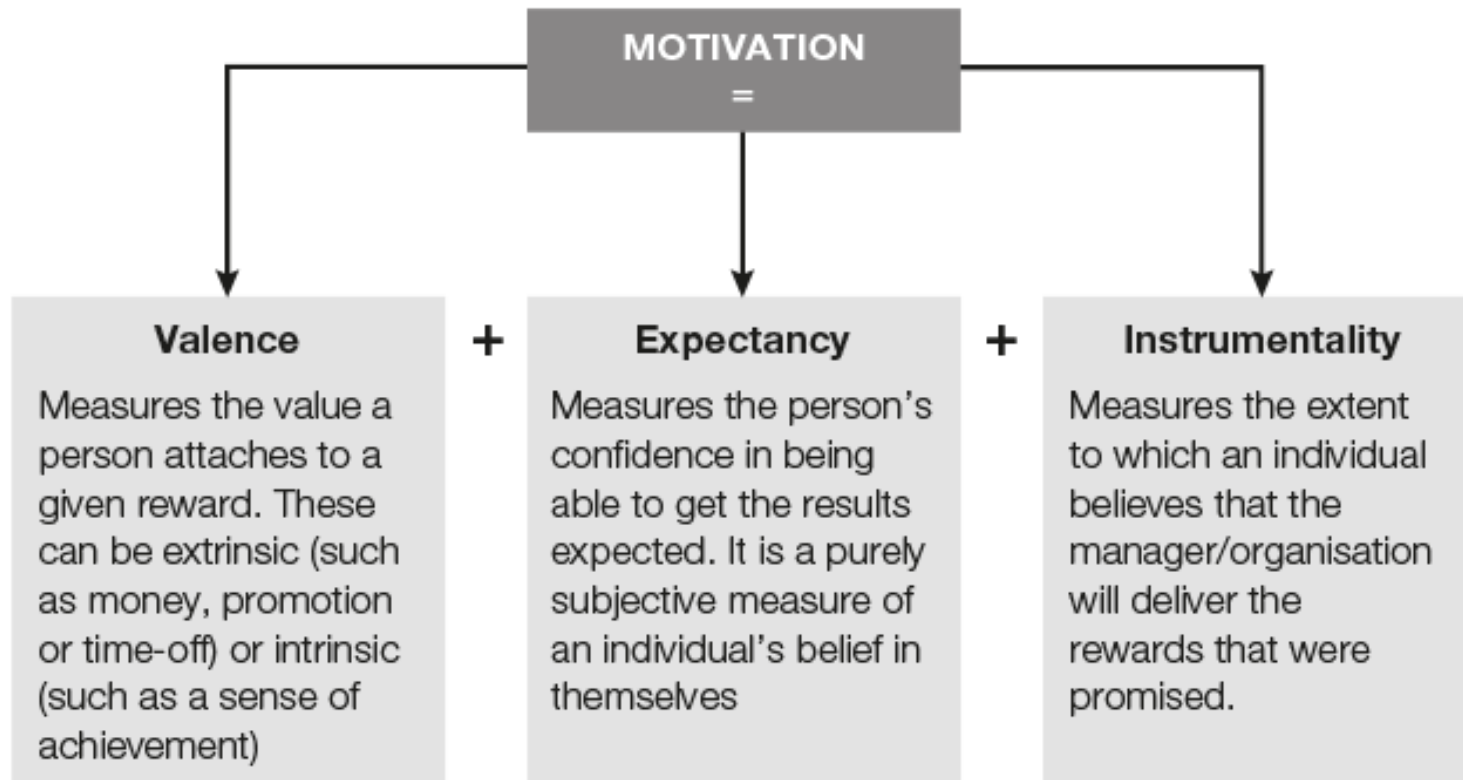


# Hertzberg two factor



**Herzberg's two-factor theory**

# Vroom's Expectancy Theory





# What does the literature tell us about researcher motivation

1. Spin-out / entrepreneurship and

2. Impact

is a focus of current research

# Researchers' willingness to engage in knowledge and technology transfer activities: an exploration of the underlying motivations

Erika Sofía Olaya Escobar , Jasmina Berbegal-Mirabent , Inés Alegre , Oscar Germán Duarte Velasco 

First published: 07 March 2017 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/radm.12263> | Citations: 7

[Check for Full Text](#)

**Table 5.** Correlation matrix of latent factors

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Attitude towards KTT	<i>0.771</i>				
2 Expected contribution	0.610	<i>0.859</i>			
3 Promotion incentives	0.307	0.384	<i>0.918</i>		
4 University regulation and culture	0.053	0.232	0.311	<i>0.818</i>	
5 Services to promote KTT	0.089	0.272	0.324	0.585	<i>0.812</i>



## **The politics of research impact: academic perceptions of the implications for research funding, motivation and quality**

Jennifer Chubb<sup>1</sup> · Mark S. Reed<sup>2</sup>

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Motivation crowding theory posits that extrinsic motivators such as monetary incentives or punishments may undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci 1971). When someone is rewarded for a behaviour they had been performing previously based on intrinsic motivation (e.g. paid for giving blood), the extrinsic motivation can replace or ‘crowd out’ the intrinsic motivation, leading to non-performance of the behaviour when the extrinsic reward is no longer available.

People will adjust and people will start to think more about their impact outside. These incentives are a bit like a sledge hammer, and people will react quite a lot. Is this the reaction they want? I’m not sure this is what everybody wants but it’s what’s going to happen. (Finance, Australia)

# Public sector motivation

Table 5-1. *Summary of Strategies and Tactics for Applying PSM*

<i>Unit of analysis</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Tactics</i>
Individual	Integrate PSM into human resources management process.	Select based on PSM. Socialize individuals into expectations of behaviors that reflect PSM. Utilize performance appraisals that include observations of behaviors that reflect PSM.
Job	Create and convey meaning and purpose in the job.	Convey social significance of the job. Establish clear goals in line with existing PSM.
Work environment	Create a supportive work environment for PSM.	Create work structure that enhances self-regulation. Encourage cooperative workplace interactions. Create and maintain incentives that align organizational mission and employee PSM. Design compensation systems that emphasize long-term attractiveness to employees and do not crowd out intrinsic motivations.
Organization	Integrate public service into organization mission and strategy.	Articulate organization vision and action that reflect commitment to PSM. Promote value-based leadership.
Society	Create societal legitimacy for public service.	Partner with societal institutions to incorporate public service values into curriculum. Advocate for and provide opportunities for pre-service experience. Use media to bring public service to attention of society.

Source: Laurie E. Paarlberg, James L. Perry, and Annie Hoedeghem, "From Theory to Practice: Strategies for Applying Public Service Motivation," in *Motivation in Public Management: The Call of Public Service*, edited by James L. Perry and Annie Hoedeghem (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 236.

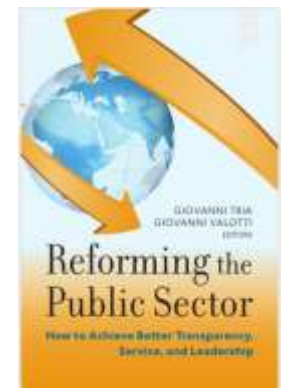
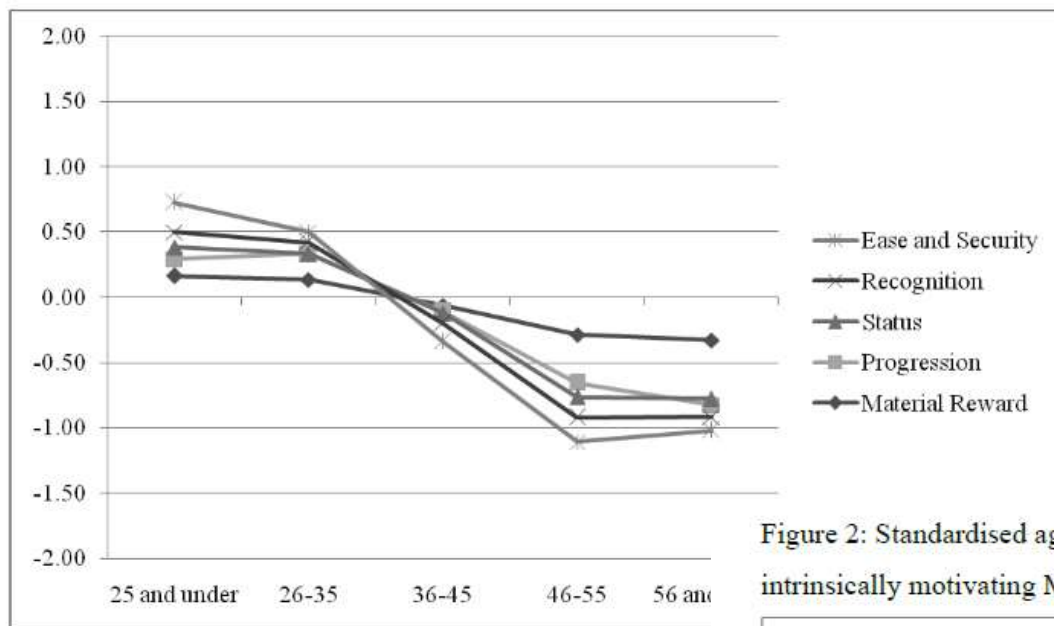
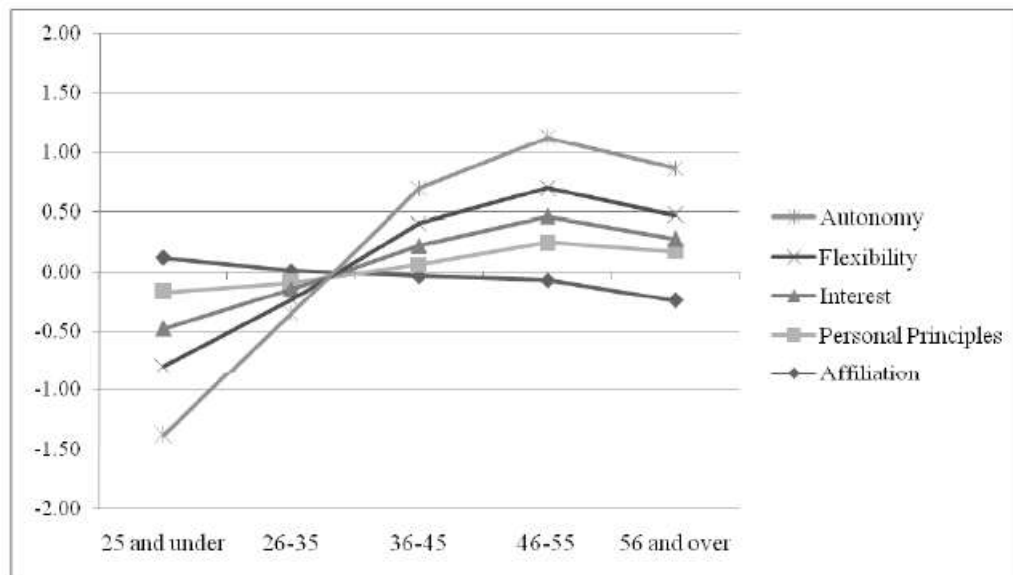


Figure 3: Standardised age differences (z-scores) across the five age bands on the five extrinsically motivating MQ scales for sample 1 ( $N = 9388$ )

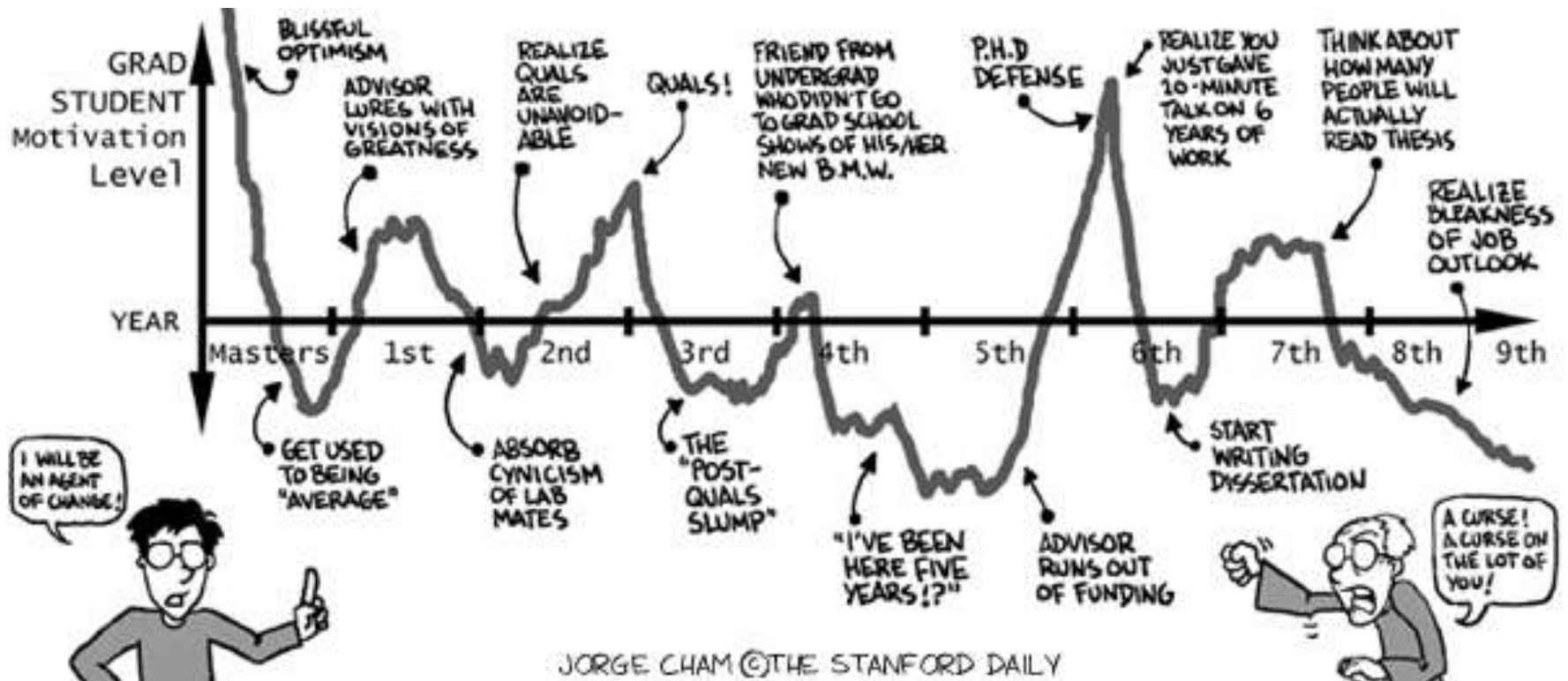


## Age-related Differences in Work Motivation

Figure 2: Standardised age differences (z-scores) across the five age bands on the five intrinsically motivating MQ scales for sample 1 ( $N = 9388$ )



# Phd comics



# Resetting your motivation

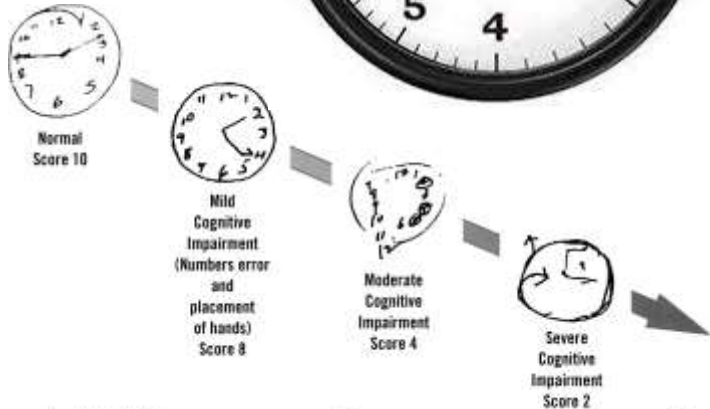
3 stages

1. Discovering (mapping)
2. Implementation (doing)
3. Growth (future proofing)

# Procrastination



- Pro – forward motion
- Crastinus – belonging to tomorrow



Perfectionism	Feeling inadequate	Underdeveloped skills
Aversion to discomfort	Resentment	Being over extended
Lifestyle	Fear of success/failure	Negative emotional state



# Manifestations of procrastination

## **Suddenly important things**

- Cleaning the house
- Making a list
- “recharging”
- Another idea
- Social media
- Just one more paper
- Gaming/tv/music

## **Common feelings**

- Panic
- Hunger
- Inadequacy
- Tiredness
- Worry about perceptions
- Stress
- **Automatic Negative Thoughts (Beck)**

# The motivation fairy

## COLUMN

### Waiting for the motivation fairy

It's easy to give in to procrastination – but Hugh Kearns and Maria Gardiner offer some tips for getting your drive back.

*"I love deadlines. I love the whooshing sound they make as they go by!"*  
— Douglas Adams

If you were trying to set up ideal conditions for procrastination, conducting a research project would provide them. Such projects tend to be large and time-consuming: completing a doctoral research project, for example, often takes three years or more. Deadlines and endpoints are often fuzzy and ill-defined. Then there's the reward structure: you can put in a lot of effort with little to no positive feedback along the way, and the rewards, if there are any, take a long time to come. Add to this the fact that scientists are often perfectionists with demanding, if not idealistic, expectations, and it is little wonder that procrastination is the most discussed topic in our graduate-student and researcher workshops. Many researchers simply take for granted that they are at the mercy of the forces of procrastination, doomed to increased stress levels and stretched deadlines. But there are simple strategies for pushing yourself to get engaged. The first is to recognize the patterns that you're falling into.

#### ADVANCED DISPLACEMENT

Some procrastination activities are pretty obvious. There's the morning coffee break that creeps into lunchtime. Or watching videos on YouTube and sending them to all your friends. Or updating your Facebook status when you should be updating your lab book.

But most procrastination is far more subtle, and can even be mistaken for productive work. For example, you might try to track down that elusive reference, even though you've already got more than you will ever have time to read. Or you could start a new experiment instead of analysing the old one. Or take stock of the glassware in the lab. Or check your e-mail. These activities make it seem as though you're doing something

useful, and you may well be, but it's not the thing you should be doing right now.

So why is housekeeping, for example, so much fun when you're supposed to be working on your dissertation or a paper? It's a displacement activity, used to dispel the self-reproach or discomfort that we feel for not doing something else. Reading a novel or taking a nap



causes too much guilt. But have you ever, say, reorganized your folders to make it easier to find the files? It would speed up your writing, after all. Or perhaps you've diligently labelled all the cupboards in the lab to make it easier to find things.

Although these activities or excuses seem acceptable, their fatal flaw is that once they're over, you still haven't finished that article, started that experiment or written your dissertation. You probably have an increased sense of guilt because you're not making progress on your goal. And although you've found and read that reference, you still don't feel motivated to write. Sadly, while you were answering e-mails or counting the glassware, the motivation fairy didn't stop by and make

that difficult task look any more appealing. That's just not how motivation works.

Most people have a fundamental misunderstanding: we like to think that motivation leads to action, or, more simply, that when you feel like doing something, you'll do it. This model might work for things you enjoy doing, such as watching a film or going for a walk. But it's not particularly good for huge tasks with fuzzy deadlines. The problem is that you may never feel motivated to revise and resubmit that paper – at least not until a hard-and-fast deadline appears. You need a different model.

#### MOTIVATION MOJO

Some psychology research shows that action leads to motivation, which in turn leads to more action. You have to start before you feel ready; then you'll feel more motivated, and then you'll take more action. You've probably had this experience yourself. You put off running an analysis for ages, eventually you decide to do it, and once you start, you say to yourself, "This isn't as bad as I thought. Why not keep going while I'm at it?"

Of course, starting before you feel motivated is difficult. But certain strategies can directly tackle the conditions that lead to procrastination in the first place.

First, big projects need to be broken down into steps. Not just small steps, but tiny steps. Instead of saying you'll make the revisions to the paper – which probably seems overwhelming – the tiny step could be that you'll read the reviewer's comments or you'll make the first two changes. Second, you need to set a time or deadline by which to perform that tiny step. Saying you'll do it later or tomorrow isn't enough – the deadline needs to have an "clock" attached to it. Third, you need to build in an immediate reward. If you finish reading the comments by your deadline at 10:00 a.m., you can allow yourself to have a coffee, a brief chat or a quick e-mail exchange. It's highly likely that once you start the task, your motivation will kick in and you'll find yourself wanting to spend longer at it.

So if the motivation fairy hasn't been stopping off at your lab or desk very frequently, perhaps you should give her a hand. The next time you catch yourself engaging in displacement activities, remember that there's a way to recover that elusive drive. Follow our three rules and watch your motivation grow. ■

Hugh Kearns and Maria Gardiner lecture and conduct research in psychology at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, and run workshops for graduate students and advisers (see [ithinkwell.com.au](http://ithinkwell.com.au)).

CAREERS

## Advanced procrastination (displacement)

## The motivation fairy is a myth

## Action leads to more action – act before you feel ready

micro

# Break a task into ~~small~~ steps



## Some tools

- Mind maps
- Apps: scrivener, things, wunderlist, freedom .....
- Notebook & pen
- 2 golden hours (Hugh Kearns)

## You and Your Writing Project: A Love Story



At the beginning, it's a honeymoon: just you and your beloved topic, no readers looking on. You're free to write to discover what you think, know, and believe, as well as what you don't yet understand. During this stage, savor the process of contemplating your subject from every angle and getting to know its lovely contours.



Now it's time to engage with your messy, provisional draft, and plunge more deeply into the reality of your subject. Re-frame, re-shape, and re-phrase what you've written in haste. Remove entire passages of fat and clutter. Solicit the critiques of relationship counselors, er, informed writers. Work hard for the joy of discovering what unique contribution you have to make to existing knowledge.



"Art is never finished, only abandoned," as the saying goes too with a great love, and with an academic writing project. Deciding when to stop writing can be hard than persevering. But here's how you know you're done: you can't look at the text a moment longer, you're out of time, and your counselors decide that your work is adequate.

Writing – a particular problem

# Theory 4: Goal setting theory of Motivation



Goals are made open, known and broadcasted.

Goals should be set-self by individual rather than designated.

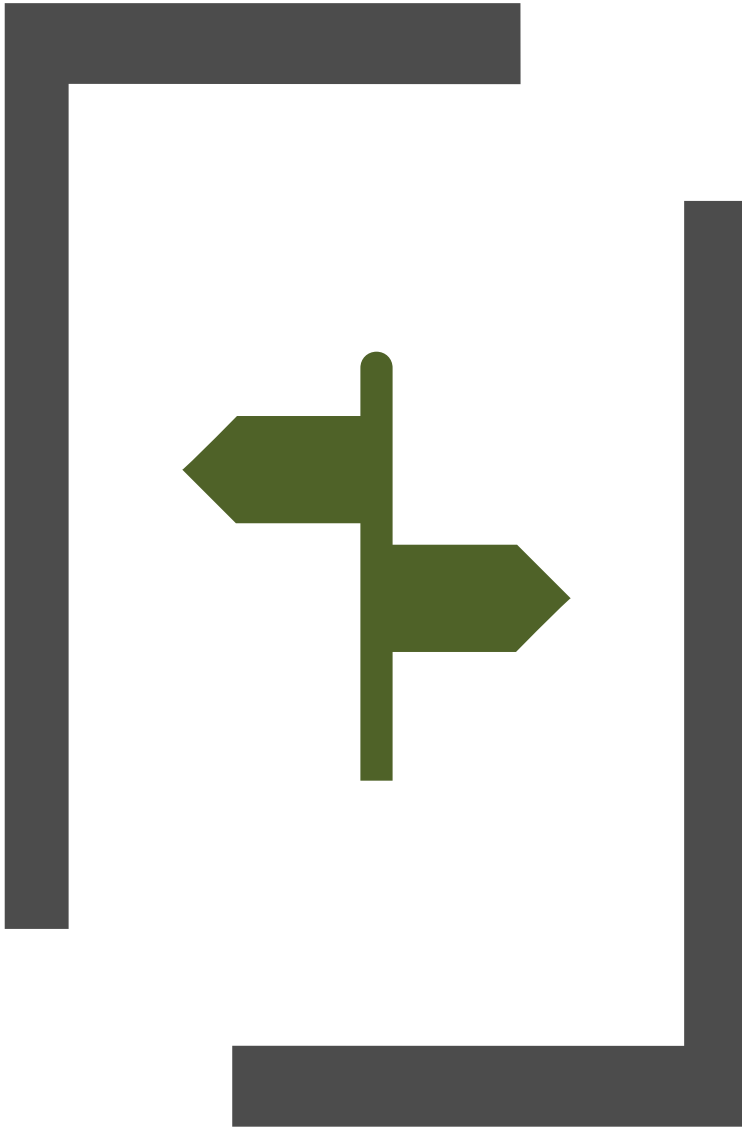
Individual's set goals should be consistent with the organizational goals and vision.

# Goals

Goals are signposts on the way to your vision

They are measurable

They will evolve as your position changes



# Passion in your career – ikigai principle

Ikigai

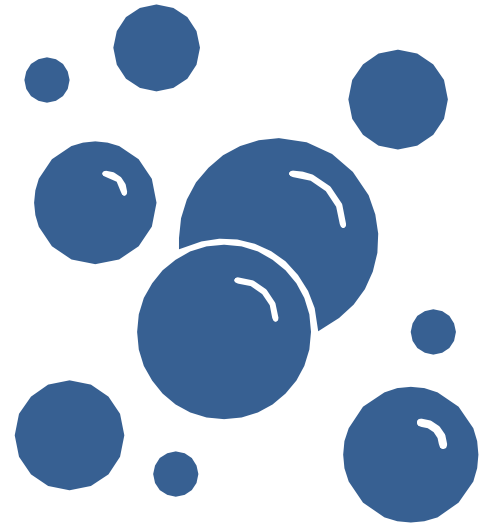
toolshero



## Leaders Map

<b>Vision</b>	What is your big aspiration?
<b>Values</b>	What are your golden rules?
<b>Goals</b>	What will success look like?
<b>Current position</b>	Where are you on the journey?
<b>Opportunities</b>	What will help your progress?
<b>Risks</b>	What may hold you back?
<b>Next steps</b>	What are your mid-term priorities?

# SOAP





# SMART goals

<p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>Specific</b> Who, What, Where, When, Why, Which</p> <p>Define the goal as much as possible with no ambiguous language.</p> <p>WHO is involved, WHAT do I want to accomplish, WHERE will it be done, WHY am I doing this (reasons, purpose), WHICH constraints / requirements do I have?</p>	<p><b>M</b></p> <p><b>Measurable</b> From and To</p> <p>Can you track the progress and measure the outcome?</p> <p>How much, how many, how will I know when my goal is accomplished?</p>	<p><b>A</b></p> <p><b>Attainable</b> How</p> <p>Is the goal reasonable enough to be accomplished? How so?</p> <p>Make sure the goal is not out of reach or below standard performance.</p>	<p><b>R</b></p> <p><b>Relevant</b> Worthwhile</p> <p>Is the goal worthwhile and will it meet your needs?</p> <p>Is each goal consistent with other goals you have established and fits with your immediate and long term plans?</p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p><b>Timely</b> When</p> <p>Your objective should include a time limit. "I will complete this step by month/day/year."</p> <p>It will establish a sense of urgency and prompt you to have better time management.</p>
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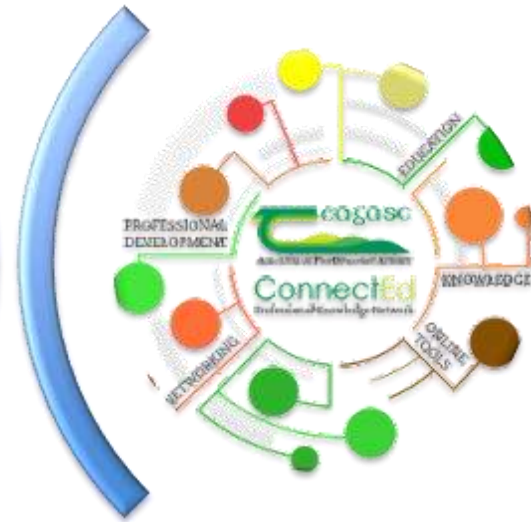
# Personal goals and motivations



Family, friends, hobbies



Professional-personal



research



# Do you hold yourself accountable?

How?

(hint: it's a lot of the things we have mentioned already but you need to figure out how to make them work for you)

Action plan

Thank you

