

Myth or Science?

Women Are More Motivated To Get Along, and Men Are More Motivated To Get Ahead

This statement is true. Compared to women, men are relatively more motivated to excel at tasks and jobs. Compared to men, women are more motivated to maintain relationships.

Before proceeding any further, though, it is important to note that these gender differences do not mean that every man is more motivated by his career than every woman. There are differences, but think of it like gender and longevity. Women, on average, live longer than men, but in a significant percentage of couples (roughly 45 percent), a husband will outlive his wife. So, there are differences, but you need to resist the human tendency to turn a group difference into a broad generalization or stereotype.

Research indicates that men are more likely to be described by what are called “agentic traits,” such as *active*, *decisive*, and *competitive*. Women are more likely to be described by what are termed “communal” traits, such as *caring*, *emotional*, and *considerate*. This evidence, however, might reflect gender stereotypes. We might hold stereotypes of the traits of men and women, but that doesn’t necessarily prove that men and women are motivated by different things.

Other evidence, though, suggest that this is not just a gender stereotype. A study of 1,398 working Germans revealed that men were more motivated by agentic strivings and women more by communal strivings, and these gender differences did not change over the 17-month course of the study. As a result of these differences, men had higher levels of “objective” career success (income, occupational status) than women. Women, however, were more involved in their families than were men.

We don’t know whether these differences are ingrained or socialized. If they are socialized, though, evidence suggests that it begins early. A study of the stories that children aged 4 through 9 told about their lives revealed that girls were more likely to emphasize communion (friendships, helping others, affectionate contact) than were boys.

Class Exercise

Before reviewing this situation, discuss with students the task of working on team projects.

Questions

1. What constitutes working hard on a team project?
Answer: These answers vary greatly depending on the student’s point of view. Many students have no concept of what makes a team project successful. Among the concepts contributing to a successful team project, students might mention motivation, commitment, drive, attitude, experience, desire, needs, or obligation.

2. What motivates them to work hard?

Answer: The principle motivator for student performance on teams is “self-interest.” The self-interest could be based on any of the motivational factors discussed in the text. One of the first steps any team should make in processing its assignment is to discuss what it means to each person in the group. This will identify for each person what his or her vested interests are in the outcome. Then discuss what the project means to the group. This may offer different perspectives to the team members about motivation. (Look up information about the Outcome-Directed Thinking Model to review these processes.)

3. Why would a team member not work hard? Not carry his/her fair share?

Answer: It’s simple; team members who do not work hard and carry their fair share of the workload are not motivated. They have no real motivation among the types introduced in the chapter.

4. How could they make the team project as important to the other team members as it is to them?

Answer: See the discussion identifying the group member’s motivation in answer 2). The discussion should identify the offending student’s motivation that could range from, “I want to pass the course” to “I want to spend as little time as possible on this project.” If the person is not prepared to adopt a more aggressive motivation, then the assignments for that student can be geared directly to the extent of his or her motivation to ensure his or her performance doesn’t impair the team’s performance. However, the students must understand the ramifications of his or her motivation in context of what he or she wants to get out of the work.

An Ethical Choice

Putting Off Work

Dana Moylan Wright found herself in a vicious cycle. The more her work piled up, the more she procrastinated. “At that point, I had many deadlines and was having trouble making myself do anything,” she said.

You’ve probably found yourself in a similar situation. We all procrastinate from time to time, especially with work that doesn’t interest us. Still, uninteresting is not necessarily the same as unimportant.

So, how can we avoid procrastination?

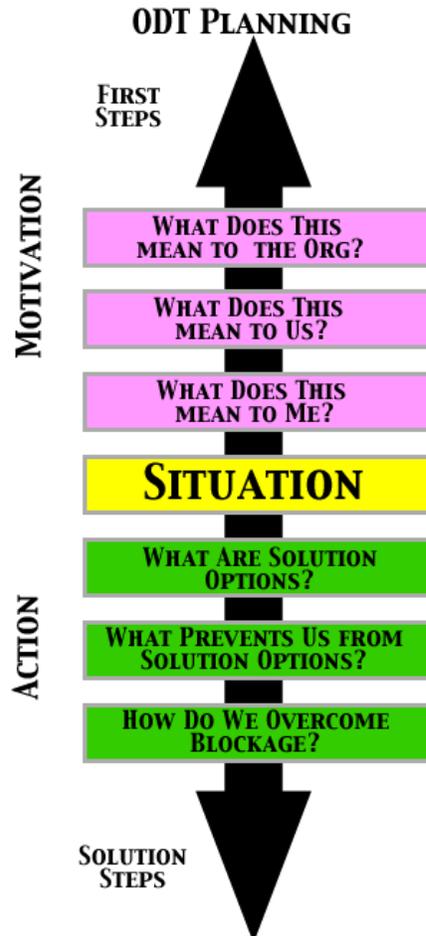
1. Though as occasional or habitual procrastinators we may rationalize our behavior—telling ourselves that waiting until the last minute is efficient—realize that procrastination is usually counterproductive. Says one researcher who has studied procrastinators: “My research showed that they do not perform better. They just think they do.” So, be honest with yourself—in the long run, we pay for our procrastination, both in terms of getting less done and in feeling guilty.
2. One way to eliminate procrastination is to set intermediate deadlines for yourself. Researchers studied MIT undergraduates who had three assignments due over a 12-week course. Of three groups of students—those who had a separate deadline for each assignment after 4, 8, and 12 weeks; those who had no intermediate deadlines; and those who were asked to impose their own deadlines—the first group had the best grades for the course. So, one way you can avoid procrastination is to cluster your projects into concrete goals so that each one is attainable and less overwhelming.
3. Some evidence suggests that making commitments public—such as telling others about your goals—may discipline ourselves against the temptations of distraction.
4. Give yourself sufficient time when you are disconnected from your cell phone, e-mail, the Internet, and so on. One expert commented, “How often have we said, ‘We’ll check e-mail, it’ll only take a minute,’ and three hours later we’re still on it?”

Source: Based on A. Tugend, “The Popular Practice of Putting Stuff Off,” *New York Times* (January 30, 2009), p. B6; and C. Tuna, “How to Put Off Work—Constructively,” *Wall Street Journal* (September 30, 2008), p. B14

Class Exercise

1. Divide the class into groups of three to five students.
2. Advise students that the class has been informed that Professor Wishemluck, a senior faculty member, just called the class teacher on their cell phone to say that he is suffering chest pains and that he is in the (pick a spot on campus that students are unlikely to know the location, such as the Faculty Senate Office).
3. The student teams must create a plan to locate Professor Wishemluck and get him assistance. The plan should include specific directions to the location.

4. Once students have created their plan and they are confident their directions will lead to Professor Wishemluck, have them think about the process they used to create the plan.
5. Ask each team to create a flow chart to illustrate the solution process they used. It should look something like this:



6. The students should identify the relationship between their motivations and the efforts they used to find the professor's location. Students will find when discussing their efforts that different processes were used to identify where the location is.
7. Lastly, students should think about the motivations they identified. What are the differences between the solutions based on motivations that were time sensitive and those that weren't? If the professor's condition is thought to be critical, what would the ramifications of procrastination be?

International OB

How Managers Evaluate Their Employees Depends on Culture

A recent study of managers from North America, Asia, and Latin America found interesting differences in their perceptions of employee motivation. North American managers perceive their employees as motivated more by extrinsic factors (for example, pay) than by intrinsic factors (for example, doing meaningful work). Asian managers perceive their employees as being motivated by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, while Latin American managers perceive their employees as motivated by intrinsic factors.

Even more interesting, these differences affected evaluations of employee performance. As you might expect, Asian managers focused on both types of motivation when evaluating their employees' performance, and Latin American managers focused on intrinsic motivation. North American managers, though believing employees are motivated primarily by extrinsic factors, actually focused more on intrinsic factors when evaluating employee performance. Why the paradox? One explanation is that North Americans value uniqueness, so any deviation from the norm—such as being perceived as unusually high in intrinsic motivation—is rewarded.

Latin American managers' focus on intrinsic motivation may be related to a cultural norm termed *simpatía*, a tradition that compels employees to display their internal feelings. Consequently, Latin American managers are more sensitized to these displays and can more easily notice their employees' intrinsic motivation.

So, from an employee perspective, the cultural background of your manager can play an important role in how you are evaluated.

Source: Based on S. E. DeVoe and S. S. Iyengar, "Managers' Theories of Subordinates: A Cross-Cultural Examination of Manager Perceptions of Motivation and Appraisal of Performance," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, January 2004, pp. 47–61.

Class Exercise

1. Divide the class into teams of three to five students each.
2. Ask the students to access http://performance-appraisals.org/appraisal-library/Performance_Appraisals_and_Culture/
3. Have each group select one of the country studies referenced.
4. Each group should prepare a white paper based on the article defining the characteristics of motivation sought under Equity Theory. (See Extended outline III.E for categories)
5. Have students discuss the differences they found by presenting their findings to the class and allowing others to comment about the differences.

Point/CounterPoint

Failure Motivates

Point

It's sad but true that many of the best lessons we learn in life are from our failures. Often when we're riding on the wings of success, we coast—until we crash to earth.

Take the example of Dan Doctoroff. Doctoroff is a successful New York investment banker who spent 5 years obsessed with bringing the 2012 Olympics to New York. In his efforts, he used \$4 million of his own money, traveled half a million miles, worked 100-hour weeks, and staked his reputation on achieving a goal many thought was foolhardy.

What happened? New York wasn't selected, and all Doctoroff's efforts were in vain. His immediate reaction? He felt "emotionally paralyzed." But Doctoroff is not sorry he made the effort. He said he learned a lot about himself in trying to woo Olympic decision makers in 78 countries. Colleagues had once described him as brash and arrogant. As a result of his efforts, Doctoroff said, he learned to listen more and talk less. He also said that losing made him realize how supportive his wife and three teenage children could be.

Not only does failure bring perspective to people such as Doctoroff, it often provides important feedback on how to improve. The important thing is to learn from the failure and to persist. As Doctoroff says, "The only way to ensure you'll lose is not to try."

One of the reasons successful people fail so often is that they set their own bars so high. Harvard's Rosabeth Moss Kanter, who has spent her career studying executives, says, "Many successful people set the bar so high that they don't achieve the distant goal. But they do achieve things that wouldn't have been possible without that bigger goal."

CounterPoint

Do people learn from failure? We've seen that one of the decision-making errors people make is escalation of commitment: They persist in a failed venture just because they think persistence is a virtue or because their ego is involved, even when logic suggests they should move on. One research study found that managers often illogically persist in launching new products, even when the evidence becomes clear that the product is going nowhere. As the authors note, "It sometimes takes more courage to kill a product that's going nowhere than to sustain it." So, the thought of learning from failure is a nice ideal, but most people are too defensive to do that.

Moreover, there is ample evidence that when people fail, they often rationalize their failures to preserve their self-esteem and thus don't learn at all. Although the example of Dan Doctoroff is interesting, it's not clear he's done anything but rationalize his

failure. It's human nature. Research shows that when we fail, we often engage in external attributions—blaming the failure on bad luck or powerful others—or we devalue what we failed to get (“It wasn’t that important to me anyway,” we may tell ourselves). These rationalizations may not be correct, but that’s not the point. We engage in them not to be right but to preserve our often fragile self-esteem. We need to believe in ourselves to motivate ourselves, and because failing undermines that self-belief, we have to do what we can to recover our self-confidence.

In sum, although it is a nice story that failure is actually good, as one songwriter wrote, “the world is not a song.” Failure hurts, and to either protect ourselves or recover from the pain, we often do *not* learn from failure—we rationalize it away.

Class Exercise

1. This exercise reveals at what level money motivates.
2. Bring a one-dollar bill, a fifty-cent piece, a quarter, a dime, a nickel, and a penny to class.
3. Ask for a volunteer to come up to the front of class. [Be sure the volunteer can bend and pick something up off the floor.] Have the volunteer face away from the class.
4. While placing the one-dollar bill on the floor, tell a story to the class and the volunteer about walking across campus and coming across the dollar on the ground.
5. Caution the class not to speak their answers to your questions.
6. Now ask the class how many would bend over and pick up the dollar. Have them raise their hand rather than speak. Record the number where you can refer to it later but not where the volunteer can see it.
7. Ask the volunteer to turn around, and ask him/her what he/she would do.
 - a. If he/she would pick it up, let him/her do so and keep it. [This will increase volunteerism in later classes!]
 - b. If he/she will not, ask why (almost all students will).
8. Have the volunteer face away from the class again. Continue the story while placing the fifty-cent piece on the floor.
9. Again ask the class what they would do; record the raised hands for picking it up, for leaving it.
10. Again ask the volunteer to turn around, and ask him/her what he/she would do.
11. Repeat this cycle with each denomination of coin.
12. Stop when you reach a denomination that the volunteer will not pick up.
13. Now, lead a discussion regarding the different responses from the class and the student.
 - a. At what point did the value of the money go low enough that most students would not pick it up? Why?
 - b. Why did the volunteer continue to pick up the money at a point when the class members probably would not?
 - c. At what point does a bonus or pay raise motivate them on the job? What factors make a raise or bonus important enough to motivate extra effort?