

**GET
YOUR
PhD
DONE.**

28 DAYS TO REBOOT YOUR MOTIVATION

Accompanying Workbook

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Get Your PhD Done: Accompanying Workbook

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Disclaimers

This book is not intended to support or treat a mental health problem like depression.

If you feel like your mood is low and you wonder if you have depression, it's always worth going to see your GP or family doctor. They can explore different treatment options with you and get you on the way to recovery.

At the time of writing in the UK, the NHS website (www.nhs.uk) has a depression self-assessment tool that people can use if they think they might have depression. Other countries may have similar resources.

This book draws on Self-Determination Theory. Other helpful motivational theories are available.

My use of Self-Determination Theory in this book does not imply an endorsement of this book from the authors of Self-Determination Theory or from any other work or approach that is referenced in this book.

Finally, as with any self-help book, effort is required.

www.coachingacademics.co.uk

Day 1: Introduction

This book is for you if you are feeling stuck with your PhD. Perhaps you are just getting underway with your PhD and wondering whether to quit now before you have even started with your research. Or maybe you have been soldiering on for months and years and are getting to the point where you want to put it all in the bin.

**What do you want to achieve by the time you finish this book?
Write this down.**

Day 2: Why Finish?

1. What are you looking forward to about completing your thesis?



2. What are the opportunities or consequences that may arise from these things?



3. What will these opportunities or consequences mean for your life?



4. What feelings come into play when you think about what this means in your life?



5. Using the above answers, summarise the things you are looking forward to achieving *and* feeling when you complete your thesis.

Day 3: Ready to Change?

Researchers, such as Prochaska & Velicer , have identified that change is a process that can take time. People go through different stages of being ready to make changes. Part of the change process that Prochaska & Velicer outlined is contemplation: Thinking about making the change.

Write a summary statement of how ready you are to address your motivation to work on your PhD.

Day 4: Visualise Finishing Your Thesis

Finishing your PhD may seem a long way off, but the day **WILL COME**.

The good news is that each step you take brings you closer to that day. Your vision board shows the “so what” of finishing. It offers you something to look at, energise and sustain you through the days ahead.

Notes for completing your vision board:

Day 5: Introduction to SDT

The motivation theory that this book is based around is *Self-Determination Theory (SDT)*.

There are several key components to Self-Determination Theory:

1. Extrinsic & Intrinsic Motivation;
2. Autonomy;
3. Competence; and
4. Relatedness.

Spend five minutes reflecting on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations you experienced during your most recent work day.

Day 6: Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

From an early age, we experience rewards and punishments. Our parents, our schools, society's justice system all draw on the carrot-and-stick approach. This is a source of extrinsic motivation. It is an approach that seeks to control behaviour: rewarding behaviour that is desirable and punishing behaviour that is undesirable.

Look at your vision board and reflect on the different drivers you experience when you work on your thesis.

Can you identify both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators?

What can you do to increase your sense of intrinsic motivation?

Day 7: What Motivated You?

Spend some time exploring what motivated you to start your doctoral work.

What intrinsic motivators can you identify for starting your PhD?

Can you identify the extrinsic motivators that contributed to you starting your PhD?

Day 8: Where Are You Now?

What aspects of your doctoral work do you find intrinsically motivating right now?

What extrinsic drivers are present for you right now?

What aspects of your doctoral work are you finding hard to get motivated?

Day 9: *Autonomy*

Humans are autonomous creatures. We thrive in being able to see the impact of our actions. Just think back to a major project or activity you completed - whether it was a DIY job, being involved in a performance, or even a major clean of your room! I bet at some point you took a step back and marvelled at the work you did, even just for a moment.

Take a moment to reflect on the last time something good happened to you - this can be in any area of your life, not just your research. Were you more likely to think it was down to luck, or hard work?

Day 10: Your Autonomy

What specifically about this issue feels out of your control?

Spend a moment reflecting on what is within your influence or control.

**Think about why these issues feel in or out of your control.
Spend some time writing these reasons down.**

Day 11: Competence

Ryan and Deci describe feeling competent as a basic psychological need that we need to have satisfied. We all need to feel capable of doing the activities and tasks required of us. We learn the skills required to undertake particular activities; we spend time practicing and our confidence grows as we master the new skills involved.

Think about those aspects of your doctoral work that you feel really skilled at doing. Where do you feel completely in the zone?

Day 12: Your Competence

Write out the specific components of the activity you feel challenged with.

Rate the task components according to their level of challenge for you.

Write a list of one to three doctoral activities you are great at doing!

Day 13: Relatedness

Relatedness is all about connection with others: our friendships, our family, our colleagues.

Good levels of relatedness mean we feel loved and cared for. We believe we matter to other people, such as our life partner or spouse, our friends, our family.

Reflect on the everyday interactions you have had (or not had) over the last week. How do they help create a sense of connection for you?

What links can you make between how connected you feel with others and the motivation to work on your thesis?

Day 14: Your Relatedness

How would you rate your sense of connection in this physical location?

**Reflect on why you choose this score for relatedness.
What do you think this tells you about your situation?**

It might be helpful to flesh out the rating you have given. Make some brief notes on the quality of relatedness you have in the space of motivational challenge.

Write two to three sentences summarising what you have learnt about the link between your motivational challenge and the connections you have (or don't have) where you work.

Day 15: Review & Reflect

What have you learnt about Self-Determination Theory?

How will nurturing intrinsic motivation help you with your doctoral work?

Finally, do you have any emerging ideas that can address your motivational difficulties?

Day 16: Values

Values are principles and ideals that are important to us.

**Take a moment to think about your values.
What is really important to you?**

**Think through 3 situations in which you did something specific.
Using the “why” questions, try to identify the underlying values in play.**

Situation 1:

Situation 2:

Situation 3:

Day 17: Values Underpinning Your PhD

What are some of the key values and factors for you in starting your doctoral work?

How do these inform the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators you identified on Day 7?

Day 18: Motivation Barriers (Part 1)

Reflect on how your motivation to work on your PhD has changed. How might this be a barrier to your work?

What role do values play in the motivational barriers you face?

Day 19: Motivation Barriers (Part 2)

What aspects of your doctoral work feel out of your control and impact your desire to work?

How does your sense of competency impact your motivation?

What motivational barriers does relatedness help you identify?

Day 20: Problem Statement (Part 1)

Write 2-5 lines describing this as a problem statement.

Write 2-5 lines describing the role of values in a problem statement.

Write 2-5 lines describing the role of autonomy in a problem statement.

Day 21: Problem Statement (Part 2)

Write 2-5 lines describing the role of competency as a problem statement.

Write 2-5 lines describing the role of relatedness as a problem statement.

Day 21: Problem Statement (Part 2)

Spend some time compiling the problem statements into one document.

Day 22: Prioritising Action (Part 1)

Having a priority is about being clear on what you are going to deal with first. You're more likely to be effective if you choose one or two areas to focus on at a time. Of course, this doesn't mean that you can't address all of the problem areas. It just means that it doesn't make much sense to try and deal with them all at the same time.

Which is more important to you:

- (i) Getting a quick win by focusing on one challenge you face; or**
- (ii) Dealing with the issue that has the biggest impact on your motivation.**

Explain your reasons.

Day 23: Prioritising Action (Part 2)

Score the problems in your problem statement for:

- Motivation Impact (1 = Low impact, 10 = High impact).
- Time to Solve (1 = Very slow, 10 = Very quick).

Prioritise the problems:

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

Is problem (a) one of competence, autonomy or relatedness?

Day 24: What Are Your Options?

Use this space to make notes on your options.

List your options here:

Day 25: Review Your Options

Score your options:

- **Ease of implementation (1 = very difficult, 10 = very easy)**
- **Likelihood of effectiveness (1 = not likely, 10 = very likely)**

Day 26: Putting Together a Plan

Describe the option you are choosing:

Break your option down into actions. Write down a deadline and identify potential barriers too.

Action 1:

Deadline:

Barriers:

Action 2:

Deadline:

Barriers:

Action 3:

Deadline:

Barriers:

Action 4:

Deadline:

Barriers:

Day 26: Putting Together a Plan

What are your ideal outcomes?

Identify alternative, contingency actions as part of your plan.

Day 27: Finding Accountability

Accountability can help provide the motivation to get on with the task and keep to the deadline you set. Without accountability and motivation, too often the goal lacks the priority to get one's attention and the necessary action to get it done.

Notes on your accountability plan:

Day 28: Celebration

Today is a time for making space to review and celebrate the progress you have made towards a greater motivation. One of the biggest gifts that coaching can give you is the gift of insight. Coaching provides people with a space to learn what is going on and get some clarity about it. How people use these insights is up to them.

What have you learnt about yourself in the last month?

How will this help you in the future?

How will you celebrate all your hard work?