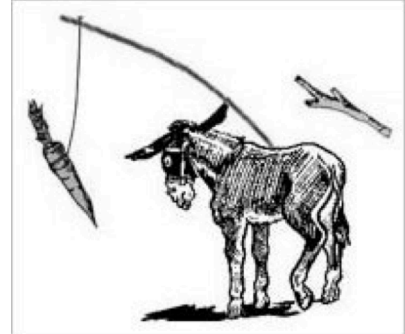

The Carrot or the Stick?

In high school, everything you do is timed down to the minute. Your teachers will remind you about every assignment; large assignments are divided up for you into manageable steps. When many students go to college, the freedom is shocking. Some students will skip weeks of class, telling themselves, “Oh, I’ll just make it up with a marathon work session later.” Of course, that rarely works.



You have to know your sources of motivation to get yourself to do work. Are you motivated more by rewards or by avoiding punishments? Take the following quiz:

Stick (Motivated by Avoiding Punishments or Disaster)

- Are you a procrastinator?
- Do you hit the snooze button often in the morning?
- Do you work in fits and starts?

Advice:

1. Work first thing in the morning, before you check email or your phone.
2. Keep a pen so that you can jot down ideas during the day.
3. Never, never, never multitask.

Carrot (Motivated by Rewards)

- Do you maintain an even pace when working?
- Is getting started on work easy for you?
- Do you plan out your day or week?

Advice:

1. Turn your work into a game. Create checklists and take short breaks every time you achieve a task.
2. Schedule time for friends, treats, and exercise. Honor the appointments like work.

Which pieces of advice will you try?

N.B. Everybody is a mixture of the two; it often depends on the task. High school was highly structured; students often have difficulty motivating themselves when they make the transition to college.
