Ways to Foster Happiness and Productivity as a Doctorate Student

As a doctorate student you may experience the all-too-common slump that most of us endure during rigorous coursework and preparation for dissertation. Indeed, a large number of students, suddenly faced with these daunting tasks, go through bouts of stress and anxiety. We all do! It’s normal and you can plan to alleviate both by implementing strategies and trusting the process.

So here are actionable tips for staying happy and productive whiling setting yourself up for doctoral student success!
Build Relationships and Networks

Relationships help reduce stress, bring enjoyment, and build resiliency. This is your opportunity to meet like-minded, motivated, and high-achieving individuals that can support you on your doctoral journey. Besides, whether you are getting paid to begin this endeavor or you are taking out student loans, you owe it to yourself to make these connections. Make sure when you walk out of your last immersion, in just two short years, that you’ve accumulated lasting friendships and business networks that will revel in your celebration.

Keep a Journal

Self-reflection is part of this process. Journaling helps gain momentum, processes ideas, and provides comfort. It will also help with the last few reflective pages of many assignments. Turn to journaling when you are faced with a blank screen or page! The journal is a ‘safe place’ where one can play without risk of failure or humiliation. Write when you are feeling anxious to get the emotions out and the solutions bubbling up. Writing is like a muscle. If you want to do it well you need to practice. Great writing is all about revision, feedback, and consistent rhythm.
Celebrate Success, No Matter How Small

Small wins along the way keep you motivated, put a smile on your face, and give you a sense of accomplishment. Don’t forget to set mini-goals along this path so you have several opportunities to celebrate! It’s important to celebrate with your current circle of relations but don’t forget to celebrate with your new found doctoral friends as they can relate to what you are going through. Celebrating can actually change your brain chemistry for the positive and well that’s just infectious!

Sleep

Sleep is your friend. Your body needs this time to rejuvenate and ready itself for the business of tomorrow. Naps can generate ideas and motivation...just sleep on it! While you will likely be busier than you have ever been it is important to establish a sleeping routine in order to keep your body happy and healthy. Lack of sleep, like a lack of food and exercise, can create all sorts of health problems.
Be Curious

Learn something new—and often. Putting yourself outside your comfort zone can spark new ideas, reduce stress, and help you feel comfortable about the learning process. New things can be as small as learning how to make homemade salsa to as large as learning how to windsurf. New things can also, in odd ways, provide a different way of looking at things — broaden your perspective!

Cultivate your hobbies and interests. Be sure to enjoy life during this journey.