

Level 7B

Fostering Motivation

Sometimes motivation can be harder to access when we are spending a lot of time in class without the immediate reward of performing or rehearsing.

1. Reward the Effort, Not Just the Outcome

It can be easy to wait for a performance, casting, or successful rehearsal to feel like your hard work is paying off.

Instead, practice noticing and rewarding the effort you are putting in along the way.

Examples:

- Showing up when you did not feel motivated
- Staying focused through a difficult combination
- Trying something uncomfortable
- Taking care of your body

2. Create Small Rewards

Rewards do not have to be big.

You can create small things that give you something to look forward to before, during, or after training.

Examples:

- Wearing an outfit that makes you feel confident
- Listening to music that puts you in a performance mindset
- Spending time with a friend after training
- Giving yourself something enjoyable to look forward to after a challenging class

These rewards are not about “bribing” yourself to dance.

They are about creating positive associations with the process of training.

Find Something to Explore

You do not always have to approach class with the goal of “getting it right.”

Sometimes motivation comes from curiosity.

You might experiment with:

- A different dynamic
- How you connect one movement to the next
- What changes when you stay more present

3. Connect the Moment to Something Bigger

Motivation often comes from remembering why the work matters.

A repetitive class may be helping you develop:

- Discipline
- Confidence
- Resilience
- Professional habits
- The ability to stay engaged even when you are not feeling motivated

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Audition Tape Process

Because the outcome is uncertain, it can be easy to become stuck in perfectionism or feel like every tape has to be your best tape ever.

One useful performance psychology strategy is to shift your focus from creating the perfect tape to creating a repeatable process.

1. Focus on the Process, Not the Selection

You cannot control whether you are cast.

You can control how you approach the audition.

Things you can control include:

- When you begin preparing
- How you warm up
- How you learn the choreography
- How you practice
- How you manage your energy
- How you film
- How many takes you choose to do
- How you respond to mistakes

2. Give Yourself a “Good Enough” Standard

One of the biggest challenges with audition tapes is knowing when to stop.

You may think:

“I could probably make it a little better.”

And then film it again.

And again.

And again.

At some point, additional attempts may stop improving the performance and start increasing anxiety, frustration, or self-consciousness.

Before you begin filming, decide what good enough means.

3. Separate “Dancer Brain” From “Editor Brain”

Trying to perform and critique yourself at the exact same time can make it difficult to fully engage.

When you are dancing, your job is to dance.

When you are reviewing the footage, your job is to evaluate.

Try not to constantly switch between the two.

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Importance of Peer Support

Peer support means intentionally connecting with other dancers and creating relationships where you can encourage, listen to, learn from, and support one another.

1. Connection

Dancers often experience challenges that can be difficult to explain to people outside of dance.

Sometimes simply knowing: “Someone else understands this.” can make a difficult experience feel less isolating.

2. Perspective

When we are in the middle of an audition, difficult class, or disappointing performance, it can be easy to see the situation from only one perspective.

A trusted peer can help us zoom out.

Support does not always mean telling someone what they want to hear.

Sometimes it means helping them see the situation more clearly.

3. Accountability

Our peers can also help us stay connected to the process.

This might look like:

- Practicing together
- Sharing goals
- Celebrating progress
- Reminding each other to take care of our bodies and minds

Accountability can make it easier to keep showing up when motivation is low.

4. Celebrate Each Other

Dance environments can sometimes become competitive.

It can be easy to compare ourselves to other dancers or feel that someone else's success takes something away from our own opportunities.

Peer support asks us to practice a different mindset:

Someone else's success is not evidence of my failure.

5. Be the Kind of Peer You Want to Have

Peer support is something we both receive and create.