**Five Types of Self-Control Strategies**

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**Self-control** is when we have the choice of doing something enjoyable or something that is not so enjoyable, but will benefit us in the long run.

**Here is an example**:

* You have thirty math problems to be completed by tomorrow afternoon; however, you started a new, addicting series on Netflix yesterday.
* **Do you choose** the more pleasurable option - watch Netflix, or the less pleasurable option - complete the math problems?

*What if* you said to yourself: “I’m just going to do it!” and did the math problems?

That’s called **response modulation**. It’s the most common type of willpower - just simply choosing to complete an activity. That is often not easy, but we can employ strategies to make that decision easier.

Angela Duckworth summarizes **four helpful strategies in boosting self-control** in her video (linked at the bottom). Let’s look at how each would apply to our Netflix v. math problems example:

1. **Situation selection**: choosing where you are
* Maybe you watch Netflix on your phone, computer, or TV. One place that usually has all of these things is your home or room. With situation selection, you can **choose** to put yourself in a **different environment** or area without those distractions.
* Ex. the campus library - you can use their computers instead and the environment may motivate you better to study!
1. **Situation modification**: changing where you are
* Maybe you really only enjoy studying in your room. Think about what could be **modified** in there to help you have better control over completing math problems over watching Netflix.
* Ex. turn your phone off, create a really complicated/hidden password for your Netflix account, ask your roommate to give you a couple hours of free time to focus.

1. **Selective attention**: focusing on something that will help you delay gratification
* With our example, you really want to choose to **focus and put your full attention** on those math problems instead of watching your show by *changing your* *behavior in that moment*.
* Ex. face your chair and body to your work (and away from distractions). If other objects come across your attention at this time that are tempting, do what you can to remove them from your focus – such as closing other computer tabs, or moving away other classwork that may be on your desk.
* What would this look like *in class*? Sitting up straight and directly facing any speakers with your shoulders; doing what you can to not give into temptations, such as looking at social media by putting your phone away when a notification pops up.
1. **Cognitive re-appraisal**: rethinking your situation
* **Look at your situation in a different way!**
* For example, if you finish your homework today, then you will have hours of time to watch Netflix tomorrow! Also, you will not have to rush and stress as the due date gets closer.
* A better math grade = contributes to a good GPA = graduation = career!

Using one or even of all these strategies can help you to have self-control over anything you do in your life!

Video: <https://www.characterlab.org/self-control>