Imagine: What if you could remove one bad habit and replace it with a good healthy habit that supports your efforts for college and career success, would this make a tremendous difference in your life?

No matter how motivated and confident we are, we need self-regulation skills and self-discipline to effectively reach our goals. **Self-regulation** is the set of skills that help us monitor and change/adapt our thinking, emotions and behavior(s) so we can reach our goals and fulfill our dreams (Sellers, Dohen, and Hodges, 2010, p. 139). **Self-discipline** is the process of teaching yourself to do what is necessary to reach your goals, without becoming sidetracked by bad habits (Waitley, 2009, p. 210).

For this “self-change” plan we are going to take a look at our “bad habits” that are getting in the way of our personal and college success. Then, we are going to consider a positive behavior (habit) that we could start to implement in place of the “problem”. **Start by reading the Appendix Section pp. 265-272 of the textbook**. Then ask yourself the following questions. Brainstorm for a few minutes:

a) What do you see as your worst habit that gets in the way of your success in school? Consider describing this “bad habit” in three ways....How you think when you decide to use the habit? How you feel prior to and during the habit? And how you behave (the actual habit)?

b) What negative effects (consequences) is this habit having on your life? Academic, career, personal, relationships, etc.

c) What “triggers” your bad habit? When does it most occur? Where does the habit occur? Who are we with (alone or with others)? In other words, think of the people, places, and things that trigger the bad habit? What are the precursors? Precipitating factors?

d) What emotional relief or reward do you get from the bad habit? What purpose does it serve?

e) What are the positive ways you could deal with the bad habit so to overcome it? In other words, what behavior (or thought process) could you add in place of the bad habit?

**Examples:** Stressed Out and Stress Reduction; Procrastination and Time Management; Shyness and Developing Social Skills; Lack of Motivation and Goal Setting; Poor Readings Skills and Improving Readings Skills, etc. (Note that you have a weakness paired with something to work towards developing)
Here’s what to address in your self-change essay:

1. Describe the specific behavior that you want to change and the new behavior you want to add to replace this bad habit. Describe in detail using the information from your brainstorming A-E. What “data” could you add to strengthen your description? See textbook pp. 265 “Step One” as you begin your description.

2. Find at least 2 reliable resources that can provide more information about your topic. Find at least one eBook or one article, and something on the internet that provides background on your topic which includes ideas for HOW to change. What is recommended and needed for you to really tackle the problem? In other words, what do the experts say? (You’ll need to cite and reference this in your paper.)

3. Discuss at least three reasons for wanting to make this change: What are the current consequences? What could be the long-term consequences? What will be the outcome(s) if you overcome this bad habit?

4. What steps are involved for overcoming this bad habit and implementing a new course of action? Design a contract. Make sure to include “reinforcements” and “punishments”. (See Appendix Section as before.) What new behaviors (thinking) will you add?

5. Anticipate what challenges and barriers you might face as you work on overcoming this bad habit (describe at least three). When considering barriers, think in terms of external things (people, work, family responsibilities etc.) and internal things (emotions, negative thinking) that might block your successful transformation (change). How will you deal with these barriers when they come up?

6. Who are the supportive people that can hold you accountable? Explain how you’ll involve others to help you with your change plan.

7. Work on your behavioral change plan for 2 weeks. Now, evaluate your progress. (See textbook page 271-272 to assist your evaluation.) Your evaluation will be an analysis of your efforts to change. What was the outcome? (If you didn’t change, share about this struggle.) If you didn’t do this part of the project, then, add in an analysis of your academic performance this semester and what you plan to do to improve into the future. End with what you plan to do next.

Formatting: APA or MLA style (whichever you are most familiar with)

Type of Font: Use plain text (New Times Roman) no italics or fancy styles

Size of Font: 12 Spacing: double Page Length: 2 - 3 pages (2 full pages is the minimum)

Proof Reading: You are expected to have another person review your paper for grammatical correctness.
