

Howdy Studyologers 😊

Two things I wanted to cover in today's email.

The **first** is pretty basic and is that we are running Studyology this semester, kicking off the week of 12th August. If you wanted to re-connect with the program again, you are very welcome. Just register via the [jotform](#) and you'll get included in ongoing conversations about which days/times work best (currently it is a choice between Monday and Friday morning).

The **second** is a bit more conceptual.

I did a presentation to med students recently in which I talked about self-care and mental health. I talked about how there are many self-care activities we can engage in that likely will improve our mental health. Where people often run into trouble is not so much the knowing what things are mentally healthy, but relate more to implementation - how can I get myself to do (and keep doing) the things that are good for me? This would characterise much of my experience around exercise. Since my early 20's I've basically known that exercise is good for you, and been aware of different types of exercise I could do, but getting myself to do it reliably is another thing altogether. This is a little bit of the challenge with procrastination as well. We know what work needs to be done and often know how to go about doing it but still fail to go ahead in a timely and beneficial way.

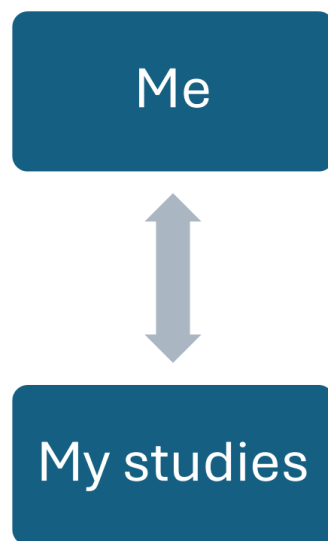
Reflecting back on the successes and failures I've had with establishing healthy habits in my life, I noticed that successes often had a catalysing agent of some kind. Often that was a person. I went to the gym when I was doing my PhD, because my uni friend wanted to go as well. I started doing work in the area of reconciliation because a colleague invited me into the space. I gave up alcohol because a colleague engaged me in a convincing story of the benefits to them and I liked it as a point of connection between us.

But the catalysing agent isn't always a person. It could be a place (I work well at home because I have created an inviting study), an object (I ride my bike occasionally because I decked it out with a silly container that I could carry things in) or a role (I started working more efficiently when I clarified my professional role).

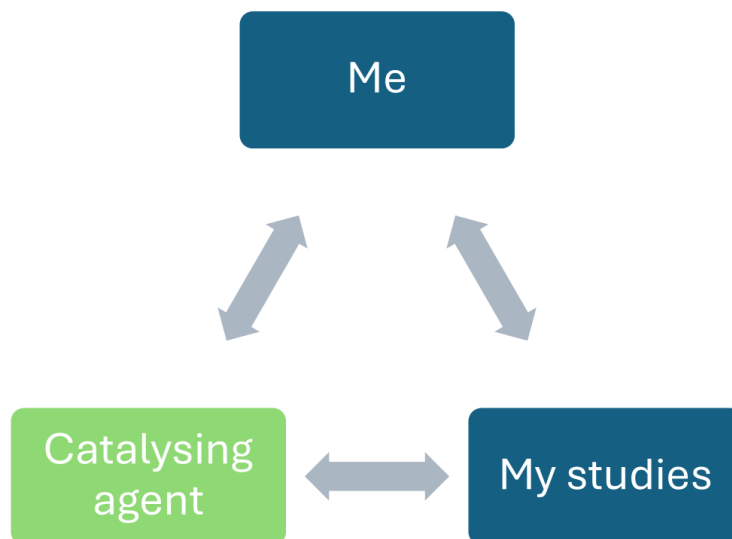
The catalysing agent could also be a connection with a higher power (e.g. spirituality), a higher purpose (e.g. a personal mission), a big goal or a personal value you hold deeply.

When you think about the activities on which you procrastinate, could it be that an important catalysing agent is missing? It might be as simple as organising a few co-working sessions with a peer, where the emerging friendship catalyses your respective interests in the topic and academic life in general. It might involve creating a working space that is inviting, comfortable and relaxing, so that when you inhabit that space, you are primed to read and learn. It could be better connecting with your future self (as we discussed in the last email) and realising and articulating that there is a bigger mission to being here at uni, than simply the daily mission of doing the work.

Basically instead of just focusing on the relationship between you and your studies....



Focus on finding a catalysing connection that encompasses and energises both.



As for what might be a suitable catalysing agent for you specifically, look back over your life at times when you did follow through with difficult but important activities. Can you find the catalysing agents in this previous experiences?

Even this distribution list might act as a mild catalyst. By receiving these emails, you are part of a community of people who are trying to work more effectively and efficiently (a shared goal). Down the track, I'll try to make this community more interactive, so it isn't just you receiving emails.

Anyway, those are my thoughts for this email. Always happy to receive reflections, questions or challenges to the content.

Take care

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