



### RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies *(Continued)*

Paul

Paul is a recent high school graduate who has just reluctantly signed up for a workout program at his local gym. He passed his basic paramedic training, but two weeks ago had to take a fitness test before he could proceed to the next stage. Unfortunately, he failed the test. He does not see himself as a sporty type and has never done much exercise except when he had to in his school days. After the fitness test, the station commander called him into his office and told him in no uncertain terms that if he fails to pass the test within three months he will be out. Paul is not too happy about it: “I really don’t see why you have to be all that fit to be a paramedic. Alright, the job can be physically demanding at times, lugging patients up and down stairs and things, but I think I am well capable of handling it as I am. I mean, it’s not as if I’m training for the Olympics, is it? Still, I have no choice really but to do as I am told.”

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### RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies (*Continued*)

Hans

Hans is a civil engineer in his forties. He works out at a local gym a couple of times a week and is trying, fairly successfully, to go jogging regularly. He has two young children. Hans has a family history of heart disease and this has been weighing heavily on his mind in recent years. Although he was quite physically active in his youth, as an adult he did little exercise for many years until the children came along. He gave up smoking at around the same time. Hans says: “My father, uncle, and grandfather all died of heart disease in their early sixties. I can’t afford to let it happen to me, what with a wife and two young kids to worry about. So I exercise as much as I reasonably can. I can’t say I particularly enjoy it, and I usually have to push myself to go. But if I feel like skipping a session, I just think about the kids and what would happen if I had a heart attack. That makes me feel really bad if don’t go, like I’m guilty of letting them down.”

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**RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies (Continued)**

David

David had a hard time socially as a child and as an adolescent. He was timid, small, and skinny and was frequently bullied. Although he liked sports in school, he never got the chance to participate outside of compulsory physical education lessons because the school coaches didn't consider him to be capable enough. He always looked up to his older brother, who was a competitive weightlifter and wrestler. On graduating from high school a few years ago, David was taken to a gym a few times by his brother, and he also became interested in bodybuilding. He now trains hard and regularly and his social life has been transformed from his high school days. He has lots of friends, both male and female, and seems to others to be a very confident and self-assured young man. David says: "I hated it as a youngster, being smaller than everyone and never being taken seriously. Now I'm strong and, well, I think I look good and I'm proud of that. It's important to me to look fit and strong and have a good physique. People give me respect and sort of look up to me now like they never did before. When I was a kid it was like I wanted to be someone else all the time. You know, to be like one of the bigger boys who was good at sports and popular and all that. Now it's other people who look at me and say to themselves, 'Hey, look at him, I wish I could look like that.' I would never have come to feel so good about myself if it weren't for the bodybuilding."

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### RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies *(Continued)*

Sheila

Sheila was a teacher but retrained a few years ago as a fitness instructor. She runs classes every evening and on weekends and also trains in the gym most days. She is highly committed to exercise and sees it as the centre point of her lifestyle: “For years, working as a teacher, I used to exercise as much as I possibly could but never felt I was doing enough. So that’s why I gave up teaching and got into this new career. I know what you’re thinking, but it’s definitely not that I am addicted to exercise or obsessive about it or anything like that. It’s just that, well, it’s hard to explain, but being an exerciser, being a fit person, is a big part of who I am, if you see what I mean. If I had to stop tomorrow, it wouldn’t exactly be the end of the world but it would mean that I’d have to do some serious thinking about my life and I’d find it difficult to readjust. It sounds silly, but it’d be a bit like losing my name or something. I wouldn’t know who I was any more.”

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### RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies *(Continued)*

Lenin

Lenin is a construction worker. He loves physical activity of all sorts. He usually plays basketball or racquetball once a week, runs often (he takes part in his city's annual 10 km fun run every year). "I've always been into sport and exercise," he says. "It's not as if I'm really all that good at it. I mean, I never had any illusions about playing professionally or anything like that. It's just great to go out and kick a ball around or run in the park or whatever, have a laugh with your friends, and just forget about work and everything for a bit. I love it." When asked if he thinks exercising is good for your health, he says: "Well, yeah, I suppose it must be. But that's not what it's all about for me, to be honest. I don't worry too much about the future and all that, you know. I just like having a good time. I mean, if I started thinking like, 'Oh, this'll stop me from getting a heart attack,' or whatever, I think it would end up being just like work. I'd hate to get all obsessed about it like some people. It wouldn't be any fun then, would it?"

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## RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies\* (Answer Key)

### Regulatory Behaviours Reflected in the Mini-Biographies

Clearly, the people featured in the mini-biographies all have very different feelings and beliefs about exercise. Apart from Beth, they are all engaging in exercise but the motivational forces driving their behaviour differ markedly. In other words, their exercise behaviour (or lack of it) is regulated in quite diverse ways.

**Beth** lacks intrinsic motivation to change. Beth is said to be *amotivated*, a completely non-self-determined form of regulation. This is a state of lacking any intention to engage in a behaviour. It results from not valuing the activity, not feeling competent to engage in it, and/or not feeling that it will produce any desired outcomes. Beth's school history probably left her feeling incompetent with regard to exercise. She does not believe that she would benefit from exercising and, in fact, she thinks that it might actually be harmful to her health. Consequently, it is not surprising that she does not value physical activity and chooses not to exercise at all.

**Paul** is extrinsically motivated. Paul has started to exercise, but it is very obvious that, like Beth, he does not value it as a worthwhile activity. His exercise behaviour can be described as *externally regulated* and is also not self-determined. He is exercising simply because he has been told by someone in authority that he has to, even though he thinks that it is not necessary. When regulated in this way, people may be motivated to comply with the external pressure to act but they do so unwillingly, even resentfully, and are unlikely to continue with the activity if the external pressures are relaxed.

**Hans** has extrinsic motivation and some intrinsic motivation. Hans is not exercising because of externally imposed pressures but because he is putting the pressure on himself. Thus, his behavioural regulation is somewhat internalized and can be said to be *introjected*. He acts because of his anxieties about heart disease and an anticipated sense of guilt that if he does become ill he will be letting down his young family. Thus, although Hans is internally driven, his behaviour is only somewhat self-determined.

**David** has strong intrinsic motivation. David's story demonstrates how *introjection* can also manifest itself as a need to engage in an activity in order to demonstrate one's ability or worth and maintain one's sense of self-esteem. David believes that bodybuilding has changed his life and given him the popularity with his peers that he always wanted, but only because it has made him look good. So, although he now has a strong sense of self-worth, it is highly dependent on his bodybuilding activities. If he were unable to continue with this activity for some reason, it seems likely that his self-esteem would soon begin to suffer.

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\* Source: Markland, David. "The Behavioural Regulation in Exercise Questionnaire—The Theory." *Exercise Motivation Measurement*. 2007. <[www.bangor.ac.uk/~pes004/exercise\\_motivation/breg/theory.htm](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/~pes004/exercise_motivation/breg/theory.htm)>. Adapted with permission.



### RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies: Answer Key (Continued)

**Darlene** has strong intrinsic motivation. Darlene’s exercise behaviour is less controlled and shows much greater self-determination. Her behavioural regulation is *identified*. Identification involves a conscious acceptance of the behaviour as being important in order to achieve personally valued outcomes. The importance of the outcomes provides a strong incentive that overrides any difficulties or obstacles to the behaviour. Thus, Darlene manages to find time to exercise regularly even though she finds it difficult to fit it into her busy school and work life.

**Sheila** has strong intrinsic motivation. Sheila is obviously a very committed exerciser—so much so that she changed careers in order to be able to exercise more. Her regulation can be described as *integrated*. Integration involves the internalization of identified regulation so that engaging in the behaviour matches one’s sense of self and who one is. Integration is similar to intrinsic regulation in that the behaviour is engaged in willingly, with no sense of coercion, and is therefore fully self-determined. However, it differs from intrinsic regulation because the behaviour is still engaged in for separable outcomes rather than for the enjoyment inherent in the activity itself. Note the subtle difference between Sheila’s feelings about why she exercises and David’s feelings about his exercising. Although exercising is so important to Sheila’s sense of who she is, her self-esteem is not on the line in the way that it is for David.

**Lenin** has strong intrinsic motivation. Lenin’s motivation for exercise is purely *intrinsic* and fully self-determined. Although he recognizes the health benefits of exercise, he is not concerned about such extrinsic outcomes of exercising; he just loves doing it as a social and aesthetic experience. Notice also that his competence in physical activities is not a big issue for him. The immediate rewards of taking part in exercise are the only important factors, and if exercising were to become a chore or like work, as he puts it, there would no longer be any point in doing it.