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Maintain Motivation with Ease

By Alice Wheaton

Imagine a new franchise where you can casually drop in and purchase a quart of motivation. However attractive this concept might be, we know we cannot get our motivation topped up by a source outside ourselves. There is no commercial supply because it is impossible to replicate the human will. According to Webster's Dictionary, the meaning of the word *motivate* is *to furnish with a motive; to impel; to induce a person to act in a certain way*. *Motive* is also defined as *that which incites action; that which determines the choice or moves the will*.

That which impels or induces one person to act may not even be of interest to another. Since employers spend the majority of their operating budget on employee wages, they want their staff to be motivated and able to achieve great things, or at the very least do their jobs competently. Many systems claim to be fail-proof motivational tools, but, in reality, there are no standard ways to motivate.

One method of motivating is to create a compensation structure in which employees who achieve more are paid more. If asking employees to achieve at a certain level does not work, the next step is for the company to show them how to achieve. If after training, an individual remains unproductive, then you could conclude that he/she is truly unmotivated.

Typically, the unmotivated person:

- Needs direction for each step of any project.
- Is inclined to find fault with the system, the manager, and/or the product, but is not inclined to do a self-assessment to find the cause of the problem.
- Does not attempt to improve skills in other areas, i.e., resist cross training. They often say *It is not my job* or *That is not in my job description*.
- Maintains an indifferent attitude, even if some aspects of their work are quite successful.
- Is unresponsive to new ideas and resists change.
- Is most comfortable with those who are similarly inclined.

On the other hand, top performers:

- Want what they want with desperation; they feel this need to their core.
- They also have the ability to detach in a way that allows them to remain focused regardless of the outcome.
- They do not depend on circumstances or the people in their lives to cause them to become motivated.
- When they have a problem, they are quick to perform a self-assessment. They run through an inventory of personal skills and attitudes to see if they lack any of the Six D's of Success—The True Motivational Factor:

The Six D's of Success – Values that Support Your Ongoing Self-Motivation

- **Detachment:** Pursue your dreams with all your heart, but be prepared to detach from the inevitable setbacks.
- **Discipline:** Do the right thing because it is the right thing to do, not because it is easy or fun.
- **Desperation:** Desperation is the unstoppable combination of fear and motivation.
- Desperation can make one truly willing to do whatever is necessary.
- **Direction:** Study others and learn from everyone. At the very least, you will learn how not to do something.
- **Desire:** Accept that you are a work in progress, and have an honest craving to know, be, and achieve more.
- **Determination:** Determination is an unwavering focus on your vision. Understand that you have the right to achieve your dreams. If something has not been done, it simply means you are the one to do it now.

Where are you in each of these six areas? Is there room for improvement? Nurturing these six qualities will provide you with the ability to stay motivated for longer periods.

Motivation is Highly Personal

Your motivation is highly unique and personal; no one but you can motivate you...it must come from within. The most you can expect from others is to gain inspiration and direction. When you interpret these truths in terms of your own personality, you can increase your desire, determination, direction, desperation, discipline, and detachment so that you can achieve more. When attempting to motivate ourselves or inspire others it is important to remember these points:

1. Destiny is not pre-determined.
2. Every behavior, positive or negative, is purposeful. Ask yourself *What is my purpose in doing/not doing this?*
3. Our purpose, or that which truly impels us, is often buried or hidden. We need to search within ourselves.

Changing behavior, even from negative to positive, will generate fear. Fear is the first response to change, even if the change is positive. As we become more and more willing to move outside our comfort zone, we are rewarded with increased competence and higher performance. What we learn in one area of life, we can transfer to other areas. Increased happiness is the result. One of the main attributes common to successful people is their ability to recognize their own aptitudes, skills, and abilities, even if others do not. The following table presents the *attitudes of aptitude* of employees who succeed, even if their work conditions that are less than ideal.

Attitudes of Aptitude

- Creativity: the ability to think of more than one solution.
- Stress tolerance: the ability to manage perceptions of the situation.
- Personal insight: the ability to perceive both strengths and weaknesses.
- Communication skills: the ability to ask questions, listens, and provides feedback.
- Self-direction: the ability to perceive one's self-worth independently of the views of other people yet is receptive to suggestions for improvement and critical feedback.
- Self-motivation: the ability to look within for energy and initiative, and to be inspired by one's own personal goals and thoughts.
- Independence: the ability to work alone, yet understand the benefit of learning from co-workers; being willing to seek advice knowing that no one has all the answers.
- Utilitarian: the tendency to expect that everything one is involved in be of some value and eventually generates improved outcomes.

Inspiration, not Motivation, is the Answer

The question that begs to be asked is *Where can inspiration be sourced?* This simple question might be the fuel that ignites all further action. The sources of inspiration are many, and may be mentored (for the lucky few) or self-mentored (for the resilient). Self-mentoring is the ability to seek ideas and instruction from books, tapes and the history of people who have achieved their dreams. If one person has achieved similar dreams, so can you!

Motivation versus Fearful Odds

Continual motivation is the key to success. From personal experience, I know there is more to motivation than the dictionary definition. To achieve our goals, we need the willingness to feel the pain, to feel discomfort—to pay the price to get the job done. The most successful people are able to live with fear, uncertainty, and ambiguity, and still move forward. There is more to motivation than positive thinking: we need the ability to move forward in the face of negative thinking, overwhelming fear, discomfort, doubt, and insecurity. Positive thinking, without action, even imperfect action is tantamount to failure.

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