

10 Simple Ways to Motivate Yourself Every Day

Taking charge of your day so you can motivate yourself in 2016.



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IMAGE: Getty Images

There are myriad psychology models and theories on what motivates us to do the things we do: how we respond to incentives, achievement theories, and so on.

I look at motivation as excitement. So how can you remain motivated in a simple way that works every single day? Here are 10 ways.

1. Take a break--you deserve it.

The only way we can perform at an optimal level is create time for rest. The moment you know you can't take any time off is usually when you need it most.

So take that long delayed vacation, and return to your business with renewed enthusiasm.

2. Keep your cards close to your chest.

Finally running that marathon? Excited about your new diet? Bursting at the seams over your new project? Good. Keep it to yourself.

Announcing your intent to do these feats will backfire. Resist the urge to reap the barrage of Facebook likes, and gushing comments. The positive feedback you receive from your network will trick your brain into thinking you've already accomplished your goal, sabotaging your once-motivated brain to do said feat.

So keep it to yourself and share the good news once you've already done it.

3. Confront death, and define your legacy.

Death is a powerful motivator. We get bogged down in mindless activities. They make us feel like we're accomplishing things, when in reality we're just spinning in circles.

Knowing that you have finite time on this planet helps sharpen your focus. Everything we do is another step in defining our legacy. This may seem like heady posturing, but both can be powerful motivators.

4. Celebrate the little wins, no matter how small.

Little wins may seem like just that--little.

Celebrating these wins can help to create positive habits. You break the inertia of mediocrity by teaching everyone around you how to win. They get the chance to bask in that emotion.

Vishen Lakhiani, CEO of Mindvalley, has gone so far as implementing what he calls the "awesome bell." Which he rings (you guessed it) anytime something awesome happens.

5. Slash your to-do list in half.

Slashing your aggressive to-do list in half will allow room for success. Knowing that it's realistic for you to complete the list is empowering.

6. Be gentle with yourself.

Stop comparing the accomplishments in your life with those of your neighbor. The story you create in your head will never be as good, and the reality will never be as bad.

There are many people who are smarter than you. The moment you can embrace this notion, you're free. Free to explore. Free to follow what excites you. Free to ignore what they do, or how they do it, and focus on you.

7. Hack the way your brain perceives your new habits.

Recently, I began waking up two hours earlier than usual during the week. Instead of viewing it as two hours less I get to sleep, I view it as two extra hours to my day, allowing me to add a full workday per week.

8. Embrace vulnerability.

We live in a culture where we horde Instagram followers and Facebook likes. The perception of our lives being anything less than perfect is a daunting notion. The glossy Facebookification of our lives can create a dangerous facade of success.

Sharing defeats and admitting failure is a powerful cultivator of motivation, allowing you to move past the failure. Work through the emotion instead of taking it out on someone else. Then move on to something more constructive.

Sharing these vulnerable moments also cultivates deeper connection with peers.

9. Do what you love (sort of).

Find what it is you love to do and get proficient at it. Success dwells at the fulcrum of passion and excellence.

But be careful. Make sure that you can make a living from your passion. I'm passionate about a lot of things that I know I'm not so amazing at and that I definitely can't make a living at. I love playing guitar. My daughter loves when I play songs from the movie *Frozen*. It's fun. I'm never going to be a rock star.

10. Focus.

There is an anecdote I've heard about Warren Buffett, Bill Gates, and Gates's father at a dinner party. A guest asked them what the most important quality for success was today and all three responded "Focus" at the same exact time. They all smiled and laughed to each other because they hadn't really prepared the answer.

We are all inundated with texts and emails. These are no longer just work interruptions. Because of the mini-computers we carry around in our pockets, the flood of information distracts us wherever we happen to be, 24/7.

So turn off your iPhone, stop trolling your ex-lover's Facebook page, and get to work.