Inge Dowden Coaching

Business Success & Happiness



A Guide to **Motivation**

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20 Things you can do
to motivate yourself and others

Whether it's in our personal lives or in our business, we all need to motivate ourselves now and again. Usually we have no trouble being motivated when it comes to doing things we love, but when we have to do tasks that are not particularly pleasant or interesting, we need that extra motivation.

That is the difference between **internal** and **external** motivation. When we are internally motivated, it means that we do the things because we enjoy them, or because we really want to do them. Most hobbies and leisure activities are based on this. You go to the football because you want to support your team and enjoy spending time with your mates, not because someone makes you go there. And when you're training for a marathon, you are quite happy to put in all the training because you want to feel the achievement of completing it or improving your time.

External motivation comes from outside. It is controlled or given by others and includes things such as praise and salary. Most people's jobs are based on external motivation, although it certainly helps when you love at least certain aspects of your job. You may not been internally motivated to complete that report on the latest sales figures, but when you get praise from your boss and people comment on how clear it was, it makes you feel good and you are more likely to enjoy it.

And this is the key really. If you want to be super motivated, and have a team of enthusiastic and motivated people working for you, you need to have a **strategy** that encourages **both** internal and external motivation.

Here are **20** things you can do to motivate yourself and in turn also help others motivate themselves (sometimes known as “motivating others”).

1. Set goals

Setting **exciting** goals is the single most important thing you can do to help you be successful at anything, including motivation.

If you know where you want to go, you can work out how to get there. It’s the old “where there is a will there is a way”. Most people believe that, but often they focus too much on the way (i.e. the how to achieve their goals) rather than the will (i.e. why they want it in the first place). If you really want something badly, you’ll do anything to get it. However, if there isn’t the want or the need, things don’t happen.

Listen out for what you’re saying: if you hear yourself say things like “I should really do this” or “I ought to do that” stop it. If you don’t WANT to do it or NEED to do it, forget about it.

2. Be clear about your values

Know what’s important to you and make sure those values are not compromised. If honesty is one of your top values, and you’re being made to deceive people (maybe you work in an insurance company and are being told by your superiors that all claims are denied in the first instance), you will feel very unmotivated very quickly.

So what are your **top** values? There is a really good exercise called the “be-do-have list” which can help you uncover what is most important to you. Briefly it goes like this: write down all the things you want to be, do and have, and then pick the three

that are most important to you. You can pick no more than three, which will make you focus on the things that are really important.

3. Make a vision board

Once you know what you want and what's important to you, you can make a vision board. This is a **visual representation** of your goals. Get creative. Take a piece of A3 paper, get a load of magazines and start cutting out images that best represent the goals you are trying to achieve, in all of the areas of your life. Stick them on the paper and put it up where you can see it every day. Your brain will be imprinted with the images and find ways to make your dreams come true. It's the ultimate motivational tool and great to use with staff as well! Because once you know what motivates them, you can use when **you** want to motivate them.

4. Use a satisfaction monitor

If you get into the habit of giving yourself a score on a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied you are with certain areas of your life, it is then recommended to keep a satisfaction monitor so you can track your progress. Make a graph with dates on the horizontal and scores on the vertical axis and measure regularly.

In fact, you can measure anything you want and create a "gold star chart". You may think this only works on children, but it is still effective when you're working with adults. It's another way to visually represent progress and achievement, which is what people need to see in order to **stay** motivated.

5. Change your attitude to undesirable tasks

Reorganising your filing cabinet may not be the most motivating task you can set yourself, but being an organised and competent person is. **Link** the non-motivating task to something that does motivate you, and you will find yourself more motivated.

6. Break your tasks into smaller pieces

It's the old "How do you eat an elephant?" question and the answer is "Bit by bit". When you have to do a seemingly insurmountable task, break it down into smaller, **more achievable** tasks. Instead of looking at your database of 5000 people and aiming to contact them all within a year, set yourself a daily task of contacting 10 people per day.

7. Build in accountability

Tell a colleague, friend or superior about your task as it can help to motivate you if you know that someone else is expecting you to complete it. Set yourself a **deadline** if needed and tell others about it.

8. Master time management

This is a big one, as it's one of the most common complaints people have: "I don't have enough time." However, there are so many applications out there that can help you manage your time better, that it's worth investigating them. Use electronic diaries, synchronise with your phone, build in free time as a buffer, make to-do lists (or "done" lists), prioritise your tasks and make sure you do the most important things first. Also learn to say "**No**".

9. Don't procrastinate

Low motivation often goes hand in hand with procrastination. Again, it's a big one that many people struggle with and there are lots of techniques to help you overcome it. If you know that you suffer from this, check them out. Here's a very simple technique: whenever you feel you're procrastinating, don't think about it too much, and think "just do it". Get yourself a Nike logo from somewhere and put it up in front of you so you're constantly reminded.

10. Eat that frog

This is a very good technique to help you with motivation and procrastination.

Question: “If you had to eat a live, ugly, frog, when would be the best time to do that?”
Answer: “First thing in the morning so you don’t have to look at it all day.”

The frog represents the item on your to-do list that is very important, yet somehow unpleasant. You know that if you did this, it would make a big difference to your life or your business. So, identify which item on your list is a frog, and then do that one **first**. You’ll be amazed at the difference this makes.

11. Reward yourself

If you have to do something you don’t particularly like and you’re not necessarily getting a reward from someone else, give yourself one! Have a piece of cake with your coffee, buy those shoes you wanted, or treat yourself to a massage. Whatever it is, it needs to be something that is motivating for **you**. If you’re in a position where you can give rewards to others, do so regularly. They don’t have to be big; you’d be surprised what the odd KitKat can achieve.

12. Scare yourself with the negative consequences of not doing it

Sometimes you don’t need a carrot, you need a stick. Imagine what would happen if you didn’t do this task. Would you lose your job? A lot of money? Your reputation? Thinking about the negative consequences can have its place when it comes to motivation (just make sure you don’t get into a negative thinking spiral).

13. Swap tasks with someone else

This works great when you have colleagues. The task that you hate might be something they don't mind, whereas you might take on some of their tasks. Use each other's needs, talents and interests to work more effectively. As a manager you should always try to give people tasks that they are naturally good at and interested in, as this will certainly help you get the most out of them much more easily.

14. Keep a record of positive thoughts

Keep a list of goals you've achieved, compliments you've received, things that are going well, things you're proud of and things you're thankful for. Then, when you're not feeling particularly motivated one day, look at them and you'll instantly feel better.

15. Surround yourself with positive people

Positive thinking is very powerful and a lot easier when you're around positive people. They can support and encourage you to keep on trying when things are tough. Remember: you can choose to listen to the positive people or you can choose to listen to the negative people. Both of them are out there, it's just a matter of who you focus on. So why not focus on the positive ones? It will make you feel a whole lot better and like anything is possible (which it is by the way).

16. See disappointments or mistakes as learning opportunities

A mistake or a failure is just an event. However, if you let it define you (i.e. "I'm a failure"), it will. Instead, see every disappointment as a learning opportunity. Ask yourself "What have I learned from this?" and "What will I do differently next time?" Once you're able to do this, you'll find life a whole lot easier. Don't be afraid to fail either, as it's from your mistakes that you learn the most (and yes, you learn more from your own mistakes than from others').

17. Have a higher purpose

Do something that isn't just for you. Support a charity, volunteer at your local community centre or look after elderly relatives. The satisfaction that you will get from these activities will be infinitely greater than anything you could ever get from money or success. When you are able to build this into your daily life, you will find it easy to be motivated.

This certainly also works on a business level. Nowadays it is no longer a luxury or a bonus to support charities as a company; it is a necessity if you want to attract the brightest and most motivated people. Corporate responsibility is the buzz word and you ignore it at your peril. However, if you are operating ethically, supporting local business as well as faraway communities, you will find greater success at every level.

18. Be part of a team

Even when you work on your own, it is good to surround yourself with other people. This can be through business networking or simply by playing a team sport. If you're in business with others, make sure that your team consists of different personalities, and that they are all working together. Build on each other's strengths and support the other person's weaknesses. "Being part of a team" is one of the reasons people will stay in otherwise mundane or even uninteresting jobs, so make sure that your team is operating as such.

19. Take inspiration from others

You don't have to do it all by yourself. Look at people who are highly motivated and see what you can do to "copy" them. Write down inspirational quotes and pin them on the notice board. Listen to motivational speakers and go to conferences and talks. Buy books and see films that inspire and motivate you.

20. Take a break

If you're really stuck and feel completely unmotivated to do anything, take a break. If you're in an office, go outside for 5 minutes, get a drink (water or coffee), move around, take a couple of deep breaths and let it all go. Think about that exciting end goal and think about something that makes you smile and then go back in and be motivated. It's a simple as that!

So there you are, 20 ways to motivate yourself and others. I hope that you will find this guide useful. You may not do everything on the list, but just pick the things that you find the easiest or the most attractive. The single most important thing you can do though is to make sure that you have an exciting goal that you can constantly refer back to. So if you do only one thing from this list, let that be the one.

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A little bit about me:

I'm the Business Growth and Happiness Coach, specialising in leadership and staff motivation. I am passionate about everyone being happy and successful at work, be that as a business owner or an employee. Because when you are happy, you are more motivated, creative and action orientated, which in turn makes you more successful.

Owners and employees of small businesses who want to grow their business locally, nationally or even internationally and who realise that they need to be at their very best, are my typical clients. I use the DISC personality profiling system to help people understand themselves and others, become better communicators and avoid conflicts in the workplace.

Based in Bristol, I'm also an accredited Growth Accelerator Coach with Oxford Innovation.

Author of "*The Happy Worker: how to find a job you love and love the job you have*", available on Amazon and from **www.thehappyworker.co.uk**.

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