

Mastery of Motivation!

Getting — and Staying — Motivated by Following Your Personal Plan

Every one of us, at one point or another, could use an extra dose of motivation. The keys to staying motivated are as follows: write goals that tap into your passions; review those goals regularly; measure and compare your progress toward your goals; and lastly, surround yourself with positive influences.



GET CONNECTED TO YOUR GOALS

What do you really want? What are you working toward in your work, family, physical and spiritual life? Think big. Choose one area you want to grow in and work on that.

Short-term "sprints" toward long-term objectives

Most professional marathoners don't think about their races as 26.2 mile runs, they think of them as an accumulation of smaller sprints (with a dash for the finish at the end). By breaking down your objectives into smaller goals, or sprints, you make them more psychologically attainable, as well as less monumental and massive.

Build your plan

Use your sprints to build a plan that consists of measurable activities. Write them down on a calendar. By building your plan and reviewing it regularly, you'll be able to keep your focus and turn down opportunities that might otherwise pull you away from your goals.

MEASURE AND COMPARE

You can't improve what you don't measure, so make sure your sprints are specific and measurable.

You can control activities, but not results

Sometimes, no matter how closely you have followed your action plan, you still miss the mark. Why is this? Since your goals are a stretch for you, you can't envision the exact outcome. Times like these are when it is most important to adhere to your plan. If you do, and are consistent, you'll eventually experience your desired growth, but in a deeper and more powerful way.

Stay disciplined

By consistently pushing toward your goals, you'll develop mental muscle memory — the stuff that pulls you through when sticking to your plan gets tough.

MAKE MOTIVATION YOUR LIFESTYLE

What are you reading, listening to and watching? Everything that you choose to surround yourself with is an influence on your behavior, so consider your lifestyle.

Calendar events

Plan now to attend positive, goal-affirming events. By putting events on your calendar in advance, you'll be able to evaluate last minute invitations much better and won't be tempted by every invitation.

Journal

Journaling is key to keeping your life — and plan — in perspective. In addition to providing time for you to reflect on each day, it is also an invaluable opportunity to gain a true perspective on yourself. After a year or two, you'll be able to look back at your writing as an objective observer and see how far your motivation has taken you.

A Bit of Work and a Plan – A Motivation Worksheet

Where's your passion?

When have you felt driven to achieve something? What was the driving force? What passion or purpose do you have that makes your mundane things worth doing?

Take some time to write down a few overall objectives for the year in various areas of your life (work, family, finances, etc.).

Tip: When writing your goals, decide what your big passions are and connect those to the mundane parts of your life. You might not be passionate about filing expense reports or being pleasant with the rudest of customers, but doing those things with finesse might provide you with the financial means to participate in the things you're passionate about. By thinking of your passion when at your job, you'll motivate yourself toward excellence.

Sprints – What are you going to do for the next 90 days?

Take each goal and break it down into tasks that you can accomplish over the next 90 days. You achieve these 90-day goals in order to move toward your objectives.

If you only look at the long term picture, it's easy to fall into the trap of being overwhelmed; but by creating sprints you'll be able to keep up your momentum.

Build Your Plan

Take the tasks you outlined above and put them into a calendar of the next 90 days. Every morning, clear out a few minutes of your time to review your goals and identify action steps that you can take during that day. Keep track of the tasks you accomplish every day, and remember to reward yourself along the way.

The Motivation Lifestyle

Do an intake inventory of what you read, listen to and watch. Can you think of other resources for more positive input?

Keep a journal in order to track your progress. Make a habit of reflecting on each day by writing the following:

- What you did
- How you felt
- What you thought