

A Different Take On Motivation

Identifying the sources of energy boosts and drains in your life.

Motivational raw material.

Most discussions about motivation center around how to get more motivated so you can experience greater success. Here, we're going to turn that notion on its head and show how your current level of motivation actually provides the raw material for determining how to create better results.

For many, the word motivation conjures up visions of inspirational speakers whipping their audiences into a frenzy that leaves them feeling like they can take on Goliath, walk on fire, or change the world. Unfortunately, this effect tends to wear off since it's rarely accompanied by any kind of ongoing follow-up to change people's real habits or capabilities.

Know thyself.

The truth is that most people, especially successful entrepreneurs, are highly motivated by some things and less motivated by others. What we're going to suggest here is that, rather than trying to get more motivated in general, it makes more sense to pay attention to what motivates you and try to do more of that. While this may seem simple and obvious, it's not intuitive for most people. We're trained by the world to believe we should get ourselves motivated to do all sorts of things we don't like — that this is just a part of life, or what it takes to be successful. Because of this, we tend to rationalize or ignore our feelings when we're not so excited about something. In doing so, we deprive ourselves of some very important information that could help us organize our lives more strategically.

Supernovas and black holes.

There are some situations in life in which you naturally experience a high level of motivation. You feel a swell of energy, excitement, drive, and all the other positives people point to when they're talking about motivation.

A close correlation exists between motivation and our concept of Unique Ability® — something in life you're naturally talented at, have a passion for, and can keep getting better at over your entire lifetime. If Unique Ability is your magnetic north, motivation is your compass-needle.

Of course, your business and your life probably also contain some demotivating situations. A few common examples for many entrepreneurs are:

- Having to follow instructions.
- Performing repetitive tasks.
- Implementing existing plans instead of being free to innovate new ones.
- Working with people who aren't future-focused or entrepreneurial in their thinking.

Some situations make your motivation shine like the sun. However, others feel like they suck away all light and energy. If you've ever felt badly about letting something slide that you just couldn't get up the energy to do, you know what we're talking about. The thing to do is get rid of these energetic "black holes" and organize your life so that you can spend as much time as possible in situations where you feel motivated.

Making this shift may take some time as you gradually delegate, eliminate, and streamline activities. The change, however, which we've seen thousands of entrepreneurs experience, is moving to behold. Those who follow their motivation seem to *lighten* tangibly: Rather than feeling like servants to their businesses, they come to regard their organizations as tools for developing themselves and their ideas — sources of freedom, not

obligation. By capitalizing on their unique strengths rather than trying to change themselves, they tap into their innate genius and produce remarkable results.

Finding your Motivational Center.

A “Motivational Center” is a filter that helps you recognize situations that expand or deplete your energy. Developing your own Motivational Center begins with a conscious act of paying attention to your inherent drive and passion. As you do this, try making a list of the things you observe, or go back in your memory and revisit past situations, seeking out your own personal “best” and “worst.”

- What has to be present for you to feel motivated at work or in other parts of your life?
- In what situations are you naturally “on”? When are you at your best?
- What circumstances, relationships, and activities slow you down and sap your energy?

You’ll notice as you talk to others that they may be pulled forward by a completely different set of motivations. This variation can be a great help in rearranging your life to make the most of your motivation.

Over the next few weeks, think about what specific actions you can take to help you focus more on situations that motivate you. With a greater understanding of what situations and relationships energize you, you’ll be able to effectively seek out and create these experiences consistently.★