



10 motivational tips

TO keep you
GOING

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Foreword

Every Monday we run a poll on <http://lookingtobusiness.com> asking what people need help with and what their biggest challenge is.

An answer that keeps recurring is motivation. We are in need of motivation to push on, to persevere and to handle the increased pressure at work and at home.

This book is a gathering of 10 tips that can help you reduce stress, increase your productivity, focus and especially your motivation.

Enjoy!

Motivational Tip #1 – Setting Your Goals

I have had a lot of motivational problems

When I was growing up motivation was a big problem for me. My view of life was that I would finish grade school, finish high school, finish college, work 40 years and then retire.

Not that fun a thought for a kid who's most prominent dream was to get out of school and have fun. I didn't know about the possibilities we have and that I could create a life that gave me freedom. My prospects were depressing, which is exactly what ruins motivation.

Goal Setting

Your motivation stands in direct relation to the clarity of your goals and how much you want to complete them.

When I realized there was more to life than just school and work followed by a tired retirement; I started setting goals for myself that were a lot more motivating.

My motivation quickly started to increase and the clearer my goals got the more my motivation increased.

The 7 steps setting a goal

1. What are your long term goals for your health, family/relationships, career and in finances?

The answers to this question will be the base for your goal setting. Be honest, what do you really want. Don't think about how to accomplish it yet. Focus on what inspires you.

2. What do you want your health, family/relationships, career and finances to look like in 12 months?

Short term goals are often very motivating and feel more tangible. Set goals you can believe in but that still motivate you.

3. Write down your goals in the positive, present tense as if you already completed them.

Seeing your goals as something you already possess makes them feel more tangible and activates your subconscious so that it believes it as well, which will cause it to start working on completing those goals.

4. Set deadlines for all your goals and add the deadline to the written goal.

When you have a deadline you have a target, you can follow your progress and you force yourself to work hard to complete your goals.

5. Listen to yourself.

Read your goals. How does it feel? Do you feel inspired? Motivated? Happy? Or anxious? Stressed? Sad?

If you feel positive emotions when looking at your goals, they are good goals, if not go back to the drawing board and set new goals for yourself.

It is important that you believe your goals to be possible, but that they motivate you to complete them.

6. Make a sketch plan

By creating a short plan on how you can accomplish your goals you have something to act on. You can start seeing the path in front of you and start acting on your goals.

It also works to push the goal even deeper into your subconscious.

7. Put your goals somewhere you will see them every day and read them daily.

The more you look at and visualize your goals, the more you will believe them.
When you start believing in your goals, you start making them a reality.

Conclusion

You can accomplish anything you can imagine and believe. Set your goals and stay tuned for the next part of this series and for your next motivational tip.

Motivational Tip #2 – Planning for Your Goals

Creating a complete plan of how you are going to succeed will make the path you are on a lot clearer and will help to greatly increase your motivation.

My first plans

The first time I set my goals I had a very clear picture of what I wanted, the problem was that I had no idea at all about how I was going to get there.

I didn't know where to start, there was so much I could do and yet there was so little I could do right now.

[Brian Tracy \(the author of Maximum Achievement\)](#) shared some advice at a seminar I attended a few years back that really helped.

He discussed planning.

The art of planning makes a great difference in your ability to achieve your goals.

By making a complete plan you learn how you are going to complete your goals, what needs to be done, in what order and what you can do now to move you towards your goals.

The sense of purpose I found when I had created my plan was unbelievable, I knew exactly what to do!

How much faster everything went

When I knew exactly what do to I could start at once and work towards my goals.

Quickly things started to happen, opportunities opened up, I realized ways to use my abilities to increase my chances.

3 steps to making a complete plan

1. Clarify your goals exactly

How does your life look? What do you do? Who do you spend time with?

The clearer you can make the picture of your life when you have accomplished your goals the easier and more powerful this exercise will be.

2. What happened 3 months before

If you are going to complete your goals what needs to happen 3 months earlier? What do you need to do? What needs to happen?

3. Project backward until today

Write down each step and you will have a complete action plan that you can follow and use to propel your success.

If you don't have a plan how can you know when you are off course?

Whenever a situation arises, either positive or negative, you will have a basis on which to evaluate it.

How can you use this situation to move you towards your goals? What problems need solving?

Where are we going exactly? Do we need to change our plans?

The ability to update your plans based on reality is an as important part of your success as any.

Motivational Tip #3 – Writing Down All Your Projects

When I have been working with people to improve their efficiency one of the most common complaints is that they feel overwhelmed and don't know where to start.

Two years ago I was having a introductory meeting with a new student and she told me something very interesting:

"I really want to become better at time management and I have worked at it a lot, I have a weekly plan, I prioritize it, but still when I get ready to start I just feel like there are so many other things I should do. I feel overwhelmed and start running in circles in my mind. All of a sudden an hour has gone by and I haven't done anything, is there any way to cure this"

This is a very common problem, I am sure you have felt it yourself at one point or another.

Know everything that needs to be done

In [David Allen's book Getting Things Done](#) he shares a great tip about how to solve this problem. Keeping an overview of everything that needs to be done makes it easier to focus at one at a time.

This might feel stressful

The first time my wife listed everything she needed to do it was because I had told her to do it about 2000 times, to shut me up she finally did it. The reason she didn't want to do it was that she was afraid that looking at that list would make it all more real and make her even more stressed. It is keeping it in your mind that makes you stressed.

When you have to constantly think about and remind yourself about everything that needs to be done you become stressed, you can never put anything away.

Getting it onto a list makes it a lot easier, you can put it aside for the time being knowing you will come back to it soon.

You know what you are working on

Listen to your mind, what are you thinking about? What projects need to be done?

Write down everything, small and large on a list.

Identifying next actions

By identifying next actions you will have an easy actionable list. Things become smaller; you can do this little thing to move the project forward. It also helps you from having to think about what needs to be done every time you pick up a new task.

You know you aren't missing something

When you know you aren't missing anything you can focus and start working on task number one.

This will make you much more efficient and make that list smaller making you even less stressed.

Quickly you can start to get into a positive spiral and become more and more efficient.

Conclusion

1. Create a list of all your projects.
2. Make an action list with all the next actions you need to take on those projects.
3. Add them to your calendar.
4. Prioritize you daily list.
5. Start on task number 1.

Motivational Tip #4 – Learning Time Management

Stress is the biggest killer of motivation.

When you are stressed it is hard to focus, hard to channel your creativity, hard to get things done and therefore you feel as though you aren't doing anything, which really kills motivation.

Time Management is A solution

One way to decrease your stress levels is to learn proper time management, to become more efficient and get more done during the day.

When you have become more efficient you will see the piles start to shrink and you can start catching up and getting a grip again.

This will help increase you motivation again.

I do more in one day than I used to in a week

Since I started using time management I have increased my efficiency tenfold. I get more done today than ever before.

I don't even have to push myself to reach these results. To be honest I worked harder before, I just work a lot smarter today.

When you start working smarter, working harder makes an incredible difference instead of just small gains.

There are lots of techniques you can use

If I was to share everything in this post it would become much too long to read, but I have written many posts on the subject.

I want to add as well that my newsletter ["Your Path to Your Dreams"](#) shares all my best advice on time management as well.

If you want to get started try reading these articles. I know they will help.

[Quadrant 2](#)

[Organize your days](#)

[Living out of your calendar](#)

[Lists](#)

If you want to learn more about time management and about how to move towards your goals join our email newsletter ["Your Path to Your Dreams"](#) and you will receive tips and advice, and even a free copy of our e-book ["How to make Selling Easy"](#).

Motivational Tip #5 – Motivating Yourself with Self – Affirmations

The most stupid but effective tool to increase motivation and self image for me has been self-affirmations.

I learned a long time ago to tell myself “I like myself!” and strangely this exercise has increased my motivation and my sense of self worth greatly.

I used to have a little voice in my head saying; “Ooh, that looks difficult, you can’t do that, stay away!”

By using self affirmations I have been able to drown that voice out and replace it with a voice screaming

“YOU CAN DO IT! GO GO GO!”

This voice is a lot more motivating, it helps me face my fears and keep working.

It is surprising how well it works to tell yourself that you are happy and motivated.

Do it enough times and you will become happy and motivated.

I read this every morning and evening

“I like myself

I love my work

I am going to be happy today

I can do it!”

You can use anything you need

You might not need the same advice as I do or the same motivators.

Think about what you need help with.

My advice is to always say it in an active form e.g. I am, I have. Instead of I will, I wish.

It is a lot more powerful to say “I like myself” than “I will like myself”.

Some suggestions to other affirmations

I deserve success

I am a good X

I am motivated

I am the best

I am great

Conclusion

It does feel very, very stupid to tell yourself these things, but please try it out.

It will make a difference if you do it often enough.

Motivational Tip #6 – The Master Decision (be happy)

We now come to a very interesting part of this motivational series;
Making the decision to be happy.

I have had a lot of problems finding true happiness.

Life is hectic, our expectations and fears keep increasing, I believe this is one of the chief reasons people get burned out.

I was reading [Brian Tracy's book Maximum Achievement](#) when it hit me, to be happy I have to take the decision, no one else is going to give me happiness.

I realized that if I wanted opportunities I couldn't wait for them to come to me, I had to go find them. I also understood that happiness isn't more than a state of mind, a state of hope, calm and relaxation, together with a sense of purpose and passion, and my state of mind is completely in my control.

The day I made the decision the world became brighter

When I decided to be happy I became more extrovert.
I spent more time with people.

I could look more at the positive sides of life and it spread.

The result was that people around me got happier, by deciding to be happy you make others happy.

Happiness is the most important goal you will ever have

Putting your happiness first is a good way of spreading joy to the world.

If you are happy you can produce more and better results which in turn benefit our entire society.
You will quickly become happier and prouder of yourself.

3 Types of people

A couple years ago I learned that you can split people into three types. It isn't always true but it is a very interesting exercise.

Green

A green person is your typical positive person. They spread energy, see opportunities, solve problems and work hard.

Red

These are your negative people; they steal energy, see the problems, and complain about whatever isn't perfect and so on.

Yellow

They can go either way; in the right atmosphere they are green, in the wrong red.

What happens when they meet?

A green person is always green, whoever they meet and they share that with whoever they meet.
They pull yellows and make them green as well.

A red person is always red; they pull others into the red and make them down as well. The problem is that their pull is usually a lot stronger than the green (it is easier to be red).

Often a group that started with 1 red, 1 green and 10 yellow becomes 1 green and 11 red.

Be Green

Being green means you are happier, more positive and that you do not get affected by the red people around you. It also makes you someone people want to spend time with and want to have in their midst.

3 steps to becoming happy

1. Make the decision
2. Make a habit of finding the positive in every situation
3. Set your goals and start working towards them.

Conclusion

You can be happy, if you want to!

Just make the decision and be happy, every day.

Tell yourself every morning "I am going to be happy today!"

Motivational Tip #7 – Letting it all out, Singing, Screaming

Have you ever felt like you are about to explode? That you just have too much bottled up? This is a common emotion, especially if you haven't found a way to vent those emotions.

Depression

I am glad to say that I have never been truly depressed, but I have been close. During a part of my career I had an office all to myself. I was completely boxed in. For 8-10 hours/day I was all alone in that office.

My projects were progressing slower than I had hoped and it felt as though I was failing. Any psychologist will tell you that being alone creates depression and when you get used to being alone, contacting other people becomes a chore, and it becomes difficult.

The problem is that you don't see it

Thanks to books I read both literature and personal development books; I realized that I needed more contact with other people.

I vowed then to call at least 1 friend every day and talk to them; this one habit literally saved my life. It got me out of my social slump and my depression. My projects took a turn for the better and before I knew it I was out of that lonely office.

Let it out, anyway you can

Keeping your emotions bottled up will just lead to anxiety, anger and frustration. Once in a while you need to let it out. This can be done in numerous ways;

Singing

Music is filled with emotion, the sounds are tailored to match our mind and bring out feelings. By singing, loudly and proudly, you allow yourself to let go. Sing songs that match your feelings, letting it all out. The calm that you will feel afterward makes any embarrassment worth it.

Screaming

This is an extreme way of letting it out, but if you have kept your feelings bottled up for too long sometimes you need to scream. Screaming makes a difference; it gives you a rush of adrenaline and can help you get back the control of yourself.

Or just talking to someone

The best way to get rid of those overwhelming feelings is to talk about it before they have been able to compound into such a powerful force. But even then talking to someone really helps; getting compassion, being allowed to show your feelings is a true blessing.

If you box it in

When you don't express your feelings in any way, you will start to become agitated, tired and depressed. Humans are a social race and even if we can't talk to others expressing our emotions out loud does help.

If you let your emotions stay bottled up for too long they can even start to manifest in physical symptoms such as poor health or early aging.

Try, when no one is around

For your own sake, try out these techniques, do it when you are alone, no one else has to hear, no one else has to be a part of it. But you need to let your emotions go, so that you can experience calm at least for a little while.

Motivational Tip #8 – Working Out Regularly

It is interesting that addiction is mostly associated with negative things such as drugs, alcohol and other abusive behavior.

But you can become addicted to success, happiness and exercise.

When you work out you release adrenaline and endorphins into your system.

When you succeed in a task those same hormones get released.

These hormones are just as addictive as the negative drugs above, but are instead an award for positive behavior and are a natural part of the body's functions.

Become addicted to working out

By working out regularly you get used to getting these happiness educating hormones into your system, in other words you become addicted to working out.

This can be a useful tool since regular workout improves your breathing and uptake of oxygen, which lets you be more productive and stops you from getting tired, it will also combat many of the illnesses we have today, such as heart problems.

In easier terms, working out regularly will let you live a longer, fuller life.

How easy it is to change

I have always been a very active person, when I was in high school I played baseball, practiced martial arts, floor ball and soccer, I had 4 gymnastics lessons/week and me and my friends would play success every break in between classes. All in all I worked out about 11 times/week.

I was in very good shape and could eat as much as I wanted, which I did.

I ate about as much as the rest of the guys in my class (there were 10) put together. Still since I moved so much I barely had any fat on my body at all.

This all changed when I started working

Right out of high school I got my first full time job.

The problem was that I kept eating as much, but because of my busy work schedule could only practice maybe once or twice a week and I didn't have the chance to play soccer during our breaks. I quickly started gaining weight, I have written about this before on my blog, in 6 months I gained about 40 pounds. It was awful, I grew more and more tired which made it even harder to work out; I grew depressed which made me eat more to make me happy and finally my results at work started getting hurt because of all my problems.

How my life changed when I started taking walks

I realized this wasn't sustainable, I knew I wouldn't be able to eat less (I love food too much) but I realized that I had to start thinking about what I ate and how I spent my days. I started by making small changes to my dietary habits, such as adding a salad to my meals, eating less bread, more fruit. But I never went on any of the diets that are so popular.

I also decided to start working out more; I started by taking walks, only 10-30 minutes/day.

As time went by I started losing weight and gaining energy, I started going to more practices again; I jogged once in a while, took longer walks, and just used the positive spiral I had created to keep getting in better shape.

I knew it wouldn't happen overnight, but I knew that I could keep getting in shape, slowly but surely and create habits that would make sure I sustained my shape.
Within 12 months I was back!

I was back in good shape again, my results were up at work, I was doing well both at baseball and at martial arts and most importantly I was happy; I liked the way I looked and felt.

It doesn't have to be much

As you can see I didn't do much to lose 40 pounds of weight. I started taking regular walks, I made myself addicted to the endorphins and I made sure to eat a little less fast food and more quality good (that in most cases is a lot tastier). Eating a 2 pound stake is as you know healthier than eating a 2 pound hamburger and it is a lot tastier.

- **Take walks instead of the car**
- **Take the stairs instead of the elevator**

If you keep your eyes open you will see opportunities everywhere to use your body and keep it in an ever improving shape. If you can walk or bicycle instead of taking the car, why not?

Conclusion

You can become addicted to working out, you can become addicted to success but like any addiction it takes that you start using the substance. Start working out regularly and you will notice that your body will miss it the days you do not.

If you think it is a hassle, start by taking a 20 minute walk every day. If nothing else it is a great opportunity to just be by yourself and think.

What do you think? Can it be this easy to get in shape? What is your experience?

Motivational Tip #9 – Find Someone to Talk to and Trust Who Believes in You

You cannot do it all alone

Life is difficult, however hard you work you will encounter problems, even the best made plans will not be able to meet the harshness of life, perfect time management skills won't let you do EVERYTHING you want to get done.

When I was 20 I hadn't understood this, I tried to do everything, I read about time management and the promise of efficiency and I became more efficient but never efficient enough.

What I realized was that I needed to choose what I could do and what I couldn't, this was very difficult for me, I had so many goals, such dreams and reality told me it would take longer than I hoped.

Get some help

I needed to let it out and to my luck one of my more senior colleagues took me under his wing and gave me advice, let me talk about my troubles and helped me with contacts.

Talking to him made a big difference he helped me get back on track, he let me talk about all the problems I had and best of all I wasn't judged, I could tell him exactly what I felt.

Ask for advice

He gave me a lot of advice, but I learned that I could also ask others for advice.

I have made it a habit to talk to the most successful people in my industry and ask them;

Why are you so successful?

The answers you get are incredible!

You learn so much and you find opportunities that you before neither saw or understood.

Vent

Whenever you have a lot on your mind talking to someone really helps, my mentor is always there for me and answers when I need help, it is great. I can call him and tell him about my troubles, usually I have the answers myself but just talking about it helps me find them.

Help the other in turn

Don't expect the other to work for free. Even if you do not pay your mentor make sure to be there for them as well. They might need a contact you have or need to vent, make sure they know that they can always come to you as well.

Conclusion

Don't lock yourself in, ask people who do what you want to do what they do differently from you, find someone you can trust to talk to and vent your problems.

Don't go at it alone, try to find others that can help you and lend a hand.

Motivational Tip #10 – Reward Yourself for all Results (Program Yourself for Success)

This tip is probably my favorite; it has helped me keep my motivation high.

In many ways people (e.g. me) are like dogs, when you tell your dog to sit and give it a reward for doing so you are programming it for success.

I have realized that I am as easy to train.

I set a goal for my day and then reward myself for completing that goal, I set weekly goals, monthly goals and so on and every time I succeed I get a reward.

Every time I get faster and faster at executing (sitting, for dogs).

Reward yourself for every completed action

I have also started rewarding myself when I push myself.

If I am tired but succeed in pushing on I give myself a reward.

When you get a reward, when you think you have done something well it releases endorphins into your brain, you can become addicted to these, addicted to success.

For me just crossing something off my to-do list is often a sufficient enough reward.

A reason to work hard, I am programmed

Thanks to this I always have a reason to work hard; every time I face difficulty I keep working knowing that the reward when I am done will be both instant and worth the effort.

Compete against yourself

You can use this technique to keep your improvement continuous.

Benchmark your earlier results and compete against yourself. When you win the competition you are rewarded with a gold medal, you can get an A for effort and a small reward if you do well, but if you don't do your job you get no reward.

Against others

This can be extended to competitions with others. Decide on a reward and compete for it.

Conclusion

Doing these exercises continuously will keep you programmed for success and you will always keep working hard.

Test it yourself and see if you are as easily programmed for success as I am.

About the Author

Daniel M. Wood works as a consultant in Management, Motivation and Success.

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You may also want to join his free email course [“Your Path to Your Dreams”](#) which will help you on your way to greatness, you will also get free copies of his books [“How to Make Selling Easy”](#) and [“The Beginners Guide to Success”](#)

To your success!