

October 2024

Partner Up!

Healing Partners Newsletter

*Motivation is
fleeting.*

*Routine is
permanent!*

I'm not motivated enough to be motivated!

We have all been there, knowing what we need to do, but just not motivated to complete the task at hand. Whether struggling with motivation to complete a task, or to start doing some solid self-care activity, it can be hard to take the first step. But as Mark Twain once said, "The secret to getting ahead is getting started, the secret to getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into manageable tasks, then starting on the first one." Sounds like good advice, right?! But how do we do this when we are not motivated? Well, let's take a look at motivation and see if there is something we can learn that may make motivation more achievable.

Motivation can be complex, elusive, and selective. You may not be motivated to take a walk around the block, but you are motivated to go to the store to get fudge topping for your ice cream, been there? I have too. So, is it really motivation that is preventing the task from getting done? Probably not, clearly the motivation is misplaced, and warrants some more exploration.

Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Motivation

First, let's look at intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when we do something because we enjoy it, and extrinsic motivation is when we do something for an external reward like a promotion or award. So, using the example above, I could say I am intrinsically motivated to buy fudge, but maybe not as intrinsically motivated to walk the block.

Complex Brain & Neurochemical Involvement

Motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, is also related to the neurochemical reward system including neurochemicals such as dopamine and serotonin. One Harvard article on motivation explains dopamine as a key factor in 'wanting' and reinforces the behaviors that elicited the reward. They report serotonin is a key factor in 'liking' and works with other neurochemicals to convey euphoria. This would mean that my brain remembers the neurochemical reward of hot fudge sundaes as a higher reward than walking the block. If that is the case, how do I get my brain to 'want' and 'like' walking the block as much as hot fudge?

Detailed Rational Mindset

One evidenced based strategy is to get down to the details! Breaking it down, just like the advice of Mark Twain, one step at a time. By initiating small acts of awareness and self-control into your day, you can strengthen our willpower capacity and achieve our goals more easily. This can lead to more intrinsic motivation and regulate neurochemical exchange that can lead to wellness, resiliency, and success!

Motivation Exercises

MOTIVATION EXERCISE #1

GOAL: *walk the block*

OBSTACLES: *lack of time, presence of pain, hard mental day, lack of energy, socializing*

WHY: *I want to feel healthier, increase my stamina and reduce my stress.*

VALUES: *I value healthy living, being in nature and being at peace.*

Part 1- Motivation & Goals

Ok, to get started, first let's pick a goal! What is it you need your motivation for?

Next, let's pick the top 5 obstacles that are bound to creep up, you know something will come up, it always does! Now define your obstacles very specifically. Try not to use words like 'motivation' or 'willpower', instead specify your obstacles such as 'unexpected social interactions', or 'low energy after a long day'. Once you have a list, you can start thinking about how you want to manage these obstacles when they arise. Write down your plan, such as 'let them know I will be available after my walk' or 'after I walk, I will take a rest for 20 minutes'. Ta-da! Now you have a plan in place to manage obstacles! Feeling more confident yet?

Next step is to reflect on why you are working towards this goal at this time in your life. What is important about achieving this goal? How or why will your life change or be better after you achieve this goal? I want you to dig deep here, thinking of your intrinsic motivation for this change. This means, why are YOU wanting to do this for YOU? This is not what others expect of you, or for external rewards, but internally, why is this important for you to achieve? Write a few reasons that resonate with you and are in line with your life's journey.

Once you have your intrinsic reasons for your goals, review these statements for your values. Values are things that important to you, values give you guidance on how you think and behave. When we see how our goals fit into our values, it motivates us to activate and demonstrate our strengths. This is something that boosts our bodies neurochemical reward system and improves the way we feel about ourselves! Cool, right!?

Part 2- Motivation & Change

Now that you know where you are going and why, what obstacles might arise, and how your values are going to guide you, let's look at how we are going to take on our goal! Grab a couple more pieces of paper and let's get started.

First step is to write your goal at the top of a sheet of paper. Below your goal brainstorm all the things that will prepare you for reaching that goal. This does not need to be in any order, it can include steps you already taken, and can be written down anywhere on the sheet. Just throw it out there, first thing that comes to your mind.

Next you need to put all your steps in the order needed to be to reach your goal. Now go down the list and put a date on each one. This will keep you on track to meeting your goal, plus it gives you something to check off the list, which is rewarding to the brain! Yah, feels good right?! Now, ready, set, go get it you go getter!

Remember, be patient with yourself if you have big goals. Small steps get you closer to your goal, and sometimes we take the long way to where we are going, and that is ok! Enjoy the journey and take time to smell the flowers! You got this!

Find JOY in the Journey

MOTIVATION EXERCISE #2

GOAL: *Walk the block*

-Set a time of day that will be most convenient (5/1)

-Plan out route to walk (5/1)

-Have alternate activity for bad weather days (5/1)

-Get good walking shoes (5/7)

-Find a walking pal if possible (5/7)

-Start walking! (5/13)

Tips For The Journey

- Put more focus on the things you enjoy and do well. Do you love your job? What skills do you have that you enjoy doing? What hobbies or habits are a positive in your day? What is your favorite past time? Whatever the answer is, do more of that!
- Challenge yourself to push a little harder. If what you are doing is too easy or too hard, you will be more likely to lose motivation.
- Don't over reward yourself for your successes. Your successes need to get you ahead, that is the ultimate reward!
- Accept your loses and setbacks. This happens to everyone, even you. Remember you are living a human experience not a nicely written novel!
- Slow down and visualize the process of obtaining your goal. Try to enjoy the journey and the effort you are putting in along the way. If we only focus on the end goal, we are likely to lose motivation during the process.
- Reassessing our process along the way is always a win. You may need to slow down, reroute and fine tune your plan from time to time. That is ok, that means you are gaining more clarity of your overall goal.
- Be mindful of the company you keep! Surround yourself with positive people who support you and want to best for you. Having a family member, friend or mentor join you on your journey can increase your motivation and keep you on track.
- Remember the values of your goal, be patient, and trust the process.



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*Just one small positive
thought in the morning can
change your whole day.*

Dalia Lama

GEEK OUT!

This month's journal article reviews the how music effects our exercise performance! Who knew? Now you do!

Ballmann, Christopher G. (2021). The Influence of Music Preference on Exercise Responses and Performance: A Review. *Journal of Functional Morphology and Kinesiology* 6, no. 2: 33.

<https://www.mdpi.com/2411-5142/6/2/33>

POETRY CORNER

You can't
go back
and change
the beginning
but you can
start where you are
and change
the ending.
-CS Lewis