

HOW TO GET MOTIVATED



Get your mind racing and find the drive to succeed in life and work

IN TWO MINDS

One of the oddest things about human nature is that we can be “in two minds”. We can have a conscious intention to do something, but then feel driven to do something else. We can have a gap between motivation and intention.

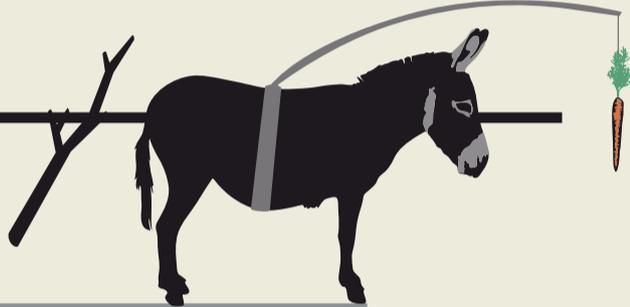
We bridge this gap using **willpower**. This is a conscious effort to overrule your instincts and do something different instead. The trouble is, this takes work, drains energy and is harder to sustain when you're tired or stressed. You can't just rely on willpower. You need **motivation**.

motivation • n.

the condition of being **eager to act** from the Latin movere, 'to move'

Motivation is a state of energy and action, where you feel excited and tasks feel easy.

Think about what motivates you. What do you find exciting and energising, and why? This is the goal of motivation research: to explore the factors that drive us to succeed, and why some tasks feel easier than others.



THE THREE FACTORS

The first thing you need to feel motivated is an **external incentive**.

Incentives get us moving and make tasks feel urgent. They pull you into action - whether you like it or not.

Money is an incentive, but so too are qualifications, promotions, status and basic incentives like safety and security. They can be positive or negative - the carrot, or the stick.



To feel motivated, you also need **inner drive**, a personal connection.

Drive pushes you to action. There are many things that need doing, but some things you want to do yourself.

Inner drivers include your values and interests, and also things you find fun, or that feel personal to you. They can be social too, like helping other people and improving relationships.

Incentives and drivers can get you going, but for sustainable motivation you also need a third factor: the **ability to succeed**.

This doesn't mean the task has to be easy: challenge can be motivating too. You just need to feel success is possible; that your efforts won't be wasted.

Your skills and resources affect your motivation, and support from others too. If you know how to achieve a task you may be more energised to do it, whereas if you feel it is impossible, your good intentions may turn to stress or demoralisation.



A MISSING INGREDIENT?



If you don't feel motivated, that will be because one or more of these factors are missing:

- **No ability?** If you don't feel a task is possible then you will probably give up. In these situations, you need to boost your abilities by gaining skills and resources, or seek help and advice. You might need a confidence boost too, or help seeing the skills you have.
- **No drive?** Without a personal connection to a task, you may do the minimum, working to rule or running on autopilot. You'll need to increase your autonomy and make the task feel more personal to you - or focus on who needs this doing and why it matters to them.
- **No incentive?** If you have the drive and ability to do something, you'd think you would just do it! But without an incentive, you may put things off, prioritising more urgent tasks. This is when you need to set goals and intentions, to make your passions a priority.

Start by identifying the missing ingredient, and then choose the most effective response.

SETTING GOALS

Goal-setting is great for helping you prioritise your passions. Setting your own goals can create urgency for things you have been putting off, and goal-setting can boost your autonomy and give you a sense of progress.

Don't wait for the world to give you incentives either. Set your own by giving yourself rewards and making bargains with other people to get important tasks done.

And if all else fails, **just don't do it!**

Cross it off your list! But, if you don't feel you can just skip it, then ask yourself why. Who needs it, and why does it matter to you? What can you usefully do? It may go back on your list, but at least you'll know the reason.



INTERNALISATION

Internalisation is the process of taking on external goals and connecting them to our world view. Reflecting on how a task fits with your beliefs and life goals can turn external incentives into internal drivers, and make dull tasks feel easier to do.

If you feel stuck, spend a minute writing down how the task relates to the things that matter to you. This simple process can give you more drive to do a task well.

This free tip sheet was created by Mindapples to support people during the COVID-19 pandemic. To find out more about our apps, e-learning, webinars, face-to-face training and charitable work, visit www.mindapples.org.