

HOW TO ACHIEVE PEAK
PERFORMANCE ON COMMAND



The Psychology of Motivation



Introduction

What if I told you that you are capable of working on something in such a way that you are unstoppable? That's right. When you enter a certain mental and emotional state, it seems like all you can do is to produce lots of your best stuff. It doesn't matter what's going on around you.

It doesn't matter whether you woke up on the wrong side of the bed. It doesn't matter whether people around you are freaking out. You are still able to produce a lot of stuff, take care of your best work and feel good about it. Sounds crazy?

Well, this is called your state of flow. The good news is everybody has one. It can take different forms. It definitely takes place at different times. It can be triggered by many things. After all, we're different people from different walks of life with our own distinct experiences. These differences do add up. Still, one of the things that we have in common is a state of flow.

This is where things are ridiculously easy. You produce a lot more and you are able to hit really high-quality standards. This is a time where you achieve peak performance. Everybody is capable of this.

The problem is, for most of us, we stumble upon our state of flow. It's kind of like walking by the road and then you hear some rumbling up ahead. It starts to rain and, all of a sudden, you get hit by lightning. Well, how often does that happen. Unfortunately, in the case of states of flow, it's not often enough.

The key to triggering this state is motivation. A lot of people think that as long as they focus on their state of flow or they think about it or they kick around the idea in their head that it will overcome them somehow some way. It doesn't work that way. You're missing a key ingredient. You're missing motivation.

A lot of people would say, “Okay, I get it. I just need to be motivated so I’ll push myself to be motivated”. There's a big problem with this. Life’s pressures and stresses can overcome you. You know this. I know this. Everybody knows this.

We surround ourselves with too much clutter, and I’m not just talking about clutter that you can see. I’m also talking about emotional and mental clutter. These are uncomfortable memories. These are regrets, problems that we dwell on. These can also involve our worries about the future.

It is no surprise that given this background, our priorities get scrambled. Whatever motivation we may have gets drowned out by the background noise of the rest of our lives. Sadly, the more people focus on their need for motivation or, worse yet, the results motivation brings, they lose sight of their capacity for motivation.

This is why a lot of people continue to struggle. In fact, so many of us have resigned ourselves to the inner and outer struggles that we have that we have lost sight of the reasons why.

This book teaches you practical tips to get motivated on command so you can achieve your state of flow. Your state of flow is the goal. Motivation is the path to that goal. Motivation is also the fuel for your emotional and mental engine. Be clear about these distinctions. Don't get them confused.



CHAPTER 1

Focus on Practical Goals

Focus on Practical Goals

This book is not a feel-good book, okay? If you're looking to get pumped up, excited in broad generalized ways, this is not the book for you. Instead, this book is all about practical results. This book is intended to help you become a more effective human being.

We define effectiveness in a very limited way here. Again, this can be controversial because a lot of people would have very expansive and broad definitions of effectiveness that operate on different levels. There's nothing wrong with that and, in many cases, that is highly commendable.

However, as far as this book is concerned, we're going to focus on practicalities. Are you still with me? Good.

It's easy to confuse our ultimate goals with our practical goal. Our ultimate goals, of course, are specific big outcomes and objectives that we would like for ourselves. We would like to live a well-lived life.

Let me put it this way. If you knew that you were going to be put in a box tomorrow, what kind of life would you have desired for yourself? In that instance, knowing that you're going to die, you are forced to look back at your life and judge what you have accomplished and be clear about what you wish you had accomplished. That's how we know what our ultimate goals are.

There is also the other set of goals. These are practical goals.

Too many people confuse the two. This is a mistake that leads confusion, wasted energy and wasted focus.

If you want to be more effective, and if you want to tap the power of motivation to push you to live a more effective and purposeful life, focus on the big things. Focus on the grand outcomes and objectives of your life.

Practical goals are involving putting food on the table, paying off debt, saving up enough money for your kid's college, taking care of insurance costs, so on and so forth. These are important goals, mind you, but in the big scheme of things, they're just steps that you take to go a certain direction. They are means to an end, and the ends are worth the most. These are your ultimate outcomes and objectives. Don't confuse the two.

Be Clear about the Big Outcomes and Objectives of Your Life

I have to confess I can't help you with this. Everybody's life outcomes and life objectives are different.

Maybe your grand life objective is to become the largest landowner in your state or province. Another person might have the grand objective of simply seeing his or her grandchildren graduate from college. Another person's grand objective have something to do with traveling to at least a hundred different countries.

Everybody's different that's why I can't help you with this, but one thing is clear. You must have a crystal-clear idea of the outcomes and objectives you want for your life. Nobody can do this for you. You have to decide. You have to put in the work to clarify these things. As you can tell, there is no right or wrong answer.

Choose to be Clear about Your Need for a Process

Now that you have an end goal in mind, understand that this goal is not going to happen by magic. It's just not. Once you have a solid objective in mind, please remember that is point B. You are at point A. Your job is to figure out how to get from point A to point B.

Now, this is not a simple matter of a few hops, skips and jumps. This is a life's journey. This involves a process that doesn't just involve going through time. It also involves a change in your mind and consciousness. You become a different person as you go through this process. It's the journey that changes you.

Every single day, there will be practical goals popping up all over the place. These goals need to be achieved to be achieved so you can continue your journey to your ultimate objectives and outcomes. I am, of course, talking about practical realities like keeping a roof over your head, making sure there's food on the table and making sure that a lot of the everyday practical considerations of your life and your family are taken care of.

All these require process, and this process is your state of flow. Now, this is where a lot of people slip up. They think their process is them showing up to a job or doing whatever it takes to pay the rent.

However, they're looking at it in the wrong way because if you look at your need for the process and you allow yourself to enter that state of flow, everything else becomes easier. Everything else falls into place.

To a large extent, your state of flow should be your practical goal. You should think in terms of how do I do trigger this state of flow so I can blow through my to-do list and then some? How can I trigger this state of flow so I can think about the challenges that I'm facing and come up with better solutions?

Believe it or not achieving this state of flow and getting it to happen on command should be your daily goal.

Recap: Your State of Flow

Here's a quick recap of what a state of flow is. It is a mental and emotional state where things become easy precisely because they're clear. It seems that whenever you make an action, it produces a result. When you look at on what's going on around you and the task in front of you, you are able to connect the dots.

None of them intimidate you. None of them make you feel that it's not worth your time. None of them make you feel burdened and heavy. Instead, you can see how things connect and you're excited about it.

Everything is clear. Everything is predictable. You notice that when you take an action, it leads to something and you can see the consequences of the decisions you make when you are in this state of mind.

This enables you to become bold. You're no longer feeling like you're this piece of plastic floating out there in the middle of a tropical storm in the ocean of life being pushed from one end of the ocean to the other end with absolutely no control nor a sense of ownership about what's going on.

This is the precise opposite. It's like you enter into a cube and everything is well-defined, predictable, quantifiable despite the fact that everything is moving quickly. This gives you courage, boldness and resolution. Everything that just clicks, and everything just works. This is your state of flow.

Now, please understand that states of flow vary from person to person. Other people can sustain it for a very long time until they totally obliterate their to-do list. Other people stay in it in a fairly short period. That's perfectly okay. What's important is that you enter it, get things done and, eventually, call it into being on command.

If I haven't said it enough times, let me say it again. Achieving a state of flow should be your practical goal. This is the secret. This is what leads to not only knocking out other practical goals but also leading you in a big way to your life's big objectives.

The best part about your personal state of flow is that it helps you take care of the now. Believe it or not the now is the foundation of the future. The future is not going to happen until you lift a finger to do things now.

Your hopes, dreams and wishes - they're just going to remain in your mind, free-floating out there, nice and irrelevant, until you reduce them into reality based on the decisions you make in the here and now. Focusing on that state of flow enables you to do that.



CHAPTER 2

The Problem with States of Flow

The Problem with States of Flow

I know at this point you're all excited about achieving this mental and emotional state. I know you're probably thinking that this is somehow some way the magic bullet that would solve all sorts of problems in your life. I understand your excitement. There's definitely a lot to get pumped up about.

However, there's a problem with states of flow. It's kind of like starting a fire. There are three ways you can start a fire.

You can use pine cones or other easily combustible material that is light, fluffy or well-spaced apart. Loose coconut fibers are much like pinecones.

Alternatively, you can use twigs and branches. These are a little thicker, a bit longer and harder.

Finally, you can use logs to get a campfire.

Keep in mind that your choice of materials play a big role on your outcome.

Let's start with pinecones. When you start a fire with a pine cone, you get a really nice flame. In fact, the flame is going to shoot out. It ignites that fast. It's nice and bright.

This is very similar to your enthusiasm and fascination and flirtation when you get excited about a new idea or a new project or a new person. It starts out bright but, unfortunately, it flames out just as quickly. It is short-lived unless you keep piling on coconut fiber or pinecones into the flickering fire that you have.

If you choose to start a fire with twigs and branches, it's very similar to having focused goals. You're not just fixated on the emotional intensity of what you're doing but you are focused on your goals and this is an improvement.

The problem is, just like with twigs and branches that need constant air and replenishment or else it will flame out, you need constant attention and a lot of structure. However, just like building a fire with twigs and branches, you can last longer if you constantly refocus on your goals.

Finally, you can start a fire with logs. If you've ever gone camping, you know that this is the most time-intensive. This takes a long, long time. In fact, you have to burn a lot of stuff around the logs just to heat the logs and get them to catch fire.

The good news is once you get them going, you don't have to do much else. They keep burning on and on and on all throughout the night. In fact, it's not uncommon for people to wake up and look at the campfire the next day and there are still bright embers courtesy of the logs that they just burned.

What I just described are the different levels of motivation that leads to your state of flow. All three of them would lead you there. You can start out all pumped up and motivated and achieve a state of flow. You can do that. You can also constantly replenish your focus and achieve a state of flow. Finally, you can take it long and slow but your state of flow lasts longer.

There are different ways to do this, but the best way is to go for the logs. These stand for sustainable motivation. This book teaches you how to achieve sustainable motivation so you trigger your state of flow more frequently and stay within that state for a much longer time.

I have nothing against enthusiasm, fixation or fascination. However, the problem is those don't last all that long. Similarly, constant focus can burn you out. Sustainable motivation takes a quite a bit more work and it takes some time to get going. The good news is that mentally pays for itself once you get it going.



CHAPTER 3

Stoking Motivation the Right Way

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To achieve sustainable flow, the initial time can be long and drawn out. Again, it's like starting a campfire with logs. It can take quite a bit of time. Often times, the initial fire would flicker out so you'd have to make sure that the logs catch fire.

You really can't expect a spark that starts an inferno that lasts weeks. It doesn't work that way. You have to stick to the process of stoking your motivation until it ignites and stays bright and focused for the long haul.

There are going to be many false starts along the way. Don't be surprised if you get motivated and all of a sudden, you flame out. Sometimes, you're really pumped up, but somebody shows up, or they say something, or you see something that throws you off and your motivation just drops like a rock.

You may be able to hit your groove and it'd seem that regardless of what other people are doing and saying, you remain focused and motivated. So far so good, right? However, sooner or later, it starts to flicker out and before you know it, it's gone.

You have to keep igniting your motivation and keep at it until it is self-sustainable. You have to reach a point where it just keeps going and going. How does this happen? Well, it all boils down to momentum.

There is a point in any kind of process where people are able to reach a level where it takes more effort to stop than it is to start. Things start to pile up on top of each other and you achieve a momentum. It's like you have a lot of force behind you so it takes less effort to stay motivated than digging your heels and stopping.

The key is to not get demoralized by the false starts. Believe me. If you were starting any kind of project and you're all pumped up about it, but for whatever reason, it doesn't pan out. You don't get the rewards that you expected the first time, the second time, or even the tenth time you try.

It's easy to get discouraged, but you have to keep at it until you achieve momentum. This is what filters a lot of people in terms of success habits. We've got this idea in our heads that when we think of a goal, we automatically assume that we will reach it. We automatically expect that we will get quick results with very minimal effort.

Of course, we both know that this is not the case. Life can be unfair. Often times, it seems that we have a harder path than other people. Unfortunately, we can't just waste our time looking over and saying, "What about them? How come they have it so easy? How come my path is narrow and hard?"

You just have to focus on achieving momentum. That should be your first immediate goal. Everything else will be taken care of once you hit that momentum because that plugs you into a state of flow. Don't get confused and distracted. Otherwise, it's too easy to think that you are entitled to an easy trip. Nobody is entitled to an easy life. We all have to pay our dues. This is just part of it.

The background of the chapter header features a silhouette of ancient Greek columns against a bright, glowing sun. A green, wavy line with a grid pattern flows across the bottom of the image, under the title.

CHAPTER 4

The Five Pillars of Sustainable Motivation

The Five Pillars of Sustainable Motivation

This chapter is an overview of how to achieve sustainable motivation. While I have presented this information in a rough sequence, it's really important to focus on how you are already motivating yourself.

Focus on the familiar. Don't think that you're going to have to start at the top of the list. It's okay to start in the middle. That's perfectly fine. What's important is you fully plug this tips into what you're doing, scale it up, and then move on to the other pillars until you have all five covered.

Focus on your purpose

It turns out that for people to do a better job at doing what they need to do, they have to first be informed of why they're doing things in the first place. That's right. While having a clear idea of what to do and how to do it are important, it's even more important to understand why you're doing these things in the first place.

Focus on what you stand to lose

I wish I could tell you that most people are proactive. I wish I could tell you that most people are motivated by the things that they hope and dream of. Unfortunately, when it comes to practical reality, most people would rather stay with almost unbearable situations until they feel that their backs are against the wall.

They basically act only in terms of reactions. These are reactive people. Most of us are reactive. Accordingly, telling people what they stand to gain can only motivate them so much. In fact, for a lot of reactive people, thinking in proactive terms isn't much motivation.

What really gets them to sit up and pay attention or better yet, get off the fence is to show them in clear terms what they stand to lose. Reactive people are driven by fear and loss.

Get motivated by daily micro-victories

Believe it or not, every single day, if you're even putting in a half effort into whatever it is you're doing, you're actually achieving lots of victories. The problem is too many of these are routine, familiar, and programmatic that it's very easy for you to overlook them. In fact, it's very easy for you to take them for granted.

In your mind, unless and until you achieve big victories, you're not really winning on a day-to-day basis. Well, you need to learn how to get motivated by micro-victories because they're all over the place.

Turn to others when you begin to slow down

It's important to note that in your journey towards self-discovery, self-awareness, self-actualization, and victory, there are other people making the journey with you. It may seem that you're the only person in that lane. You might've even gotten the idea in your head that nobody can really quite understand you.

However, if you're completely honest with yourself, there are other people around you. You can turn to them when things begin to slow down. When you find your motivation lacking, there are people you can turn to.

Mentally standardize your state of flow and call it into mind

This is the most important part of this process. Unfortunately, you have to master the previous parts to even have a shot at succeeding with this section. This is where the rubber meets the road. If you are able to achieve this, then a life of pretty much unstoppable accomplishment and victory awaits you.

You see, when you enter a state of flow, things become easy. Can you imagine being able to call that state into mind on command? In other words, you call it into mind at that point in time when you're being challenged. When you feel that you need a Hail Mary pass to win this game, you call your state of flow into mind.

Believe it or not, you can do this. However, you need to get all the previous four pillars taken care of before you attempt to do this. Still, this is the ultimate goal of continuous motivation, as far as using it to lead to your personal state of flow.



CHAPTER 5

Focus on Your Purpose

Focus on Your Purpose

If you want to develop sustainable and consistent motivation regardless of your circumstances, you have to have a laser focus on your purpose. What are the big objectives you're working for? What are your life's biggest hopes? What are the things that explain why you wake up day after day and put on your clothes?

Is it just to pay the bills or put food on the table? Is it just to live another day? No, of course not. You have a bigger purpose out there. Unfortunately, a lot of people struggle with motivation precisely because they've lost sight of the big purpose of their lives.

Believe me, this has nothing or little to do with your family, what you do for a living, and your everyday obligations, responsibilities, or duties. It's something more. It's something bigger. What is the reason why you continue to remain on this Earth?

Well, the good news is all of us have a purpose if we dig deep enough. Unfortunately, we get so side-tracked by our attempts to just keep our heads above water that the "big things" don't seem that important. Now, we know deep down inside that they are, but the problem is we focus on what's immediate.

If we keep this up, it's only a matter of time until we live our lives in such a way that it's very easy to conclude that we have no purpose at all. We just all focus on the next crisis that we have to solve or the next set of problems that we have to get over. The idea of having a reason to strive for something simply escapes us.

That's part of the reason why so many people feel stuck. Now, this doesn't mean that they're not happy, but there is no purpose. It's not clear. It's set somewhere in the distance and all they have to look forward to is one set of issues, challenges, and problems after another.

From time to time, they allow themselves to relax. From time to time, they focus on something that delivers pleasure, but a lot of it is shallow. A lot of it is temporary. This is due to the fact that we focus on objectives.

We think that if you achieve something at some point in the future, then you'll be happy. This is a lie. It's an illusion. Here's an example. When I was in high school, I was under the impression that if I worked hard and sacrificed enough, I would get into this school that I've always dreamt of attending.

Sure enough after I did well enough on the SAT test and got my grades up, I got admitted to a really "good school". What do you think happened there? Do you think I was happier? Of course, not. At that point, I started telling myself, "I will be happy once I finish school with the right degree and I get a corporate job."

Sure enough, things turned out according to plan and I got myself a nice job in one of the bigger insurance companies in Southern California. Do you think I was happier then? By that point, my definition of happiness changed to something else. It seems that each time I reach the goal, the goalposts keep getting pushed forward.

I wish I could tell you that somebody else was doing it, but I was doing this to myself. I am hardly alone. You see, our definition of success and happiness change based on our circumstances. If we were just to use happiness as our primary frame of reference, we'll never reach it.

It's going to be an impossible destination that keeps getting pushed further and further away. It's as if we're constantly kicking the can down the road. Again, I'm not the only person doing this.

Now, if I were living my life based on purpose and focusing primarily on why I do things instead of what to do and how to do it, I probably would have a different experience. Purpose is not just an objective. Your purpose actually defines you, reflects your character, maps out your personal values, and reflects your legacy and destiny.

I know that these are big words for a lot of people. After all, this book is supposed to be practical, but this is the most practical thing you could wrap your mind around. Until and unless you focus on the big things of life which is your personal purpose, it's going to be very hard to get motivated and remain so.

It seems that all the other empty details of life constantly get the better of you and you get confused. Your resolve starts to waver. You start thinking, "What's the big deal anyway? Why don't I just choose to be happy now? Why don't I choose to be happy with the things that I get?"

Well, when you do that. You're settling. You're not living a purpose-focused life. You're definitely not living life according to your terms. Instead, you're settling for the crumbs. You're settling for the things life kicks you way.

Before you know it, you end up letting the mundane and the routine nature of life cloud your vision. It's hard for you to develop a sense of urgency because you'd think, "What's the point? I'm never going to be fully happy anyways so might as well settle for now."

Make no mistake. When you focus on your purpose, you clarify the mundane, break past the routine, and excite a deep sense of urgency. You'll never feel like you're just wasting your time and just going through the motions.

All it takes is a laser focus on your purpose. Please stop doing it as some sort of destination. When we do that, we depress, discourage, and diminish ourselves because we focus on the distance between where we are now and where we feel we should be. Focus instead on the fact that you have a purpose in the first place.

Unleash the power of Visualization

One of the main reason people struggle with getting motivated by their sense of purpose is that it's not "real enough". Anybody can write down the grand objectives they have for their lives. Anybody, with enough effort, can put together some sort of mission and vision statement for their personal existence.

This is not the issue. The issue is whether any of this is emotionally urgent and "real enough for them to have their intended effect. The effect of course, is motivation.

One of the best ways to trigger this is to play a mental movie. Imagine your purpose play out in front of your mind's eye. What would you see? Focus on the details and how the characters interact with each other.

Now, allow yourself to feel the emotions of those characters. This is the ideal you in some distant future you. How much different is that person's emotional state? How much clearer is that person's appreciation of hi/her place in the world compared to your understanding now? How intense is the sense of fulfillment that you get when you play this mental movie?

Focus on this. Don't just feel the emotions. Focus on the reality of being in that place. Understand that this is your ultimate goal. Understand that this is what's supposed to push you towards the boring stuff of life and towards the endless duties, responsibilities, and obligations. This is what's supposed to give you the drive and the urgency to overcome the challenges.

Now, you have to keep rehashing this until it has the intended effect. Don't think that just because you came up with the mental movie the first time around, that it's good enough. No. It has to have the intended effect. It has to give you that sense of purpose.

The image features a hand holding a smartphone in the foreground, displaying a vibrant street scene with historic buildings and people. The background is a blurred city street. A blue banner with a green and blue wavy pattern at the bottom right contains the chapter title.

CHAPTER 6

Focus on What You Stand to Lose

Focus on What You Stand to Lose

I wish I could tell you that most people only need to read Chapter 6 for them to get properly motivated, I wish I could tell you that they only need to focus on this ideal state of their lives for them to get the motivation they need to enter a state of flow consistently. After all, this is what the media tells us.

When you look at standard advertising, you are given an alternative view of reality. It's something that you desire. It's something that you hope for. Unfortunately, that's not how it works in reality. It turns out that most people can appreciate the things that they should be doing. Most people won't have a problem when you tell them the kind of life that they should strive for. In fact, they would agree with you.

The problem is most people would not lift a finger to achieve that ideal state. They know that these are the things that should happen, but the problem is they're too bugged down by their daily lives. They're too focused on day-to-day survival that they really don't have much time and energy left for the things that they should do.

Tony Robbins said that people are focused on what they must do. They tend to ignore the things that they should do. Now, if you were to remind them of the things that they should do, they would tell you that they would agree with you 100%. Who wouldn't?

The problem is when it comes to the actual urgency and energy needed to actually get closer to those things, they draw a blank. This is due to the fact that most people are reactive by nature. Believe it or not, most people are motivated primarily by fear or the possibility of loss.

You can talk to most people until you're blue in the face about the things that they stand to gain. You can paint all sorts of bright picture and mental imagery regarding how they stand to win if they just reach out for their dreams.

This all sounds awesome. The problem is people are not motivated by proactive promises. Instead, they will only lift a finger to change their situation and alter the course of their lives if they feel that their backs are against the wall. If they feel that they are about to lose or fail, that's when they develop a sense of urgency.

This is why it's very important that if you're looking to achieve a constant state of flow through motivation on command, that you also focus on what you stand to lose. Often times, this is all you need to do.

Let's face it. If you have a lot of things that you need to get through, it's very easy to think that, "I need to get rid of this stuff first before I can start thinking about the things that I should do to take my life to the next level.

Well, those sticky notes in your mind and that to-do list deep down in your heart will never go away. If you get rid of some entries, some newer entries will take care of them. This goes on and on and on until people lower your body in a box.

If you want to get out of this trap, focus on what you stand to lose. Focus on fear to motivate you. How do you do this? Think about the disappointment you'll feel when you fail to achieve a state of flow. How much of a let-down would you feel?

You know you're capable of making things happen, but because you did not push hard to motivate yourself consistently, things didn't happen. You have to raw ingredients, but it didn't pan out. You have yourself to blame.

Also, think about the hassle of starting over and over again. You have to understand that if you are not living your life based on your purpose and you're not looking to achieve a state of flow, you're basically just starting over and over again every single day.

Things are not falling into place to the point that things become easy. You're constantly struggling with getting things done, but nothing seems to happen. You're always starting from square one.

Similarly, think about how pointless it is to wander around aimlessly. That's really what you're doing if you lose focus, if you're not motivated by a sense of purpose, and your ability to trigger your state of flow is random. You're just going around in circles.

Finally, think about the regret. Think of yourself as 70 years old or 80 years old and you're thinking back on your life. Did you overcome your fears? Did you refuse to take no for an answer? Did you push back against the challenges that life sent your way?

There's a sense of regret when the only thing you can focus on is your appearance and other worthless, shallow, and temporary concerns. The flesh breaks apart with time. What cannot be taken away from you is your sense of purpose.

If all of the above fails, feel free to slap yourself around mentally. Ask yourself, "I need to wake up, what am I afraid of? Why am I not achieving big things in my life? Why am I not tackling big issues in my life? Am I really pushing my life to the next level? Why do I always instantly go for the quick and easy instead of the hard, narrow, and ultimately more rewarding?" Practice a little bit of tough love on yourself. You'd be surprised what would turn up.

Visualize yourself confronting your reactive side

In the 1980s, there was a movie called “An Officer and a Gentleman”. The character played by Richard Gere was given a hard time by his drill instructor. This drill instructor insulted him, shouted at him, and was constantly telling him, “Quit. You’re not fit for this. You don’t belong here. Quit.”

In one of the most iconic parts of that movie, Richard Gere turned to his drill instructor with tears in his eyes saying, “I have nowhere else to go.” I want you to visualize yourself being a drill sergeant to yourself.

Stare at yourself in the eyes and tell yourself, “What are you doing? Why are you wasting your time? Why did you quit? Why have you settled for the crumbs in life when there are big summits that you could scale?” Allow yourself to give yourself a hard time emotionally.

This is going to be very hard because let’s face it, we all have ego. One key part of our ego is self-protection. We don’t like to get hurt. We don’t like to be made to feel that we’re nothing. However, often times, that’s exactly what we need to feel to break us out of the routine because we are performing way below our potential.

If you cannot get motivated consistently and on command, break yourself out of that routine by visualizing yourself as a drill sergeant staring down and telling yourself, “What are you going to do? Why have you settled for this? You’re capable of so much more. Why did you stick to this pattern? Every single day that passes is a wasted opportunity.”



CHAPTER 7

Get motivated by daily micro-victories

Get motivated by daily micro-victories

Did you know that every single day, you are able to do certain things right? Everybody knows it. After all, that's the reason why you are in a relationship or why you are employed. If you're a student, it's also the reason why you're still in school.

Despite the struggles that you may be feeling, you are doing well enough for you to at least stay in the game. Focus on these victories. You're already getting stuff done. Believe it or not, every single day packs opportunities for achievements.

You're not just going through the motions. You're not just going through a checklist. There is always an opportunity for achievement there. These are called micro-achievements. Believe it or not, something as banal as showing up on time is an achievement.

Did you know that there are a lot of people out there who have a tough time showing up on time? I know you're probably thinking that that's unprofessional. For whatever reason, people never run out of excuses for why they're always late. The fact that you can show up on time is a victory in of itself.

Similarly, getting small tasks done are victories. Now, you may be thinking that this is too much. You might even be thinking that I'm pandering to you or condescending. No. Imagine when you first started, those small tasks were not so small because you haven't done them before. Now, you're knocking them out every day. Be aware of this.

Finally, communicating with people clearly is also an achievement. Now, you may be thinking, "Well, as a human being, that is a default skill we don't have." Absolutely wrong. You can't even imagine how many people have bad communications skills. The fact that you're able to communicate clearly enough to get things done in whatever organization you're in is a big deal.

I want you to be aware that showing up on time, getting small tasks done, and communicating clearly are achievements in of themselves. Now, they're not massive achievements, but they are achievements nonetheless. Allow yourself to become pumped up by each of these. Push yourself to do more micro-tasks like these.

If you are constantly showing up on time, take it up to the next level and show up fifteen minutes early. If you are getting small tasks done, level up by getting a lot bigger tasks done. Similarly, if you're a good communicator, take it to the next level and collaborate to achieve greater things.

The great thing about small accomplishments is that they lay the foundation for even larger ones. However, this will only happen if that is your intention. You will only level up if you want to level up.

Unfortunately, a lot of people dismiss their ability to achieve micro-victories and they stay stuck. They think, "Well, this is really not that big of a deal. I do this all day. So what?" That really is too bad because if you setup a system where you achieve a streak of accomplishments, sooner or later you'll achieve momentum and you'll get motivated.

This motivation grows like a wildfire. If you have been struggling with being productive in the office and you notice that one day, your to-do list just got shorter and shorter because you were knocking stuff out, allow yourself to get in the moment. Allow yourself to achieve some level of physical, emotional, and mental momentum so things get easier and easier as you do them.

This is paired with an increasing level of motivation. Try to recreate this next day and your motivation can push you to do more and more complicated tasks. The more you do it, the more momentum you get. Ideally, you should work on the small stuff to achieve a level of momentum and then, give yourself a harder assignment.

Now, this doesn't mean that you have to knock out the hardest item on your to-do list, but if you have something moderate, the moment you knock it out, you get a nice sense of reward. You did something that you normally would avoid. That's a big thing.

Lay your day out by scaling difficulty

To get motivated by daily micro-victories in a systematic and methodical way, follow these steps:

Step #1: List out all your to-do tasks

Step #2: Start with the easiest and end with the biggest and most intimidating things

By "biggest", I'm talking about tasks that really can't be broken down. They have to be handled in one big block.

Step #3: Blast through the first items

Since you're starting out with the easiest items, chances are you've done them before. Chances are you know full well how easy they are so knock them out. Blast through them as quickly as possible. However, do not compromise quality.

Step #4: Allow yourself to become emotionally aware and excited

When you see yourself blasting through easier items, stop for a second and allow yourself to become emotionally aware. At least tell yourself, “It is happening. I’m blasting through this stuff. I’m no longer taking an hour checking email, or shuffling papers, or going over calculation that I know are already set. I’m not robbing myself of time doing “busy” stuff.” Let it sink in. Get excited that you are blasting through your list.

Step #5: Push yourself to do more and more complicated stuff

As you cut through the easy items on your to-do list like a hot knife through butter, eventually, you’ll get to more complicated stuff. This is more moderately difficult material. Allow yourself to carry the momentum that you built blasting through the basic stuff. If you are truly emotionally aware, this should not be a problem. You know that you’re doing well so go with it. Let it happen.

Step #7: As you knock out more complicated stuff, allow yourself to get even more excited

It’s easy to look at personal excitement in terms of volume. For example, you’re going through your to-do list and it says read and respond to 100 emails. Once you’ve done that, you’re thinking that you’ve done really well, but you have to go beyond that.

You have to also look at the quality or complexity of the item you’re handling. Get excited by those items. Understand that normally, this takes quite a bit of work and getting used to, but here you are knocking it out. Allow yourself to scale up the excitement that you have. This is a sense of ownership, control, and discipline you’re achieving.

Step #8: Map out how far you get each day

Now, we’ve got some bad news for you. If you laid out your to-do list properly, chances are there will be some items there that really take it out of you. Maybe these are the moderate stuff or the harder materials. Whatever the case may be, as you initially blast through the easy stuff and things slow down a little bit with the moderate stuff, eventually, you’ll reach a point where you’ll run out of time.

Maybe it’s time to go home or it’s time to get on with the rest of your day. Whatever the case may be, you did not quite destroy your daily to-do list. Well, don’t worry about it. This is not the end of the world. I just need you to map out how far you reached that day.

This has to be graphical. You have to come up with a map. Don't beat yourself up unnecessarily if you notice that you're backsliding or if there's a fluctuation on the pattern. Don't be discouraged by that. This happens to the very best of that. Instead, just look at the map and allow yourself to get motivated by the fact that you are making progress.

Eventually, you'll notice a pattern. The completion map eventually starts averaging more to the right. This means that over an extended period of time, you are making consistent progress. Allow yourself to get excited about this.

Most importantly, regardless of how far you get every single day, always shoot to go further and further each day. Stay focused on your life purpose. Stay connected to it. Allow it to push you forward. That is your motivation. With that motivation, shoot to go further and further each day with your to-do list.

A photograph of two men sitting at a table in a bright, modern office or meeting space. The man on the left is seen from the back, wearing a dark shirt and glasses. The man on the right is facing him, wearing a light-colored blazer over a white shirt, and is gesturing with his hands while speaking. The background shows large windows and other office furniture. A blue banner with the text 'CHAPTER 8' is overlaid on the top right of the image.

CHAPTER 8

Turn to Others When You Begin to Slow Down

Turn to Others When You Begin to Slow Down

In this chapter, I'm going to walk you through a technique that is normally a negative practice. Generally speaking, it's a bad idea to compare yourself to other people.

People do this on Facebook all the time. They look at their friends' vacation pictures, they look at their friends' kids graduation pictures, or photos of their friends in the driveway with a new Ferrari, BMW or Mercedes Benz. They look at amazing pictures of their friends on Instagram as they go through exotic travel destinations all over the world. And then they do something that is all too predictable: they feel miserable.

You see, normally, when you compare yourself to other people, you line up what's missing in your life to what they have going for them. When you feel envious or when you feel sad looking at somebody's vacation pictures, the first thing that comes to your mind is the fact that you haven't been going on vacations. Maybe you can't afford it, or maybe you just don't have the time. Whatever the case may be, you feel left behind.

Similarly, when you compare yourself and your relationships to the 30th wedding anniversary of your friend, you think about how inadequate, dissatisfied or frustrated you are with your relationships. Similarly, when you compare appearances to other people, you look at how chiseled, toned, and how closely they look like Greek gods and goddess, and you look at how out of shape you are.

People do this all the time. When they compare, they automatically line up their worst and compare it to somebody's best. Now, let me ask you, is that a winning strategy? Of course not. But we can't help but do it.

Obviously, if you have \$10 million in the bank, you're not going to compare yourself to somebody with \$1 million. That's a foregone conclusion. When it comes to income, you blow them out of the water each and every day. Similarly, if you look like Brad Pitt, you're not going to compare yourself to somebody who doesn't look all that good.

Instead, the human tendency is to compare what we don't have or what we're insecure about with what people have going for them. We compare their best with our worst. This is why, generally speaking, it's a bad idea to compare yourself with others.

However, in this chapter, you're going to use this all too human tendency to work for you instead of against you. That's right, you're going to compare yourself to successful people you know. But here's the difference: when you compare yourself to, let's say Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Colonel Sanders, Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordan, you name it, you tell yourself a different story.

Normally, when you compare yourself to your friends and family members who seem to be doing well in life, you tell yourself a certain story. You tell yourself, "You've been left behind. You don't have it. They're so much happier than you. They deserve to be happy and you don't."

Those are the normal narratives that go through your head. In this case, you're going to tell yourself a different story. You are going to tell yourself that they went through hassles.

Did you know that Michael Jordan originally was rejected by his high school basketball team? Did you know that Sylvester Stallone had so many doors slammed in his face because he had this ridiculous screenplay about a boxer in Philadelphia called Rocky? Did you know that Colonel Sanders of KFC chicken fame failed so many times in life?

Believe it or not, there are lots of successful people that flirted with the idea of suicide because they met so many failures and disappointments in their life. But here they are, textbook cases of success, overcoming the odds, and the ability to win.

Tell yourself that those people went through hassles too, but they were able to do it. They went through periods of doubt. They went through periods where everybody around them told them that they were crazy and that they were stupid.

In fact, Albert Einstein was told that he won't amount to anything. That's how stupid he appeared to his high school teacher. But nobody's talking about his high school teacher now, right? We talk about Albert Einstein, Michael Jordan, Bill Gates, and Steve Jobs as heroes.

But they are human beings too. They felt the pain of disappointment. They felt the pain of low expectations because there are so many people telling them that there's something wrong with them.

Steve Jobs was adopted. His mother gave him up for adoption. And it broke his heart that his birth parents also had another child, but that child wasn't put up for adoption. He was the one put up for adoption.

Do you know what that does to a person's psychology? That person, for the rest of his or her life, would ask, "Why did I get put up for adoption when my sibling wasn't?"

I need you to get into the minds of these successful people and realize certain lessons. First, as I have mentioned earlier, they go through hassles just like you, but they were able to overcome. Compare yourself to them in terms of their ability to overcome. In fact, a lot of those people start off in a worse position than you.

Sam Walton, the founder of Walmart, one of the richest companies in American history, actually started his company in the red. He actually violated the American securities law just to raise money for his first store. That's how broke he was. But now, his descendants are all billionaires.

This brings home the second lesson. These people that you're comparing yourself to, are not better than you. Oprah Winfrey did not come from a privileged background, but she was able to overcome. If she can do it, you can do it too.

These people did something different from you. They improved their problem-solving skills. That's all there is to it. This means that you have to allow yourself to challenge your problem-solving skills.

If you are faced with any kind of challenge, try to go under it. Try the front door. If that's not available or if the basement is off limits, try the roof. If that's not happening, try the side door or the back door.

If today is simply impossible, try it the next day and the day after. Try next week, or next month. Eventually, you will be able to solve the puzzle because every single one of life's difficulties and disappointments is simply a puzzle that you did not have the solution for at that given time.

But just like a puzzle in real life, just because you did not solve it right, it doesn't mean that you'll be unable to solve it forever. Keep trying. Map out how far you get and who you thought about to inspire you.

Keep repeating this daily. Keep pushing. In fact, if you only shot for a 1% improvement every day, you will eventually break through.

Think about it, a 1% improvement. It may not seem like much, but it means that in 100 days, which is over three months, you will double your results. Not too bad. And if you keep shooting for that 1% improvement every day, you will overshoot your goal sooner rather than later.

Don't be afraid to turn to the lives of other people when you begin to slow down. When you start feeling a resistance and that nagging doubt enters the back of your head where you feel that things are just not possible and that you're crazy for even trying, slow down.

Understand that other people who had it worse than you went through the same situation, and they came out on top. Nobody helped them. Nobody gave them a hand up. You can do the same.

Turn to Others When You Begin to Slow Down

Mentally Standardize Your State of Flow and Call It Into Mind

At this stage, you should already have established states of flow. You should already be achieving that mental and emotional state. Now, the next step is to call it into mind. In other words, make it happen on demand.

As I've mentioned in the introduction to this book, the fact that you achieve states of flow from time to time is not enough. Because, let's face it, everybody achieves a state of flow from time to time. What you're shooting for is something dramatically different. You're shooting to achieve that state of flow on command.

It is not based on how you feel, not based on whether there is the right kind of drama around you, and it doesn't matter whether people are pushing you and are properly supportive. No. You must be able to call this state of mind on command, based on your will, based on your decisions, and based on your agenda. This is how you separate consistently and habitually successful people from everybody else.

How do you do this? Well, follow the steps below.

Step #1: Pay attention to your performance

Get ready for the next time you achieve a state of flow. Anticipate it. Be ready for it.

What are you going to do when it happens? Well, the next time you achieve a state of flow, take notes. Savor it. Stop for a second and tell yourself, "I am in a state of flow. This is happening." Allow yourself to get emotionally absorbed in the process. Try to remember every detail of your mental and emotional experience.

Remember, the hallmark of a state of flow is when things become really easy and everything is predictable. You make a move, something positive happens. You make another move, and another thing happens. Remember every detail of this mental and emotional state.

Step #2: Simplify it in a form you can quickly call into mind

Please understand that since you are feeling certain things and thinking about certain things, you can create a formula, or at least an adequate description of your state of flow. Pay attention to what happened before, during and after that state.

Step #3: Test your ability to trigger states of flow on command

Now that you have written down the last time you were in a state of flow and you've kind of broken down the different elements, think about how your motivation spikes up. Think about it and see if your mental clarity increases. That's how you know you're on the right track. Keep tweaking until the mental images that you're thinking of truly triggers a state of flow.

I wish I could tell you that this is very easy. I wish I could tell you that there is some sort of cookie cutter, one-size-fits-all solution for this. There is not. You just have to do it on your own. You just have to keep tweaking those mental images until you reach that high level of mental and emotional clarity.

Your motivation level must be palpable. You must truly feel it. You're not playing mind games with yourself. You're not deluding yourself. This is real because the motivation you feel, paired with mental clarity, translates into actual results.

This is important. Because you know you're just engaging in self delusion when you feel good, but that's it. You know you're onto something real when you're able to produce more work and that work meets higher standards of quality. That's when you know you have triggered a state of flow. Everything else is a mental mirage. Know the difference.

Step #4: Try it consistently

When you feel your motivation triggered by this mental image that you use to enter a state of flow, keep it going by focusing on mental images that you know trigger your state of flow. You can also do this when you feel your motivation is lagging. Try to spike it up with the right mental image.

You're probably going to have to switch through many different mental images until you get it right, but that's okay. The key is to identify a consistent mental image that puts you in that place.

Step #5: Double your efforts

Here's the secret: when you have the mental image and you've achieved that state of flow, put it to use. Double your efforts. Allow yourself to do twice as much as before. If you're only able to file one report for your job each day, use your state of flow to do two, then three, then four. Go with that feeling.

Don't say to yourself, "Well, I have met my quota already" or "What am I doing? If I step up my production, chances are, my supervisor, my boss, or the owner of the company would increase their expectations of my productivity. I might be shooting myself in the foot here."

Forget all those doubts. Just go with the feeling that now you are taking ownership of an important part of your life. Before, you were lazy, unmotivated, and you were just doing the bare minimum to avoid

getting fired. Now, you are going to be a star. You're going to be one of the few assets in the company that you work for.

Did you know that in any given organization, 20% of the people there account for 80% of the results. This is called the Pareto Principle, also called the 80/20 rule. If you want to get anywhere in life, be part of the 20%.

The 80/20 rule is an iron rule of human life. Did you know that 20% of the population own 80% of the wealth? 20% of the population pay the vast majority of the taxes? 20% of any NBA team account for 80% of their points? This applies across the board. This is hardwired into the human condition.

Be part of that 20%. Let it happen. Double your efforts today.

Step #6: Push harder on more difficult tasks

Focus on getting a crystal clear view of the mental image that triggers your state of flow. Zoom in on it. Allow it to sink in.

Once you get triggered and you're extremely motivated, just let it happen. Don't brake it. Don't stop. Don't edit yourself.

Don't say, "I'm just doing too much" or "I'm taking on something that's too big." No. Just focus on your harder tasks and just push through. Allow the momentum to carry you forward.

Don't mentally say, "What am I doing?" Don't think of any thoughts or images that would make you doubt what you're doing. Let the momentum carry you forward.

This is how you mentally standardize your state of flow and call it into command. The more you do it, the more natural it becomes. Eventually, it becomes part of who you are, and success becomes habitual.