

Skillbook

Get Motivated!

Time Management
Skills



Mindtools

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Skillbook

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1. Introduction

Self-motivation is what drives us to do the hard work needed to accomplish an important goal or task. If that activity is something that we enjoy doing or that excites us, it can be easy to find the motivation to do it. At other times, we might need to dig a little deeper into our reserves of self-motivation to get to grips with an undesirable or boring task.

That's because there are essentially two types of motivation: **intrinsic** and **extrinsic**.

- Intrinsic motivation is the “internal” drive you feel when you do something because you want to do it, such as a favorite hobby or pastime, or working toward a desired goal.
- Extrinsic motivation comes from “external” factors that you are given by other people. For example, a looming deadline set by your manager can be a powerful call to action.

It's important to understand the sources of your motivation, so that you can use them to achieve your goals, or to get yourself out of a slump.

This **Skillbook** will help you to kick-start your self-motivation, so that you can tackle even the most difficult or boring of tasks head on.

In around one hour, you'll learn about the three key elements of self-motivation, and you'll complete some short exercises that will help you to discover what motivates you. We'll cover:

- Building self-confidence, and thinking positively.
- Finding your focus, and knowing what you need to do to get motivated.
- Defining your direction, and setting goals that will take you where you want to go.

2. Building Your Self-Confidence

Getting to where you want to go in life takes self-belief and a hearty dose of self-confidence.

Often, though, the path to your goal can seem long and daunting. You can fixate on the obstacles and challenges that lie ahead, without appreciating what you've accomplished already and how far you've come. So, another key ingredient for success is positive thinking.

If you only think about the things that you still need to do, you put yourself in a negative space. This allows more negative thoughts to enter your head, and soon you're telling yourself that you don't have what it takes to get the job done. Thoughts about past failures creep in, and small issues become the proverbial mountains made out of molehills!

To keep your motivation levels high, you must remind yourself of your strengths, and the times when you enjoyed success. This boosts your confidence, and it reminds you that you can achieve what you set out to do.



Action:

Fill in the table on the next page with as many of your positive skills and experiences that you can think of. These can be strengths and advantages in any area of your life, not just at work. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What am I consistently complimented for?
- What rewards and accolades have I received?
- What things do I do really well, with little effort?
- What opportunities are open to me right now?
- What do I have that others would want?
- What have I achieved that makes me really proud?

Positive Aspects of My Life		
My Strengths	My Current Advantages	My Successes

The aim of this exercise is to encourage you to think positively about yourself right now, as well as to give you a way to keep your confidence high in times of self-doubt.

Keep a copy of this list close by, and add to it regularly.

3. Knowing What You Want

“Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.”

– John Wooden, American basketball coach.

Your thoughts are powerful. Everything you do, and every action that you take, starts with a thought. So, to make anything happen, you need to plant the seed with an idea or a desire.

This means that you have to know what you want or need, before you can go out and get it. The good news is that meeting your wants and needs is a powerful motivator.

Famous motivation experts Abraham Maslow and Fredrick Herzberg both talk about the critical nature of satisfying needs. Some of these are the basic survival needs that we all share, such as finding good-quality food, water and shelter. After we meet these, we then turn our attention to our individual personal needs.

Getting Our Needs Met

Most of us will work exceptionally hard to meet our own core needs. For instance, if you have a core need for acceptance, you will work to meet that need. However, you need to do so in a positive and constructive manner, rather than in ways that are destructive and unhelpful to your overall success.

The next exercise will help to you think about how powerful your needs are, and how they impact your behavior.

Action:



Think about a time when you got cross with someone, whether fairly or unfairly. Maybe you argued with a colleague, or you took your frustration out on a salesperson. Describe the incident in the box on the next page.

Describe a time when you got angry or frustrated with someone else:



Action:

Think about **why** you acted the way that you did. What need of yours was being neglected at the time? Arguments might stem from a need to be in control, or a need to be respected. Look at the list of needs below, and identify the ones that applied to you and your situation.

- Accomplishment.
- Acceptance.
- Adventure.
- Advancement.
- Authority.
- Belonging.
- Clarity.
- Connection.
- Control.
- Discipline.
- Duty.
- Freedom.
- Honesty.
- Influence.
- Justice.
- Knowledge.
- Love.
- Mastery.
- Money.
- Morality.
- Opportunity.
- Peace.
- Pleasure.
- Power.
- Quiet.
- Recognition.
- Respect.
- Responsibility.
- Safety.
- Security.
- Spirituality.
- Trust.

Now, from this list, or from some other source, identify the top six needs that drive you to act, work hard, and persist with your objectives. For each need, think of one example where that need was met, and one where it wasn't met.

Need	This need was met when...	This need was unmet when...

Need	This need was met when...	This need was unmet when...

When you are clear about what you want and what you need, your brain automatically begins seeking ways to get it. Your needs are the connection between motivation and action.

However, you can't stop at knowing what you need and thinking positively about the outcome. It also takes a lot of work and commitment to meet your needs, so that's what we'll look at next.



4. Defining Your Goals

There are many ways that cause you to get sidetracked along the path to success. To avoid this happening, you need to be clear about where you want to go, and what you want to achieve. You also need to have daily objectives to guide you so that you stay on track. This is where goal setting comes in.

Self-motivation relies on having reasonable and attainable goals – there is little point in working for something that has a low probability of success. Remember how important self-confidence is to self-motivation? You need to build your successes and prove to yourself how much you can accomplish. You won't be able to do this if the goals that you set for yourself are fundamentally unattainable.

For instance, if you need financial independence, setting your sights on a big win at the poker table, or aiming to pick the right lottery numbers, are not realistic or probable goals! Going back to school or investing in some additional training, on the other hand, might well help you to get a better paid job and achieve the financial position that you desire.

Action:



Using what you have learned about your needs and desires, and write down a brief overview of one clear and attainable goal that you want to achieve in the next 12 months.

Then, make your goal powerful by using the SMART mnemonic. Do this by answering the question prompts provided in the table on the following page.

SMART stands for:

- **S** – Specific.
- **M** – Measurable.
- **A** – Achievable.
- **R** – Relevant.
- **T** – Time-bound.

Overview: My Goal	
Specific <i>What do you want to accomplish?</i> <i>Why is this important?</i> <i>Who is involved?</i> <i>Which resources will you need?</i>	
Measurable <i>How will you know when you've accomplished this goal?</i>	
Achievable <i>How can you accomplish this goal?</i> <i>How realistic is the goal based on constraints, such as financial factors?</i>	
Relevant <i>Is the goal worthwhile?</i> <i>Is this the right time?</i> <i>Does it support your work or career aspirations?</i>	
Time-bound <i>When will you put in the work?</i> <i>What can you do six months from now? Or six weeks from now?</i> <i>What can you do today?</i>	

Now that you have written your goal down, you have significantly increased your chances of attaining it. The simple act of putting goals in writing is one of the most crucial steps in self-motivation. (Now add the first step toward it on to your To-Do List!)

Visualizing Success

To enhance your self-motivation further, you can use mental imagery to create a strong vision of your goal. When you make your goal visual, you make it more real in your mind.



Action:

Start the visualization process by closing your eyes and imagining yourself achieving your goal. Then answer the questions in the table below.

Picture yourself finally achieving this goal. What do you see?

How do you feel about yourself as you achieve it?

How do you act?
How do others respond to you?

Making a Contract

Next, it's useful to make a contract with yourself. This is a further reinforcement of the commitment that you are making. Writing out your intentions can be a powerful way of taking control and improving your chances of success. And, because many of us relate to the notion of contracts and the binding nature of legal agreements, a contract with yourself can be a great motivational tool.

Tip:



When your goal is large and it involves a number of smaller objectives, break it down into smaller, more manageable pieces. Then tie the pieces together using your contract.



Action:

Turn your written goal statement into a contract. Fill in the first section, below.

1. I, _____

do hereby commit to _____

by _____

2. Upon successful completion of this goal, I will reward myself with _____

Sign _____



5. Rewarding Yourself!

To stay motivated, it's important that you're rewarded for your accomplishments. And, when there is no one around to give you the rewards that you want, it's ok to treat yourself!

Choose rewards that are important to you, and that will inspire you to press on, even when you don't want to. So, try to reward yourself with something that you will really appreciate, and make sure that it fits the size of your accomplishment.

For example, for a less-significant goal, your reward could be a night off to relax with a movie and a box of chocolates. Or, when you achieve a big objective, you could treat yourself to a new tablet computer or some clothes that you really want.

Build your reward into your contract to make it real and official. You can also give yourself periodic rewards, which is particularly helpful with longer-term projects.

Action:



Think of your reward for the goal that you identified earlier, and add it to the contract on the previous page.

All that's left now is to bring your goal full circle. Use positive thinking and the self-confidence that you have developed, and live like you have achieved your goal already.

There are times when you may need to remind yourself to smile and walk tall, and you may need to give yourself pep talks to continue to build your confidence. After a while, though, you'll likely have experienced a few successes on the way to your goal.

Then, with that renewed sense of confidence and self-esteem, it's off to tackle the next goal, while always remembering to celebrate the wonderful "you" of the present, as well as the great "you" of the future!

6. Key Points

Self-motivation is what you need when the going gets tough. It's what helps you to lift yourself out of a slump when you don't feel you can persist, when you start letting deadlines slip, or when you lose sight of the end objective.

Some people are naturally more self-motivated than others. Everyone, though, can benefit from learning some self-motivational tools and techniques.

First, you need to feel good about yourself, and develop the self-confidence and positive attitude that will help give you the drive to succeed. Then, define your goals, visualize success, and put your expectations down in writing. Finally, reward yourself appropriately for your accomplishments.