



23 Best Ways to Get and Keep Motivated

by Geoffrey James

No matter what you do for a living, the key to success is motivating yourself, each and every day. Most people don't realize that motivation mostly emerges from minor changes in your own behavior. Here's how to remain a go-getter, even when the going gets rough:

1. **Realize that YOU are in control.** You cannot control the outside world, but you can control your emotional reaction to it.
2. **Accept where you are.** Life is like those signs that read "You Are Here." You can get somewhere else only if you know where you are now.
3. **Adopt a positive vocabulary.** Use strong adjectives (e.g., "fantastic") to describe what's good and weak words (e.g., "annoying") to describe what's not.
4. **Condition your mind.** Train yourself to think positive thoughts while avoiding negative thoughts.
5. **Condition your body.** It takes physical energy to take action. Get your food and exercise budget in place and follow it like a business plan.
6. **Avoid negative people.** They drain your energy and waste your time, so hanging with them is like shooting yourself in the foot.
7. **Seek out the similarly motivated.** Their positive energy will rub off on you, and you can imitate their success strategies.
8. **Have goals—but remain flexible.** No plan should be cast in concrete, lest it become more important than achieving the goal.

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9. **Act with a higher purpose.** Any activity or action that doesn't serve your higher goal is wasted effort—and should be avoided.
10. **Take responsibility.** If you blame (or credit) luck, fate, or divine intervention, you'll always have an excuse.
11. **Stretch past your limits.** Walking the old, familiar paths is how you grow old. Stretching makes you grow and evolve.
12. **Don't expect perfection.** Perfectionists are the losers in the game of life. Strive for excellence rather than the unachievable.
13. **Celebrate your failures.** Your most important lessons in life will come from what you don't achieve. Take time to understand where you fell short.
14. **Don't take success too seriously.** Success can breed tomorrow's failure if you use it as an excuse to become complacent.
15. **Avoid weak goals.** Goals are the soul of achievement, so never begin them with "I'll try..." Always start with "I will" or "I must."
16. **Treat inaction as the only real failure.** If you don't take action, you fail by default and can't even learn from the experience.
17. **Welcome obstacles.** You can't grow stronger if you're not lifting something heavy, so savor your problems.
18. **Get perspective.** Take the time and effort to step back, reexamine your assumptions, and find truths that you missed before.
19. **Appreciate being alive.** Never neglect to marvel at the miracle of conscious existence, which is all too soon over.
20. **Relax more often.** Spend at least one hour every day doing something that's just because you enjoy doing it.
21. **Experience wonder.** Take pleasure in the unexpected and unusual because without them life would be tedious and boring.
22. **Be playful.** The joy of a child still lives inside you; let that child out at least once each day.
23. **Give thanks.** Experience deep gratitude for all the wonderful things in your life: family, friends, work, and play.

Getting and keeping motivated puts you in control of your actions and your career, thereby lessening stress. Even implementing a handful of these changes can have a major effect on your health and your attitude.

About the Author:

Geoffrey James is a veteran business journalist who now writes a daily column for Inc.com. His latest book, *Business Without the Bullsh*t*, won the following praise from Publishers Weekly: "The author's pithy and frank style matches his title... a quick, impactful primer for anyone wanting to be more effective on the job."

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