

IDEAS FOR SUCCESS

How can I motivate myself

By Mark Beard, M.A.

Do you have a vague notion of wanting something more? Maybe it is becoming a pressing desire. Self-improvement is something desired by most people; but for various reasons, motivation often comes and goes, making change difficult. The good news is that getting oneself motivated may be easier than you might think. Consider the following ideas for self-motivation:

1. **Know what you want.** Get a picture in your mind of where you want to be and what you want to accomplish. Often our goals remain too vague; consequently our plan to reach our goals remain a bit hazy. Try using the "SMART" goals formula. For example, is your goal S-specific, M-measurable, A-attainable, R-realistic, T-time-sensitive?
2. **Find out what it will take to achieve your goal.** Do your homework. This can be done through talking with someone who has attained the goal you are considering, reading books on the topic, researching the details of attaining or that define your goal.
3. **Map out your plan.** A step-by-step process is helpful for most people when they are venturing out in new areas of their life and new exploits. Where do I begin? What new skills or knowledge will I need? How will I know if I am on the right path? The more you think it through, the easier it will be to succeed.
4. **Have someone hold you accountable.** People often do not want to share their dreams with others because of a fear of failure. Ironically, most of us are surrounded by people who would love to see us improve our lives. The key is to tap into a relationship with such people and give them permission to check on your progress, remind you of your commitment, and cheer you on to your goal. You remain in charge, but now you know you have a supportive friend.
5. **Keep the dream alive.** Talk about your dreams. Share with supportive friends and family what you have accomplished. Continually learn more about what you hope to accomplish.
6. **Just do it!** Sometimes getting started is the hardest part. I compare it to jumping off the high-dive for the first time. Even though you have seen others do it, there is still the unknown, the self-doubts, the fear, and the overwhelming feelings with which to contend. However, once you have a plan you feel good about and a plan you know is beneficial to you, sometimes you just have to jump! When you do, I think you will find the butterflies in the pit of your stomach will give way to a sense of exhilaration from your accomplishments.

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