

# Inspiration Trumps Motivation

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One of my favorite distinctions is between motivation and inspiration.

Motivation is something outside of ourselves that pushes us to take action.

**Inspiration is something within ourselves that pulls us to take action.**

Motivation promises rewards or the avoidance of punishment.

**Inspiration promises satisfaction and fulfillment.**

Motivation can be positive or negative. **Inspiration is always positive.**

Most successful entrepreneurs have a healthy dose of both motivation and inspiration. Sometimes this inspiration is described as having a great passion for what they're doing or pursuing.

Interestingly, I mostly see people concentrating on being motivated. They go out of their way to find things that will motivate them to do something else.

When people act from being motivated alone, that motivation must be on-going and usually must escalate in intensity for the person to continue to feel motivated to perform because their heart isn't into what they're doing.

In some cases their apathetic or even bad attitude serves as evidence that the only reason they're taking action is to avoid consequences. This would be form of negative motivation. The motivation is actually to NOT get something.

For example, a lot of people I know exercise so they won't get fat. They are motivated by the fear or not being able to fit into their current clothing, or of being made fun of or judged for their larger size. As soon as something happens that gives them an excuse for gaining weight, such as pregnancy or a broken leg, they lose motivation because they now have a reasonable excuse for weighing more.

If your motivation to start a business comes from not wanting to work in an office or punch a clock, you'll want to delve deeper into what inspiration exists for you to own a business.

Remember, inspiration is generated within you. It's a feeling, an itch, a burning desire to "go do". It infuses you with a cozy feeling you're on the right path or it could show-up as a burning drive. This is what sustains you through periods of difficulty and supports you in taking necessary actions to get to where you want to go, even when those actions are uncomfortable to you.

Erin Brockovich is an extreme example of being inspired to pursue the clean-up of a local town. If you recall her story, she was both inspired and motivated. The inspiration was that drive to keep fighting the system and big business, and her motivation was that she had three children who could've been infected by the contamination. The combination of these two elements kept her going against all odds and numerous setbacks.

***What's your level of inspiration and motivation in your own business?***

A question I often receive from clients is "How do I know if I'm inspired?"

My response... "If you're asking me then you aren't."

Inspiration shows up for different people in different ways. For some it's a deep sense of knowing that they're on the right path. For others it's a fiery drive that nothing could put out. And for still others it's a feeling of bliss or joy that accompanies them as they tackle tasks—both easy and difficult. No matter how you experience inspiration, you will definitely know when it's present for you.

Just because you're inspired, doesn't mean you won't have down days, sometimes doubt your purpose, or get off track a little. This is where positive motivators are most effective.

Positive motivators are the rewards we set for ourselves once we reach a milestone or goal. Having positive motivators gives us something else to keep our eye on when the goal itself gets blurry. And, once we've earned the positive motivator it serves as an anchor for our success.

For example, I had a client who was launching an ecommerce website. He set the goal of having the site earn \$10,000 per month by the end of the year. When he does that, he will purchase a new Mercedes. His positive motivator is getting to buy the Mercedes, and it will serve as an outside reminder and give him a push when he needs it. In fact, we decided that if he starts to feel overwhelmed with everything he has to do to meet his goal, he'll go down to the dealership and test drive the Mercedes.

Now, he isn't working to get his site to \$10,000 per month only to buy the Mercedes. If he were it wouldn't be enough to sustain him through when he has doubts, is tired, or entertains returning to his old job. He's been inspired to build a site which provides a unique solution to his market. The Mercedes just anchors one of his business goals.

What positive motivators do you have?

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