

## **Motivation Inhibitors**

All too often, the path to success, initially so clearly defined, begins to get blurry again. What is it that blurs the path or inhibits our motivation? We could all name hundreds of little things that get in the way. But lack of long-term success goes much deeper than daily setbacks, hassles, and frustrations. Take time to examine where all the detours come from: the self-doubt, the self-sabotage, the nagging, the negative inner voice, the inability to stick to the things you know you should be doing. Sometimes, our lack of persistence stems from the fact that the required behavior is not part of our customary pattern. Other times, it's because we're not doing it for the right reasons or in the right way. Sometimes, it's because we're trying to treat the surface problem or behavior rather than an underlying issue. That is, we're treating the symptoms instead of the disease.

Great persuaders, along with maintaining a positive outlook themselves, surround themselves with people who are just as successful (or even more so) as they are. One of the big reasons we don't stay motivated is because we unintentionally sabotage our own efforts or we let others sabotage us. Sometimes we don't even realize this is happening. It's like we stand around dumping buckets of water on our fire, or letting others dump buckets of water on our fire, and then we scratch our heads wondering why the fire won't burn.

Two of the big motivation inhibitors are mindset and the people we associate with. Take a look around you. Are the people in your life pulling you up or pulling you down? Are they encouraging you or discouraging you? How do they view your goals, dreams, and aspirations? Many times, we give up simply because we don't have support or encouragement from those we respect and love. This lack of support may be because they are being protective, or they don't fully understand the situation. Or they may understand the situation and all its implications, but they just don't buy into it. Or it may simply be jealousy and resentment; they didn't pursue their dreams, so why should you get to pursue yours? However, for all those who discourage you, don't understand or believe in your plans, or who see their lives going down the tubes and want to take you

with them, there are also those who are successfully pursuing their dreams. These people will encourage you to do likewise. Surround yourself by inspired and motivated people.

Another strain on your ability to motivate yourself is your mindset. In many cases, our dreams have become lifeless, or we've given up dreaming altogether. But when our capacity to dream is lost, part of us dies. If you ever find yourself in this situation, you must revise and rekindle the dream. Be honest with yourself: Do you ever make up excuses for why you can't do it, shouldn't do it, or don't have time to do it? This is called "self-handicapping." We sabotage our own efforts and desires by finding excuses and anticipating future failure. Deep down, we may feel this mentality is the safer route. The idea of success can be scary—it may mean sacrificing the old and familiar and embracing the new and unfamiliar. It will mean new commitments, change, and a few adjustments.

You have probably heard the example of keeping a baby elephant chained up to a stake. The baby elephant tries to get away, but the stake is too deep. When the elephant reaches adulthood, it could easily pull out the stake, but it has long since given up. It no longer even tries. Dr. Martin Seligman, founder of Positive Psychology, calls this concept "learned helplessness." When we don't take accountability for our learned helplessness, Dr Seligman says it could trigger the following negative results:

- Disrupts the ability to learn from the situation.
- Inhibits the ability to be creative.
- Lowers the expectation for future successes.
- Produces emotional disturbances, i.e., anxiety, hostility, fear, and depression.
- Reduces the body's immune system.
- Limits earning capacity and decreases job security.
- 

When we are honest with ourselves, we may find that there are areas where learned helplessness prevails. To overcome this tendency, you need to dream, and dream big. You've got to feel inspired to break those shackles. Remember, your inhibitions have

only as much power as you give them. Like the baby elephant that has grown to maturity, the chain and stake are not a real obstacle. What's holding you back? What are the chains and stakes in your life? What would it take to make you want to leap out of bed each morning? If you have dull dreams, it is difficult to stay motivated.

Great persuaders take full ownership of their success, their failures, and their life. If you tried hard enough, I am sure you could come up with twenty reasons why you might fail. But these don't matter, because all you need is one good reason to be successful. We could spend all day and night finding excuses. In fact, here are some of the excuses I hear all the time in the persuasion world.

- "I can't cold call."
- "They just got lucky."
- "I have a bad territory."
- "The economy is down."
- "They set me up to fail."
- "The employees hate me."
- "I tried and it didn't work."
- "The marketing is outdated."
- "I'm not good on the phone."
- "The competition is everywhere."
- "The product needs improvements."
- "I'd be successful if I had that account."
- "How do they expect me to compete with . . . ?"
- "The company doesn't generate enough leads."
- 

Whatever form the discouragement comes in, you must fortify yourself and forge ahead. Think what would have happened if Abraham Lincoln had listened to his critics, or if Thomas Edison had paid attention to everyone who said his inventions were impossible. What if Bill Gates had listened to his counselors while he studied at Harvard

and stayed in school? What if Mark Victor Hansen and Jack Canfield had listened to the over one hundred publishers that turned them down for *Chicken Soup for the Soul* (which ended up selling millions of copies)? There are volumes of similar stories. What is your story? Are *you* going to write it—or is somebody else going to write it? The main thing to take from these experiences is that you cannot allow others to suck the energy and motivation out of you.

Let's get past our learned helplessness, our pre-excuse for failure, and decide on victory.

© 2009 Kurt W. Mortensen