

Staying Motivated While Motivating Others

Leadership Toolbox

Podcast Transcript

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Think of the most dynamic and positive person you know. Do you look forward to interacting with them? Do they excel in school or in their job? Do they have an active social life? Odds are that if you answered “yes” to all three questions the person you have in mind is a highly motivated individual. Motivation by definition is the act of giving motive or a movement toward action. My name is Matthew Lexcen, and the goal of this podcast is to help you continue to give yourself motive and how to move others around you toward action.

How Do I Stay Motivated?

For many leaders, getting motivated to take on a task or project is not difficult but when obstacles arise, that positive movement forward, your motivation, can waiver. It can become stalled and the key to motivation is movement; it is change. You may have noticed in the introduction above that the key words in the definition of the word “motivation” are “act”, “movement” and “action”. Here are some tips to help keep you moving and to keep you motivated.

Find the Good

Sometimes it is easy to forget the reasons why we are immersing ourselves in a project or task. If this happens and you’re not feeling as motivated as you were before you began, it is essential for you to take a step back and find the good in what you are doing? Ask yourself questions like:

What is my overall goal?

How may I be helping others by reaching my goal?

How does completing this task or project help me?

By taking a look at what is gained by completing your project or task, you will be more encouraged to continue on toward your goal.

Make Your Goal Known

I mentioned working toward your goal above but just *having* a goal isn’t enough. In order to stay motivated toward accomplishing that goal it is important to tell others about it. If others are aware of the project or task you are undertaking, you will be more likely to hold yourself accountable for completing the task. Put this into practice. Tell co-workers, friends, professors and family about what your goal is and how you plan on attaining it.

Have Fun with It

If you make a list with items that range from cleaning your bedroom to going to a movie with friends, what are you more motivated to do? For most of us, we would choose the movie with friends and other fun items on the list over cleaning our bedroom any day. This shows us that we are more motivated to take part in activities that are fun. Translate this idea into your projects and tasks that require more motivation. Listen to upbeat music while working, eat a snack or treat that reminds you of being a kid and take time for motion (stretching or a short walk will circulate more oxygen throughout your body, allowing you to feel refreshed).

Reward Yourself

How do you lure a mouse through a complicated maze? How would you reward a puppy for learning how to sit or stay? The obvious answer is with a treat! This same principle applies to people who might need a little motivation when working toward a goal or finishing a certain task. It's practically the same thing...well, maybe without all the fur or drooling, but the principle is the same. If you have completed a project or have reached a goal recently, then reward yourself. Whether it be a cookie, a night at the movies or maybe a new pair of shoes, you need to take time to congratulate yourself. This positive reinforcement will keep you motivated when you get stressed or feel less than motivated.

How Do I Keep Those Around Me Motivated?

While motivating yourself may be an easy task for some, keeping others motivated can be more difficult because we do not have control over the actions of others. Let me repeat this-you do not have control over the actions of others. As a leader, remembering this fact is important but that doesn't mean that you cannot influence their actions. Here are some helpful tips on keeping those around you motivated.

Get Excited and Walk the Talk

I'd like you to think back once again to the person before that I had you picture. Are they excited about their work? Of course they are. Excitement is infectious, so when motivating others it is important to portray a level of excitement that others will want to emulate. It is as simple as going to work, a class or an event with a smile on your face or by greeting others with a positive attitude. If people see that you are excited to be there, then there is a better chance that they will share in your excitement.

Along with portraying your excitement to others, it is vital to remember that the people around you are more likely to be motivated toward completing a project or task if you are. For example, if you want people to get excited about volunteering at an elementary school science fair then say things like, "I remember when I entered the 5th grade science fair and had so much fun making a plaster volcano." Ok, so that may be a bit much, but if you show interest and excitement about an event then your co-workers or group members will be more likely to as well.

Keep Everyone In the "Know"

As the leader of a team, group or organization it is easy to take on the burden of knowledge for the whole team, but it is important to share that information with the people you are working with. They will be more likely to take on responsibility with more gusto if you are willing to share your ideas and the decisions you are making with them. By not leaving them in "the dark" you are showing them respect that could be just the motivation they need.

Little Things Count

Finally, remember your p's and t's. That's right, your p's and your t's; that's please and thank you. Don't forget how far a little common courtesy can go. Think of how nice it is just to have someone ask you if you could "please" do something for them. Or think of how much you enjoy being told thank you for the hard work you do. If you thank the members of you team, group or organization, they will know they are appreciated and may be more motivated to do their job.

Of course these tips and pointers are not foolproof and won't work with everyone, but give it a shot and see what kind of change can help you to move forward in your schoolwork, career and personal life.

In closing, I encourage you to be the most dynamic and positive person you know. Give yourself motive and move others around you toward action. You make a difference!

This podcast was presented by Student Activities at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Find other podcasts at mnsu.edu/activities/toolbox. Thank you for listening. I hope you will review other leadership tools as you grow as a person of influence.