



Motivation

Communities in
Transition

BY
extern
CHANGING LIVES EVERY DAY

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Have you often heard yourself say things like....

"I should get up and do something"

"If only I had the energy"

"I can't be bothered...I am too tired"

"I will start on Monday"

Lack of motivation often affects us all. At times we all feel less motivated to do things and it's ok to take some days off. However, there is a risk that those 'off days' can lead to more 'off days' than we would like, and before we know it we end up criticising ourselves and doing less things than we would like to.



Let's understand what we mean about motivation

People often say things like, *"I need to start doing things...."* *"I'll start on Monday"* for example, when getting fit, quitting smoking, changing their job, or making lifestyle choices.

The latter are all goals that are very common. However, when it comes to being motivated to start, it can be more difficult and somewhat challenging for us. If you are struggling with motivation you are not alone in this.

Understanding the reasons that block motivation can be the first step in moving forward. Some of those reasons could be:

- Living with an illness, both physical and/or mental
- A lack of purpose and self-worth
- Setting unrealistic targets – for example losing weight quickly or instantly stopping smoking
- Having failed previous goals you set
- Doing things for other people, but feeling pressured and influenced. Trying to do things to keep others happy...
- Living with fear or intimidation...
- Comparing yourself to others
- Feeling stressed and overwhelmed...



The good news is that change can happen... and here are some tips that can help...

Find your purpose – getting help and support from others can really be of benefit, discovering who we are and what we want in life can truly help us find our self-worth.

Create a to do list and what can help you achieve this. Maybe you need some support from a counsellor, friend or family member. Understanding who you are can really benefit you to make changes in your life.

Set goals and plans that are realistic – for example, wanting to give up smoking. What can help you do this? Speaking with your GP, using replacement treatments, such as patches, developing new habits to replace those old habits; for example, the times when you smoke more, learning new ways to manage those stressful times....the same applies to any change you want to make. Proper preparations can help you succeed.

These goals need to be realistic and achievable.

For example, if you want to start exercising and do not like the gym, signing up for a gym membership may not help you achieve your goal, but going for a walk every day may be the answer, as this sounds and feels like something you can achieve. "Baby Steps" may help in the first instance. Try to set your own goals, not goals that have been set and influenced by others...

Learn to stop criticising yourself. When you do this, it means that you run the risk of falling back into old habits as you do not believe in yourself.

You are not aiming for perfection, doing your best is enough, it's all that you can expect from yourself.

Look at what is blocking you from making changes. Is it others in your life? Is it an illness? Maybe getting some guidance to learn to accept your illness and learning how to live and manage it can really help with motivating you to make changes. Can you make changes to the people in your life? Do you need help to do this and with finding out what help is available?

Believe in yourself, be ambitious and see your worth... become aware of the negative self-talk and the unhelpful thinking patterns, for example, "*I will never change*", "*I always say things and don't follow through*". Focusing on the things you are not doing will not help with your motivation.

Learning to let go of the past can be of real benefit. You need to learn to set your goals day by day. Start small and build on them and reflect on what you are doing well.

If you relapse, try not to beat yourself up, it's normal to fall back into old ways, but what you now have is the experience to know that you can and you have been able to make changes. Let go of the regret of slipping and start again and learn from what worked well and what didn't....

Together we can do this...together we can get motivated to make small changes and goals, and together we can support each other.

Self-Help Tips

- Attend a motivational speaking workshop
- Be mindful of what you eat as this can help lift your mood
- Do exercise that you enjoy
- Practice mindfulness – you can download apps such as Headspace, or Calm
- Set realistic and achievable goals
- Stay connected with others who are encouraging and of similar positive mind-set
- Take on new challenges and develop skills
- Engage in positive and affirming self-talk
- Remember and celebrate your past successes and achievements

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