

BULLETPROOF MOTIVATION



How To Sustain Long-Term Motivation
and Set Yourself Up To Win at Anything
You Set Your Mind To

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INTRODUCTION



Introduction

Want to be richer? Want to be in better shape? Want to build an amazing business?

How about improving your relationships? How about living in an incredible house?

All of these goals are achievable. None of them is beyond your reach.

And you know what? You probably already know *how* to achieve most of them. You probably already have the skills, the knowledge, and the expertise.

And sure, you could read a book on each of these topics. You could read a book on how to get into great shape, and you could read another on how to build a business. Chances are you would just be procrastinating. Chances are you're just spinning your wheels rather than getting down to the actual hard work you know you're *really* supposed to be doing.

You don't have a problem with how. You don't have a problem with what.

The issue is with just actually *doing* the things you're meant to be doing. It's sticking to that diet plan. It's saving that money instead of spending it on little things. And it's approaching clients to offer your hard work.

The problem for most of us is that we just lack the motivation that we need in order to start on a new project. Even if we start out well, we often end up flagging and giving up after not long.

So how do you get around this problem? How do you maintain motivation and drive? How do you stay disciplined and focused?

This is the ultimate example of “teach a man to fish,” because you’re not just learning the steps you need to take to accomplish something; you’re learning the very “stuff” that accomplishment is made of. With true grit, determination, and willpower... you can accomplish literally anything that you put your mind to.

In this book, you will learn to fish. You will learn to dig deeper than ever before, whether it is to complete a workout, to write the next great American novel, or to create your own business. Once you can commit yourself 100% to a given task, who knows what you can accomplish!

CHAPTER 1

WHY MOTIVATION IS KEY TO EVERYTHING



Chapter 1 – Why Motivation is Key to Everything

Sounds grim doesn't it? Grit and determination are not exactly normally spoken in the same breath as "fun" or "relaxation!"

Actually though, once you get your motivation and your discipline sorted, you will find that you have *more* time to enjoy yourself or to relax with family. That's because you'll be able to work more quickly and efficiently, and you'll be able to work towards the goals that *actually* interest you.

I have a real issue with people who say that in order to be successful you need to sacrifice time with family and friends. It bothers me when people say they can't be in a relationship because they need to "focus on their career."

The reason this bothers me, is that I 100% believe (and know) that you can have it both ways. You can work extremely hard on a project you are passionate about and be extremely successful doing so. At the same time though, you can still find time to spend with friends and family. You can still find time to relax on the sofa and watch TV. You just have to work HARD and work SMART and then STOP.

In this book, you'll learn how to do all of that.

And with this kind of motivation and mental toughness will come all kinds of additional benefits. Benefits you can't even believe.

Firstly, you'll find that you're more resilient to things that happen in your life. When you get bad news, you will be able to take it in your stride, adapt, and carry on. When you have more determination, you'll be able to improve all your skills through intense learning, analysis, and repetition. When you have motivation, you'll be cognitively faster because you'll be able to focus on the task in hand without distraction.

And you'll be able to get out of bed on time in the morning. Clear the kitchen at the start of each day. And bite your tongue in an argument because you aren't a slave to your emotions (resulting in many hurt feelings prevented).

This will be your superpower. It will change EVERYTHING for you. And in this book, you're going to learn how to tap into it.

A glass bottle lies on a wet beach at sunset. The bottle is partially filled with a dark liquid and has some text on it, including "WIDE MOUTH" and "SEALED". The background is a blurred sunset over the ocean, with the sun low on the horizon. The text "CHAPTER 2 EMOTIONS RULE MOTIVATION" is overlaid on a dark rectangular area in the upper half of the image.

CHAPTER 2

EMOTIONS RULE

MOTIVATION

Chapter 2 – Emotions Rule Motivation

Here's something that shop owners and sellers know about human psychology: our decisions are driven by emotion and NOT logic.

That is to say, that you will buy something not because it is great value, because you need it, or even because you particularly *like* it.

You buy something because you get excited by the cool packaging. Because you think the materials used look elegant.

Because you imagine how cool or elegant *you'll* look.

You buy it because it's something other people have. You buy it because you've had a hard day and you need a treat. And you buy it because you are worried that it will be out of stock if you hesitate.

Take a look at any marketing materials and you'll see that this is true.

The fact of the matter is that we are ruled by our emotions, which you can think of as being a compass for the thing our body thinks we should be doing.

The problem? Our body is hard wired to survive in the wild outdoors. As far as evolution is concerned, our main challenges are finding food, staying warm and dry, and procreating. We want

to belong to a strong social group, and we want to be respected by others.

These core emotions can be roughly arranged according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, but the point is that our thoughts *stem* from our emotions. And those emotions typically stem from our physiology and environment. This is what then determines

For proof of this, consider what happens when you get "hangry." When you become hungry, this will make you grumpy, irritable, and stressed: and this can often lead to arguments, mistakes, and other problems.

So, what's actually going on here? Well first, the lack of food in your system causes your body to release large amounts of cortisol, while serotonin levels drop. That heightened cortisol leaves you jittery and anxious, and it is that hormone that causes your thoughts to become stressed and irritable.

Why? Because in the wild, that hunger would be extremely dangerous, and it would be highly important that you seek out food – even if it meant competing with other people to get it.

You'll now find yourself worrying about your boss firing you, you'll think about all the things your partner has done recently to irritate you, and the mess on the side in the kitchen is going to *really* annoy you.

Your thoughts will now begin to race, and you'll find yourself struggling to concentrate on anything. You're looking for danger, you're looking for problems, and you're tired.

You think you're angry because your boss/partner/housemate is an idiot. But you're *actually* angry because you're hungry.

What Does This Have to Do With Motivation?

So, what does this have to do with motivation and discipline? Why does it matter?

The problem is that if you now try to get work done, if you now try to focus, then you are going to find it extremely difficult to do so.

Consciously, you want to work on your project and get work done. But unconsciously you're just looking for food!

There are countless other examples of this.

What if you're tired? What if you're cold?

Or what if you're stressed about something that you said to a friend last week? In these scenarios, the hormones and neurotransmitters running through your body are going to make it very difficult for you to focus on what you *need* to focus on.

Motivation then, is the ability to overcome that emotional drive to focus on what you need to.

The Problem With Dull and Dry Work

What happens when you *aren't* hungry? When you aren't scared or stressed? When the temperature and your energy levels are just right?

That's the point at which you begin to focus on the things that you need to do to be successful: that's the point where your motivation actually comes through.

Remember that hierarchy of needs?

It looks like this:

1. Self-Actualization
2. Esteem
3. Love and Belonging
4. Safety Needs
5. Physiological Needs

This list shows us the order in which our “needs” must be met, where the bottom item (physiological needs) takes absolute priority over all else. After that, you'll look for shelter.

Ever noticed how you don't struggle with motivation to get up and go to work in the morning?

That's because you know that if you DON'T go, then you won't be able to afford to eat, because you'll get FIRED.

That creates an emotional response (stress), which drives you up and out of bed. And it works nearly every time, unless you're so sick that you're too unwell to go.

Once you've finished work, you tend to spend time with your family (love and belonging), or perhaps hanging out with friends/dating, and you tend to look for esteem by buying nice clothes or by trying to advance your career.

Self-actualization is everything else. This is the feeling of fulfilment that comes from having a goal or a passion. It is self-improvement. It is "the desire to be the most that one can be."

But you can't be the most that one can be if you're starving to death, or if nobody loves you. That's why this hierarchy must be structured from bottom to top. You need to satisfy your most base desires and needs before you can start looking after the soul.

The emotional drive to eat will always be stronger than the emotional drive to diet. The emotional drive to be warm and safe will always be stronger than the emotional drive to workout. And the emotional drive to hang out with friends will always be stronger than the emotional drive to go to work.

BUT it also just so happens that the items at the top of the pyramid are also the ones that bring the most *lasting* contentment and happiness. And this is why so many of us struggle with our motivation – we struggle to tell our bodies that *no*, today comfort

and hunger take a back seat to the things we really need to get done to be happy.

A person is captured mid-air, jumping over a deep canyon. The person is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, and sneakers. Their arms are outstretched, and their legs are spread wide. The background shows a vast, hazy landscape under a warm, golden light, likely from a setting or rising sun. The canyon walls are reddish-brown and textured. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the image, containing the chapter title in white text.

CHAPTER 3

HIJACKING OUR MOTIVATION

Chapter 3 – Hijacking Our Motivation

To improve your chances of going after those long term goals, you need to hijack your body's own motivation system. You need to force it to sometimes turn the hierarchy of needs on its head.

How do you do that?

One option is to try and minimize those nagging doubts and physiological needs.

In other words, you make sure that you start your day *full of high quality food* and you start your day with a clear slate.

If you're eating low quality processed cereal for breakfast, then your body is going to want more sustainable energy and nutrition. Therefore, you'll be anxious and you'll struggle to focus on other tasks (even if you aren't aware that hunger is the problem).

Eat a meal of complex carbs, protein, and fruits, and your body will be satiated and sustained. The result is that you'll have one less thing on the back of your mind.

Likewise, you should try to remove all nagging sources of stress. Tim Ferriss refers to these kinds of issues as "open loops." These are jobs that you know need doing, and that are causing a mild, low-level stress. That might mean answering an email to tell someone you can't make it to their party, or it might mean arranging your car's MOT.

Whatever the case, many of us will put off completing these kinds of tasks. In doing so though, we actually prevent ourselves from focussing 100% on our current task.

Solve this problem by following the “one-minute rule.” That means that if a job takes less than one minute to complete, you should do it right away!

Now, if you start your day with no distractions and minimal stress, you’ll be able to focus on your goals much more easily. You’ll find you are less likely to procrastinate, and you are more likely to get the work done that you really need and *want* to get done.

Environment

Equally important is to consider your environment. *Where* are you working, and what effect this is going to have on your mindset and your motivation.

One big problem that often affects our environment is untidiness. This has the effect of making us feel slightly unsettled and uneasy. That’s partly because there is too much visual information to process, partly because untidiness is just tidying work that we know we’re going to have to do later, and partly because we might unconsciously associate it with hygiene issues.

And consider this: our peripheral vision is actually more acutely sensitive to movement because we use it in order to scan for danger and predators. You might be focused on your computer

screen/textbook/dumbbells... but your unconscious mind is scanning the nearby environment for threats and things that need fixing. Fix that now, and you'll be much more focused on what you need to get done.

Only once you convince your brain that everything immediately pressing has been taken care of, will it then allow you to focus on the meaningful work toward your goals.

Using Wants to Get Out of Bed On Time, Every Time

There is another way that you can hijack your motivation system in order to get what you want.

Have you ever noticed that you struggle to get out of bed early? This is a perfect example of motivation/discipline that many of us have trouble with. We often hear about top CEOs and entrepreneurs waking up at 4am to get in a workout before working on their projects, but most of us just can't bring ourselves to do the same.

The alarm goes off and we roll over and hit "snooze."

Eventually, when we're about to be late for work, we manage to leap out of bed in a panic and then rush to get ready for the day.

Using what you've learned so far, can you figure out what is going on here?

The issue is with your hierarchy of needs. Sleep is a physiological need and it is something that will help you to heal wounds, improve brain function, and more. Your body knows you need it and so it trumps your ambition to work out or write a novel.

Only once your livelihood is in threat, do you actually manage to force yourself out of bed!

The other thing to recognize, is that you will always be MORE driven by needs that are IMMEDIATE versus those that pay off in the long term. Sure, if you wake up every day at 4am and workout, you'll eventually be in incredible shape. Probably.

But if you stay in bed, you'll feel amazing NOW. For definite.

What wins as far as your primitive lizard brain is concerned?

So, what's the answer?

One answer is to place something that you badly want, within reach of your bed. Take something that will serve as a strong motivation to get up, and then ensure that you only need to take the smallest possible step to get there.

An example I often use is a phone. Many of us have a strong EMOTIONAL drive to look at our phones. We want to see what our friends are saying, and we want to see if we have an email from our boss.

These aren't great habits, but they are deeply ingrained and we can use them to our advantage. All you have to do to look at your phone is to prop yourself up *slightly*. Thus the drive to find out what is going on in the world (ESTEEM) is able to briefly trump your physiological urge to stay in bed.

Look at your phone for five minutes, and the blue light from the screen will trigger the release of cortisol in your brain, helping you feel more awake.

You could likewise use some kind of snack that you love eating and place that by your bed. Or you could treat yourself to an episode of your favorite TV show.

A similar method is to create more real and immediate consequences for NOT doing something. People talk about setting up alarms that will donate huge amounts of money to charities they *don't* agree with unless they wake up to stop them.

Easier is to tell your boss that you will log in at 7am every day.

Painful? Yes. But once you are committed and your career is on the line, you'll find you do it!

I have been able to work as a freelance writer for the past 10 years because I commit to large amounts of work with clients upfront. By doing that, I force myself to earn at least a minimum amount every day – procrastinating is not an option because I have already promised to do the job!

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So, think about what already motivates you every day, and then structure that to encourage yourself to work effectively.



CHAPTER 4

VISUALIZATION

Chapter 4 - Visualization

Okay, it's time to get more technical: what happens in your brain when you are motivated toward your major goals and when you aren't?

How is it that some people are able to push through the distractions of hunger, anxiety, and discomfort and work toward their goals anyway?

The reason that our motivation is flexible, is that our brain and body don't know the difference between what is happening in the real world, and what is happening inside our mind's eye. In other words, we can use visualization in order to tell our body that there is a threat or a great reward to work toward and if we are good enough at this, it can become so real that it triggers a huge flood of hormones.

For example, imagine that you *genuinely believe* there is a murderer outside your window right now. There is not one, but the very fact that you *believe* there is, means that your body is going to be flooded with adrenaline, cortisol, and other stress related hormones. You'll experience a physiological response that causes you to shake, tremble, and even bring up your food! You will have no problem motivating yourself to check outside the window, or to hide under the covers!

Neuroscientists are increasingly subscribing to a theory called “embodied cognition.” This states that we think by using visualization in order to understand the world.

What is meant by this? Well, once upon a time, scientists believed in something called “mentalese.” This was the hypothetical universal “machine code” of the human brain. Scientists wanted to understand how humans were able to garner meaning from conversation and spoken/written language.

In other words, when we understand language, how is this happening? What are we “translating” that language into in order to comprehend it? In lieu of any real answer, mentalese was suggested as a possibility.

Embodied cognition suggests that there is no universal machine code, and that instead we comprehend meaning and language by relating it to our own physical experiences. We essentially play a little animation of what we are reading or listening to, using our own senses and our own bodies to understand it.

So, when someone tells you that they walked through the woods, you understand this by visualizing trees and by remembering the feeling of leaves crunching under foot. When you discuss maths, you understand it by relating that to your own experiences with quantities and objects.

Our understanding is routed in our physical experience (even if you aren’t consciously aware of this happening).

Brain scans appear to confirm this theory, or at least lend support to it. They show that when we hear a story or think about something, areas of our motor cortex and sensory cortices light up as though we were using them.

And as such, as far as the body is concerned, there is little difference between walking through a cold wood and ACTUALLY walking through the wood. The experience is very similar, and as such, the hormonal response is also very similar!

Likewise, when you're struggling to get out of bed in the morning, you will have a flash of realization when you think about the repercussions. You might very briefly imagine yourself being fired, shamed, and destitute. And this is just as real as that feeling of comfort in bed.

This is how you can motivate yourself to do something. When you think about what could be gained by working on your physique, or by writing that book, or by working on your business, you will visualize that end point (again, this might happen unconsciously). This can release a huge amount of dopamine (the reward hormone), which controls motivation and goal-oriented behavior.

This will then activate a pattern of activity in the brain called the "salience network." This is the part of the brain that causes us to switch attention from one thing to another and then to hold that focus. This network is made up of the executive control network (conscious control of attention and motivation) and the dorsal

attention network (reflexive response to stimuli). One of the key brain areas involved in this is called the anterior cingulate cortex. When that part of the brain is damaged, it can leave a person with absolutely zero attention or motivation – they find it impossible to stick to tasks and eventually become completely inert!

So, how then can you use visualization in order to work toward your goals?

The first tip is to make sure that the thing you're working towards is something that you feel extremely passionate about.

This is perhaps the most important way to stay motivated and disciplined: to have an end goal that you TRULY care about. One that you get excited thinking about.

This is something that Arnie always said: that he was happy to go through rep after rep of gruelling work in the gym, simply because he believed that every single one of those reps would bring him closer to his goal of being Mr. Olympia.

You need a goal like that in order to stay motivated.

What if you don't know your "life purpose" or your end goal? That's fine! You don't need to be changing the world here! Even working toward a short-term, immediate goal will have similar benefits. Just make sure that there is always SOMETHING you are working on and toward.

You need to make sure that this goal you are working toward is something that speaks to you emotionally. That means it should be something that you feel will help you become actualized, but at the same time it should also be something that will help you build respect, that will help you to support your family, and that will ensure you put food on the table.

In other words, the more of your needs the ambition and the goal meets, the greater your chances of success.

What if the thing you're working on doesn't have any emotional payoff for you? What if you need to focus on a project given to you by your dense manager?

(Notice how this is the kind of work you really struggle with?)

The answer is:

A) Think about the REASON you need to do this work. In this case, focus on what career success might mean for you.

B) Try to make the work you're doing more inherently engaging. If you're writing a dull article about something you don't care about, try and find what is exciting about that topic. Or challenge yourself to write the very best article with the best structure and the best grammar possible. This will help your work to truly come alive.

Focus on the Fear

Humans are naturally risk averse. Again, this is an evolutionary hangover that once made a lot of sense in terms of our survival. We couldn't afford to take big risks with our safety or our resources, and so we would cling to things we needed.

This was effective back then, but today it has the effect of making us somewhat static and unchanging. We are happy to stick with the status quo because at least it is safe and predictable.

One answer then is to focus more on the stick as well as the carrot. In the case of completing dull work, try to think about what will happen if you are late handing in your work AGAIN. Think about the awkward conversation, and the stress it will cause regarding your job satisfaction.

A small amount of stress – called eustress – is a positive thing.

(Too much is bad for motivation, but this is something we'll address in an upcoming chapter.)

Another thing to consider, is the threat of not progressing. What happens if you don't work on your physique? Simple: you stay out of shape forever, and get progressively worse. You never fix your self-esteem, and you create more and more health problems that make it *even harder* to turn things around.

What happens if you never start applying for other jobs, or negotiate higher pay? You potentially remain stuck in a dead-end

job for the rest of your life! Or at least miss out on huge amounts of money that could make you and your family much happier.

Those are some pretty compelling sticks! In the latter example, the hope is that the threat of being stuck in the same position forever is enough of an emotional motivation – a tangible enough vision – to *override* the slightly awkward thought of having to talk about salary with your boss/clients.

Priming

Another tip is to use something called “priming.” Priming means getting yourself into the right mental state for the work you need to complete.

(Not to be confused with neural priming, which is a completely different – though interesting – topic.)

For example then, if you need to work out but can't muster the motivation to do so, you can always try watching a motivational video of someone training instead. Likewise, if you are struggling to stay focused on your work, you could watch a video of someone else being productive.

Doing this helps to light up the right brain areas, our mirror neurons and natural empathy help us to feel as though we are working on the thing we need to work on. And the encouraging music and dramatic angles trigger the desired emotional response.

Environment (Again)

Similarly, you can also motivate yourself by using the right environment. We already discussed how you could remove distractions and thus make it easier to concentrate on what you're supposed to be focused on. But how about tuning the environment to support and encourage maximum productivity?

This concept was explored in-depth in the book *Deep Work* by Cal Newport. There, the author discussed the possibility of creating a space designed entirely around the concept of encouraging productivity and inspiration. This space included areas filled with inspirational items and great works for example, that would help to inspire and subtly influence the person trying to be productive.

We can create something similar in our own office environments and even our own gyms – by filling them with things that will make us feel productive and inspired to do our best work.

So, by considering all these factors, we can “hack” our motivation and become the most productive and hard working versions of ourselves. Not by reasoning with ourselves and trying to convince ourselves to work harder – but by making the work we're doing *become* the thing we can't stop thinking about.



CHAPTER 5
THE ENERGY PROBLEM

Chapter 5 – The Energy Problem

Now let's say you have a goal that you're entirely focused on and extremely passionate about. You have cleared your schedule, and your home is perfectly conducive to that writing/productivity/training.

But you still can't find the motivation to get productive. Why not?

How about this: can you drop and give me 100 push ups right now?

Unless you're in the car or on the train, there isn't much of a good reason why not. But I bet you don't do it.

(Go on, I double dare you!)

So, what's stopping you now?

The problem very often comes down to energy. And this is another aspect of motivation that is so often misunderstood and overlooked.

Too many people claim that they don't manage to achieve their goals because they don't have enough time.

"I don't have time to work out."

"I'd love to learn a language, but I don't have time."

"There isn't enough time in the day to look for a new job."

None of this is true. You can *always* find more time in the day. You can look for a new job while you're on your commute – or even while you're on the toilet! You could get up 15 minutes earlier to do a workout. You could learn a language on Bluetooth headphones while you cook.

And I BET that you have spent plenty of time doing other things. Watched any good TV shows recently? Yes? Then how can you sit there and tell me you don't have any time!

Have you really not wasted any time on Facebook lately? Is your itinerary that packed?

So, if there *is* time, then why is it you can't do the thing that you WANT to do?

The answer is energy (well, the clue was in the chapter title). Energy is finite. You cannot simply keep piling more and more on top of an already packed schedule and expect not to be tired.

The reason that you come home from work and then just want to crash on the sofa is that you are too tired to do anything useful. Even to do something useful like reading!

The tireder you get, the more your motivation and willpower are depleted. This is why we are more likely to snack in the evening. We even start making more selfish decisions come the evening according to studies!

Even if this is something you really want to do, when you are spent, your body is going to want “brainless” activity.

So, what do we do?

Working With Your Brain

Sometimes, no matter how much you try to cajole or trick your brain into *wanting* to do the thing you’re telling it to do, you just can’t manage it.

This is certainly true when you’re trying to fit more into your routine than you realistically can. And it’s certainly been true for me lately as a new Dad. I don’t have the option of “waking up 10 minutes early” because my baby often wakes me up at 4am and requires bobbing for the next 30 minutes. I can’t spend my evenings doing useful things, because I need to cook for her meal the next day. It’s challenging.

But despite this, I’ve managed to write a book in the last month, gain a diploma, and beat my personal records in the gym for a number of movements.

So, what’s the secret? One such answer is to make the things you want to achieve work around your existing routines and energy levels.

Case in point: I now train extra hard on a Monday because it is the one day where I get to go to the gym. I perform my other workouts in shorter modules lasting 10 minutes. So instead of

training my whole body for an hour, I will train biceps for 10 minutes, lats for 10 minutes, pecs for 10 minutes etc. I can then take one or two of those modules and squeeze in a super-short workout while the baby naps.

Likewise, I've learned when I work best. This routine has me *exhausted* and I know that as soon as I have dinner, I'm going to be completely finished. Dinner triggers the release of large amounts of serotonin, which the body converts into the sleep hormone melatonin.

Not only that, but once you sit down, your body will enter a deep state of relaxation. So, stay on your feet to remain energetic longer.

Likewise, I find that as soon as I relent and start watching "junk" my willpower and motivation abandons me. Instead of watching useless YouTube videos while I cook then, I watch inspiring documentaries and discussions about fitness.

I will listen to podcasts in a single earbud while I bob my daughter, and I'll be productive in fleeting moments using a 7" laptop.

In other words, I find ways to fit what I need to do around my natural rhythms and my routine – rather than trying to force the other way around.

Stress

Note that very often, your energy problem is actually a stress problem. That's because stress is something that can affect us all differently, but which is always emotionally exhausting. In a moment, you're going to learn how you can motivate yourself and gee yourself up in order to gain more *physical* energy and strength.

But the same is also true: bad news, an argument, or a stressful thought can all take the wind immediately out of your sails. So learn to protect against these things using meditation and mindfulness. More on this later.

Geeing Yourself Up

The other option is to find ways to wake yourself back up.

One of the best options? A little bit of physical exercise. Often, we don't want to exercise because we're too tired, but as soon as we start, we feel more awake again. Exercise increases the demand for blood around the body and muscles, which in turn accelerates the heartrate and breathing. This sends signals through the vagal nerve to the pituitary gland, triggering a release of adrenaline and related hormones. This makes you stronger, more energetic, and more awake.

So, start with light exercise – such as some stretching or a little bit of light bouncing up and down. Don't even demand anything more

of yourself than that! This can then give you enough energy to do more *should you wish to*. It can also help you to gain more energy for a host of other tasks. This is one reason that office workers are often encouraged to get up and walk around the room on occasional intervals.

Not in the mood to jump up and down even?

Can't think of anything worse?

Then you could always try a trick from the animal kingdom. It's called "pandiculation," and it essentially involves stretching.

Or not stretching exactly. Not reaching your toes and then holding that position for 2 minutes. Rather, it means stretching as in a yawn. As in the way that your cat or your dog will stretch when they first wake up after a nap. This movement involves elongating the body with a slight muscle contraction – and it feels extremely relieving and cathartic.

The reason for this is that you're contracting and then relaxing the muscles in order to help let go of stored tension. This can help to immediately remove stiffness – stiffness that otherwise can easily be mistaken for tiredness. Not only that, but it also helps to "wake up" the connection between the brain and the sensory motor cortex. When we don't use the muscles for a while, this can lead to something called sensory motor amnesia. By contracting the muscle, the connection between the brain and the limb is reinforced.

In fact, a yawn is actually a form of pandiculation, which helps to release tension in the respiratory muscles: including the intercostal muscles (which expand and contract the chest to open and close the lungs), the jaw muscles, and the diaphragm.

If you are planning on doing something physical but the thought of moving makes you come out in hives – and you can't muster the body control to do it – then try stretching.

Finally, another way to wake yourself up when all you want to do is to curl up in a ball, is to splash some cold water on your face. The reason for this is that we have lots of very sensitive nerve endings in the face, which when stimulated with cold water, can trigger something called the “mammalian dive reflex.” This effectively increase blood flow to the brain, and can trigger what athletes and others often refer to as a flow state – not to mention waking you up and helping you overcome any lingering sense of fatigue.

Priming (Again)

Did you know that motivation can make you *physically* stronger? This is where stories of Mothers lifting cars off of their children come in. And it's not impossible: a shot of adrenaline helps to increase muscle contraction and max strength.

Did you know that it's even possible to reduce the physical symptoms of alcohol intoxication simply by willing yourself to?

Have you ever noticed how you can quickly sober up when something bad happens on a night out?

All this shows the power of motivation and will. It shows that if you are excited enough, then you can trigger enough of an emotional response to overcome even physical ailments.

So how do you get to this point? Options include using motivational videos again, using music, or just having a pep talk with yourself. Remind yourself why you are doing this, what the consequences are if it goes wrong, and what the emotional hook is.

A close-up, high-angle shot of a person's hand wearing a black and yellow athletic glove, firmly gripping a silver barbell. The barbell is loaded with black weight plates. The background is a dark blue, textured gym floor. The text 'CHAPTER 6 TRAIN LIKE A NAVY SEAL' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on a semi-transparent dark grey rectangular background.

CHAPTER 6
TRAIN LIKE A NAVY SEAL

Chapter 6 – Train Like a Navy Seal

It can be hard work motivating yourself to work out when you really don't want to, to learn, or to work.

But while that may be true, it's also fair to say it's *much harder* to trek through the desert for days on end without sleep. To run over barracks into enemy fire, or to make life or death decisions when your body is screaming at you to sleep.

Of course, I'm talking about Navy Seals. I'm talking about the military. I'm talking about paratroopers.

I'm even talking about Spartans.

For centuries, countries have been training their military to not only be able to fight, but also to be able to do so in the most dire and stressful circumstances.

What's the secret? Partly, the secret comes down to *learning* to be comfortable in the uncomfortable. This has even been occasionally referred to as "discomfort training."

The truth of the matter is that we always want to be comfortable. We want to return to the homeostasis that we now know signals that all physiological needs are being met. While this is true though, it is also true that the human body was not *designed* to always be comfortable.

Think about your ancestors. They did not have central heating, they did not have warm baths, they did not have clean clothes. They lived in their own dirt and faeces, ate raw meat, and slept in the cold under the stars. The strange thing? They were no less happy than you!

This is habituation. We become used to what we have, and that then becomes our “baseline.” Our bodies have adapted to living in warm, soft, environments, where everything is set at the same height as us. We have very little physical or physiological stress.

This is all good and well, except it makes us *highly* susceptible to any fluctuation in what has become our norm.

Now when the heating breaks, or when you find yourself a little bit over tired, you feel as though your world is coming apart. Your body triggers a major stress response, and you feel anxious, jittery, confused, angry, and sluggish.

So many of us struggle to perform on less than adequate sleep!

Because the military knows that its infantry won't always have the luxury of a good night's sleep, it needs to train them *in* those conditions.

Likewise, the Spartans would used to pull up bunches of grass with their bare hands. It didn't train their reflexes or muscle – it trained their grit, their determination, and their psychological endurance.

They would then become *habituated* to being cold and being dirty and being tired. Likewise, soldiers would learn how to perform on less sleep.

Now, when conditions were perfect, those same individuals would be far better at fighting, running, and performing. At the same time though, when life got even harder... they would be able to cope.

So, what can you do?

- Try intermittent fasting – go without eating for 18 hours
- Train on sub-optimal sleep
- Train outdoors with your shirt off, in the rain
- Take cold showers and force yourself to endure that cold for an increasingly long amount of time
- Travel with nothing but a backpack
- Take part in ultra-marathons, endurance sports, tough-guy events

The aim is for us to learn to become comfortable in uncomfortable situations – to raise the level that we are able to tolerate.

In SEAL training, there is an event called hell week. Without going into detail here, you can rest assured... it isn't very nice.

Those who win are rewarded with the opportunity to lie in a boat huddled next to each other spooning and with a blanket thrown over you all. Those who go through this, claim that it is the comfiest that they have ever been!

And when you start finding that you can be comfy anywhere, and that difficult situations aren't so difficult anymore... then you know you've reached a new level of performance. Now you can accomplish anything!

Meditation

Don't have the mindset to force yourself to grind through a workout in the cold and wet with no top on? That's fair enough.

But in that case, you need to do something to cultivate that kind of mentality to begin with.

One way to do this is through meditation.

Meditation is a practice that involves focusing the mind. This can be achieved by focussing on a mantra (such as "om"), by looking at a flame, by listening to your own body, or by chanting prayer. These are all different types of meditation, but the goal is ultimately always going to be the same: to change what you focus on, and thereby to change your mindset.

What you'll find, is that meditation can help you get through the toughest grinds in your life. Why? Because you can simply choose to detach yourself from the fear, from the boredom, or from the pain. When you do this, you can rise above stress and even find a way to thrive amidst the chaos.

Mindfulness – a meditative practice that involves focussing on the here and now – has a lot in common with stoicism. Stoicism is a

philosophy that suggests we can't avoid hardship, and nor should we want to. All we can do therefore, is to change the way that we *respond* to it. This is our obligation, and by doing so, we can work through the very toughest of times.

Developing a stoic mindset can be accomplished through practicing meditation and learning to direct your thoughts toward more positive things.

A target with concentric rings in black, blue, orange, and yellow. Several darts with white heads and green flights are embedded in the yellow bullseye. A semi-transparent grey rectangle is overlaid on the target, containing the chapter title.

CHAPTER 7

CORRECT GOAL SETTING

Chapter 7 – Correct Goal Setting

When it comes to staying motivated, there is a right way and a wrong way to set goals. The right way is to set a goal that you feel comfortable you are able to complete, that you have total control over, and that you can quickly assess.

The wrong way is to set a distant goal that you think you might one day be able to accomplish, that is vague and idealized.

So, a good goal is something like: I will exercise three times a week for the next month. I will only have one snack a day.

A bad goal is something like: I will lose 3 stone by next year.

The problem with the latter goal is that it is so distant, and reliant on so many factors, that it comes down to much more than just motivation. Often, you might find yourself excusing yourself from training or from eating correctly because you believe that the goal is so far away, you can excuse yourself.

What's more, is that when you check in and find you haven't lost any weight at all after the first month, you might just give up!

And what if you have a bad week where you were unwell? Or perhaps if you went on holiday? This setback could again completely destroy any motivation and sense of progress you had built up.

Conversely, a good goal that challenges you to do something (or not do something) every single day, will be extremely easy to measure. Not only that, but each day presents a fresh challenge. Fell off the wagon today? Then you can just try harder and do better tomorrow.

And there are no excuses. You can't "exercise three times a week later." You either succeed or fail, entirely based on your own commitment.

Each day is a fresh challenge for your willpower, and all you need to do is to focus on that "here and now goal."

Of course, you will still need that end point in mind. You still need the emotional hook and the goal to work toward. But you aren't going to concentrate on that. You are *only* going to concentrate on the daily grind. When you check in a year later, you'll find that the "end goal" has taken care of itself.

CHAPTER 8

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY



Chapter 8 – All Work and No Play

While the bulk of this book has been about understanding how your motivation works, how to tap into it, and even how to grind through the truly unpleasant work, it's also important to recognize that there is a flip side to motivation: the rest and the relaxation.

You might not think that this has any business in a motivation book, but the truth is that you can't have one without the other.

When you force yourself to be disciplined, it is useful to think of this as using up sand in an hourglass. You only have so much sand that you can work through, before the whole thing needs to be flipped and reset.

How do you reset the hourglass? Simple: by relaxing, by spending time with friends, by sleeping, and by recovering.

What's more, is that focussing on these eventualities – knowing that you'll eventually be able to rest and will get to enjoy yourself – is a fantastic way to give yourself more motivation through the hard times.

What is more encouraging?

“I need to keep going forever, no matter how tough it is!”

Or:

“If I keep going for another hour today, I can relax and enjoy my favorite book tonight.”

In fact, did you know that the key to muscle growth is actually to rest and recover better? Muscle doesn't grow during workouts; it grows *after* them as long as you provide enough protein.

The same is true for grit and determination. Learn to balance the yin and the yang, and to keep the two separate!



CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Motivation and determination are things that can be learned, rather than being hereditary or genetic.

The key is to understand what makes your own mind tick, and to learn the crucial role of emotion.

When you do this, then you can tap into those emotions and trigger them as needed.

Train meditation, and learn to be comfortable being uncomfortable. If you can do these things, then you will gain a kind of grit and determination that makes you capable of truly anything.