

# EIGHT WAYS TO MOTIVATE YOURSELF

by Margie Markarian

Are there things you want to do in your life – either personally or professionally – that just never seem to happen? According to motivational speaker and corporate trainer Steve Chandler, the critical factors for accomplishing goals and leading a fulfilled life are self-motivation and the choices we make between optimism and pessimism.

In the book *100 Ways to Motivate Yourself* (Career Press), Chandler offers an extensive list of ideas and techniques for overcoming negative roadblocks and achieving important life goals. He firmly believes in creating a vision of who you want to be and then living your life as if that vision were already true.

“The first step toward self-creation is to have something to wake up for in the morning – something that you are ‘up to’ in life,” said Chandler in his book. “This vision should be created right now – not later. You can always change it if you want, but don’t live a moment longer without one. Watch what having a vision does to your ability to motivate yourself.”

Eight of Chandler’s many suggestions on ways to motivate yourself are excerpted below.

**Move your goal posts.** Most people are surprised to learn that the reason they’re not getting what they want in life is because their major goals are too small. And too vague. And they therefore have no power. Your major goal will not be reached if it fails to excite your imagination. What really increases motivation is the setting of a large and specific power goal.

A power goal is a dream that drives you. It lives and breathes and provides motivational energy. It gets you up in the morning. You can taste it, smell it, and feel it. You’ve got it written down. And you keep writing it down because every time you do, it fills you with clarity of purpose.

**Be lazy to begin with.** Most of our hardest jobs never get done. The mere thought of doing the whole job, at a high-energy level, is frequently too off-putting to allow self-motivation to occur. One way to ease yourself into self-motivation is to act as if you were the laziest person on the planet. By accepting that you’re going to break a big job into small tasks and do those tasks in a slow and lazy way, there is no anxiety or dread about getting it started.

**Leave your friends.** Politely walk away from “friends” who don’t support your goals. The people with whom you associate will change your life. If you associate with cynics they’ll pull you down with them. If you associate with people who support you in being happy and successful, you will have a head start on being happy and successful.

**Feel good first.** Most people think they’ll feel good once they reach some goal. They think happiness is out there somewhere.

The problem with putting off feeling good about yourself until you hit a certain goal is that it may never happen. By linking happiness to something you don’t have yet, you’re denying your power to create it for yourself.

Give away some power. Motivate yourself by giving someone else the ideas necessary for self-motivation. In most our relationships we stay focused on ourselves. We’re fascinated by how we’re “coming off.” We’re constantly monitoring what others must be thinking of us. We live as if we were surrounded by mirrors.

If you want to be motivated, shift your inspiration to someone else. Point out others’ strengths to themselves. Offer encouragement, support, and guidance. Watch what it does for you.

**Start your life over.** If you catch yourself thinking that you are too old to do something you want to do, recognize that you are listening to the pessimistic voice inside you. It’s the voice of a liar.

Talk back. Remind the voice of all the people in life who have started their lives over again at any age they wanted to. Nobody cares about how old you are but you. People only care about what you can do, and you can do anything you want, at any age.

**Look inside.** Most of us wait to find out who we are from impressions and opinions we get from other people. We base our own self-image on other people’s views of us.

For example, when someone complements us, we ask, “Oh, do you really think I’m good at that?” If we’re persuaded that they are being honest and have made a good case, we alter our self image upward.

It’s great getting feedback from others, especially positive feedback. And we all need it to live and feel good. But when it’s all we’ve got, we’re in danger of being far less than we could be because our so-called self image always depends on others.

Therefore, let positive reinforcement and compliments be a mere seasoning to your life. But prepare your life’s meal yourself. Don’t look outside yourself to find out who you are – look inside – and create who you are.

**Push your own buttons.** From now on, make it a personal commitment to notice everything that inspires you. These are the buttons on the control panel that operates your energy and self-motivation. For example, you don’t have to wait for hours until a certain song comes on the radio and picks up your spirits. You can control what songs you hear by making a tape and playing it in your car every day. Movies and books can be a source of inspiration too. The point is to learn how to push your own motivation buttons.

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