



Missing Your Motivation? Here's Why

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/school-thought/202108/missing-your-motivation-heres-why>

Do you ever find yourself staring at your to-do list, **intimidated** by its size but too overwhelmed to begin checking off boxes? Yeah, of course you do.

Motivation in our daily lives can be extremely hard to come by. There are some days where you feel like a superhero as you **plow through** your tasks like some unstoppable machine, and then there are days where you feel like that unstoppable machine just **ran you over**. Those days, motivating yourself to get things done feels impossible.

Everyone wishes on those days that motivation could come down deus-ex-machina-style and spontaneously inspire us to **tackle** the day. However, on the days when motivation is missing, it may be less important to focus the absence of motivation and more important to look at what other needs are not being met.

Twentieth-century psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed the theory that human needs are **intrinsically** prioritized and that some needs must be **fulfilled** before others can be of concern (Maslow 1943). He proposed that needs are more or less hierarchical in nature, with survival and safety most basic, lying at the bottom of his famous pyramid of needs, and more abstract requirements such as **self-fulfillment** and psychological needs towards the top.

Maslow also examined how these needs relate to our sense of motivation in life. Maslow's original hierarchy included five layers of needs—physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and **self-actualization**—each of which must be fully satisfied before the next **layer** of needs could be tackled. He concluded that we are motivated by our needs, whether these needs are **tangible** or psychological, and that motivation to continue 'upwards' will be absent when lower needs are not met.

Although Maslow eventually **adjusted** his theories to be less **rigid**—he later withdrew his belief that one stage of needs must be fulfilled entirely for those above it to be **acknowledged**—there are many critiques of his theory and his research methods. Nevertheless, the concept of psychological hierarchies remains an arguably **vital** piece of modern-day understanding of psychological motivation.

Taking a page out of Maslow's book, it is important to consider what other things you feel when you find yourself lacking motivation. Although motivation sometimes feels **fleeting**, your motivation is likely drained because some of your other physiological and psychological priorities are unmet. The unsatisfied needs could be related to your environment, your relationships, your emotions, or something different altogether.





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Personally, I find my motivation at its lowest point when I am hungry or tired, or when my anxiety and emotional **turmoil** are at a high; achieving my goals seems irrelevant during these moments. Motivating myself to do the “extra stuff” feels impossible when I’m in this

state, so my to-do list goes untouched except for the essential tasks. Everyone’s needs might be prioritized differently, but it is important to consider what needs you might not be acknowledging that **inhibit** your motivation to proceed.

Although it is unrealistic to expect the world to pause and our to-do list to **shrink** while we sort out our body's and mind's requirements, we can still take a moment **to take stock of** our well-being when motivation runs low. Like missing car keys, sometimes things turn up once you stop looking for them and **fixating on** their absence. Next time you find yourself looking for your long-lost motivation, consider taking the time to ask yourself what else is missing too.

Match the words with their meanings.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. intimidated | () | 12. rigid | () |
| 2. to plow through [sth] | () | 13. to acknowledge | () |
| 3. to run over [sth/so] | () | 14. vital | () |
| 4. to tackle [sth/so] | () | 15. to take a page out of sb’s book | () |
| 5. intrinsically | () | 16. fleeting | () |
| 6. to fulfill | () | 17. turmoil | () |
| 7. self-fulfillment | () | 18. to inhibit | () |
| 8. self-actualization | () | 19. to shrink | () |
| 9. layer | () | 20. to take stock [of sth] | () |
| 10. tangible | () | 21. to fixate on [sth] | () |
| 11. to adjust | () | | |



- a. to try to deal with something or someone
- b. to change something slightly, especially to make it more correct, effective, or suitable
- c. to become smaller, or to make something smaller
- d. a state of confusion, uncertainty, or disorder
- e. to develop an obsessive attachment to someone or something
- f. frightened or nervous due to lack of confidence in a situation
- g. a person's desire to use all their abilities to achieve and be everything that they possibly can
- h. short or quick
- i. to go through a substance or an area of something with difficulty / to finish an activity with difficulty
- j. stiff or fixed; not able to be bent or moved
- k. to slow down a process or the growth of something
- l. necessary for the success or continued existence of something; extremely important
- m. a level of material, such as a type of rock or gas, that is different from the material above or below it, or a thin sheet of substance
- n. in a way that is an extremely important and basic characteristic of a person or thing
- o. real and not imaginary; able to be shown, touched, or experienced
- p. to do something that is expected, hoped for, or promised, or to cause it to happen
- r. to accept, admit, or recognize something, or the truth or existence of something



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s. to examine a situation carefully

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t. a feeling of satisfaction that you have achieved what you wanted

u. to do something the way someone else would do it; to behave or act like someone else

w. to hit and drive over someone or something with a vehicle

Answer key

- | | | | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1. (f.) | 3. (w.) | 5. (n.) | 7. (t.) | 9. (m.) | 11. (b.) |
| 2. (i.) | 4. (a.) | 6. (p.) | 8. (g.) | 10. (o.) | 12. (j.) |
| 13. (r.) | 14. (l.) | | | | |

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