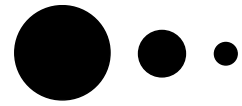


THE GROWTH MARATHON

One Stride At a Time



MASLOW

GOAL

ON MOTIVATION PT.1

TYPES OF MOTIVATION

DRIVE

PERSONALITY

TGM

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— **One Stride At a Time** —

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What is Motivation?

Before jumping into figuring out what motivates people or what affects motivation, there is one question we should ask ourselves; "What is motivation?"



I picked some definitions from various sources, and they can be seen below:

- Motivation is the desire to act in service of a goal. ([Source](#))
- Motivation is the reason why people initiate, continue, or terminate a specific behavior at a particular time. ([Source](#))
- Motivation is the process that starts, directs, and sustains goal-oriented behavior. ([Source](#))
- Motivation is the drive ignited in us when we pursue a specific goal. ([Source](#))
- Motivation is the mechanism by which groups and individuals select a specific behavior and persist with it. ([Source](#))
- Motivation is a condition inside us that desires a change either in the self or the environment. ([Source](#))
- The essence of motivation is energized and persistent goal-directed behavior. When we are motivated, we move and take action. ([Source](#))

All the definitions above point to one thing, motivation is what causes us to act. It is the motor or force that drives our actions.

While going through the literature, I found that motivation is quite a complex concept. The aim of this article is just to provide you with a surface-level, easily digestible idea of motivation and how we can use the origin of motivation to act in ways that'll improve our lives. These can help in your decision-making and maybe increase your appetite for more knowledge on the topic.

Next up is the types of motivation out there.

Types of Motivation

Motivation seems to have different sources. Some motives are biological and hence are present in all human beings (we seek food, sex, water). Some are based on our traits; some depend on external factors like incentives or social acceptance.

There are various types of motivation from literature, a few interesting ones are as follows:

**Drive
Motivation**

**Goal
Motivation**

Types of Motivation

**Personality
Motivation**

**Maslow
Motivation**

Drive Motivation

Due to an out-of-balance internal state, we feel motivated to get back to equilibrium. The drive is that out of balance internal state. For example, when we are in danger, there is the release of adrenaline, and we have a physical drive to either fight or fly. The drive is to bring our body back to its equilibrium state. When you are hungry you have a drive, when you see a sexual partner, you have a drive etc.

Goal Motivation

Goals are generated by a discrepancy between where we currently are and where we want to be. Goals are worth achieving when they are challenging, specific and congruent with our belief system. Otherwise, we do not have the adequate motivation to achieve them.

Motivation and Personality

We are motivated in different ways based on our personality traits. Specific goals motivate appropriate personality state behaviors that are effective for achieving that goal.

Maslow Motivation

Human behavior is dictated by several needs, ranging from physiological needs to self-actualization needs.

The literature on motivation is quite fascinating and I encourage you to spend some time reviewing what's out there if this article is interesting.

As I was reading about motivation, I fell on [a piece](#) that prompted an interesting question in my head, are motivation and willpower the same thing?

Motivation vs Willpower

I believe for any need that has a direct impact on our lives, willpower is either irrelevant or unlimited. We don't need willpower to quench our thirst. Willpower is just another muscle according to Cal Newport and various research on the subject. Like any other muscle, it gets tired. This means if our willpower for the day is depleted, we can't go and fetch water to save our life. But something

ensures we do what it takes to quench our thirst in order to survive. I can't call it willpower, because we do not have much choice, our bodies want to survive, and we will get that water. We cannot be too lazy to go get a cup of water if we are close to death (unless we are physically unable to). For the moment I'll just call it basic need motivation.

I think willpower is like an engine we use to satisfy needs that are difficult to achieve and will not cost our lives if we don't fulfil them. For example, learning how to play the guitar, training for a half-marathon etc. (In the next article, we'll see that Maslow calls these needs growth needs.) We are motivated to do them, but the actual push to get us started comes from willpower.

I cannot come to a definite conclusion as to how motivation and willpower differ, but they seem to be different from the example above. What are your thoughts on this?

While you think about that, let's touch a bit more on willpower. Willpower is like a muscle, hence it can be made stronger with practice, and if not worked on, it atrophies. What does this mean concretely? It simply means that if you always require willpower to do something, it'll take too much effort and will constantly drain you. As James Clear suggests, by turning an activity into a habit, we decrease the amount of willpower required to do that activity. Our body automatically does the activity. You can have a look at [this article](#) to get more insight about habit formation.

A pitfall a lot of people seem to fall in (I am guilty of this too, a bit too often to be honest) is to wait to be motivated to do a task. We want to feel like doing it before doing it. Best believe this, for most people (I say most and not all because I suspect some people are wired differently) you will never feel like doing something hard. This is where James Clear's 2-minute rule comes in handy. Motivation typically comes once you start an activity. Go do something for 2 minutes, and then stop. It won't be as easy to stop as you think. The hardest part of doing anything is starting. This agrees with the law of momentum, starting is tough, but once started, moving is easier.

I love this quote by [Erick Cloward](#), "A routine will beat relying on motivation and willpower any day".

Conclusion

This article served as a concise introduction to motivation. It answered the following questions:

- What is motivation?
- What are some types of motivation?
- Is willpower the same as motivation?

I hope you enjoyed it. The next article will have more digestible material, we'll have a look at how one can be more motivated and Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Drop a comment [here](#) on any aspect of this article that you enjoyed.