

Procrastination, motivation, inspiration

How are these everyday practitioner emotions linked, and what part do they play in the success or failure of our practice? **Mark Shields** explains.

Procrastination seems to be one of the biggest problems practitioners experience. There is an entire industry (namely the personal development industry) focused almost entirely on attempting to address this problem, helping us get clear on our goals and then motivating us via all manner of coercion to achieve them.

Guilt, irritation, shame, self-sabotage, stress, the fear of not reaching one's potential, anger at self, beating oneself up, right path/wrong path thinking etc...all accompany the so-called unmotivated practitioner.

One of two things can happen when you find yourself procrastinating or seeking to motivate yourself. You will motivate yourself with head talk and force yourself to do something that most likely does not feel particularly good. Or you can wait (aka procrastinate), until you feel inspired from within. Motivation will take substantial effort, be a fleeting addictive type high followed by a down, feeling like a pat on the back that may leave you wanting. Inspiration takes courage, will feel genuinely good and uplifting, absorbing, purposeful and of course inspired!

Living from inspiration

On a personal note it's been a journey of many years to learn to live from inspiration; the most notable experience that sticks in my mind was when I was a senior bank manager.

This was a wonderful time for my family and I and we seemed to be riding on the crest of a wave. We had it all. The house on the hill, the sea view and the boat in the harbor; but sadly it did not seem to inspire me.

I did not procrastinate for more than a couple of months, as once my mind was made up I was ready to change my life for ever.

I felt inspired to become the best Life Coach in the UK. There was an element of fear in this career change as the prestige and kudos of my bank position was what everybody seemed to want. I felt inspired and motivated

“Inspiration comes forth from within. It's what the light burning within you is about, as opposed to motivation, which is doing it because if you don't do it, there will be negative repercussions. Motivation is making me do something that I don't really want to do.”

– *Esther Hicks*

to study in my spare time and took the relevant qualifications; at the same time I was itching to get to my first client.

It just felt better when I thought about life coaching, so I took a deep breath and amicably left the bank. In less than a week I was running my own life coaching practice.

An internationally acclaimed coach and personal friend told me, “For goodness sake Mark, live the dream – you only live once!”. I was both motivated and enormously inspired by this statement and his advice helped me leave the safe zone of banking which was all I had known for 20 years.

The desire to inspire and motivate people to live the dream within the boundaries of their own goals and dreams was enormously satisfying.

Again, I find myself, as will you, moving into new areas with new inspirations. Perhaps bashing your head against what you “should do” ... outdated ideas and projects that are motivated by living up to some ideal set by someone else, or perhaps doing what you feel you should or ought to be doing in the hope of fantasy rewards at the end of the hard slog.

It takes courage to live free and in the flow of your own calling – but the reward is extraordinary. I believe that the word inspiration originally means to be filled with life, passion, and emotional and physical balance and well-being, achieving great results in your own life and the lives of your patients and clients.

The experience of motivation.

1. Are you focused on the outcome of your success with your clients?
2. Do you find yourself comparing the success of your practice to others?
3. Do you ever say, “I know I should be trying that with my clients, but...”?
4. Do you waste a lot of time feeling guilty?
5. Do you achieve a goal and then wonder what the point of it was?

The experience of inspiration

1. Do you feel a strong sense of purpose and clarity?
2. Do you start the day with intent, eager and excited to face the challenges that lie ahead?
3. Do you believe in your potential and the value of your contribution and value you add to your clients?
4. Do you know that you have something unique to offer your clients and are open to discover new ways to continue adding value to your client's lives?
5. Do you take the time to be reflective about your life path and practice and how you are developing as a practitioner?

Next time you feel inspired by a new idea or perhaps a fresh role model in your life, somebody you meet by chance, or a certain gut feeling that won't go away, embrace these new feelings and use the experience to its full advantage.

Nothing happens by chance; everything in life happens for a reason. So don't allow yourself to procrastinate and simply exist. Seek out the inspiration and motivation you need to lead a full and exciting life as a practitioner, follow your star, live your dream as I did and see where it takes you. ☞



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