

Activating Optimal Motivation

Firstly, if you have a low motivation to learn the skills of motivation for yourself, to do this we are going to provide the opportunity to test them out on yourself by applying them to an important task, goal of situation.

Identifying a Topic/ Subject for the Application

Think about something you know you have low-quality motivation around, but something you know is an important task, goal or situation in either your personal or professional life. It could be:

- Something you are repeatedly procrastinating about
- Something others are expecting handled and are frustrated with you about
- A great idea you'd like to pursue but haven't had the courage to act
- A meeting, or other activity that just drains your energy when you think about it
- Resolving a conflict with a difficult person
- You are experiencing a lack of positivity or wellbeing – you're in a bad mood, not yourself

Whereby, shifting your current outlook and seeing it from a new perspective may bring greater clarity and be a worthwhile expenditure of some time.

Three Steps to Activating Optimal Motivation

1. Identify current motivational outlook
2. Shift to (or maintain) optimal motivational outlook
3. Reflect

Skill 1 : Identify your current Motivational Outlook.

Reference the six outlooks as described in the first part of the session. You can find the Spectrum of Motivation by clicking [here](#). Refer to it as we undertake skill 1.

Looking at this chart, and based on what you've learned about each outlook (do not judge whether the outlook that seems right is good or bad) just identify where you think your current motivational outlook lies.

To assist you in this process we will track alongside you with an example, using diet and wellbeing as the subject. This aligns with our metaphor of junk and healthy food for suboptimal and optimal motivation outlooks. As we complete one side of the table you can work your way through with your example.

Topic Selected and Described:

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Point of Focus. Lose 10 kg over the next 6 months.	
My reflection	Your reflection on your subject
Disinterested: I see no value in losing this weight. I'm not totally happy with my weight or diet, but have no intention of acting on this – I'm too overwhelmed right now.	
External: I really want to win the prize my health insurance company is offering of a tropical island holiday if I achieve my weight loss goals over the next 6 months	
Imposed: I'm feeling a lot of pressure to lose weight. My family is worried about my health; I feel guilty about disappointing them	
Aligned: I value my health, and losing this weight will make me healthier. I'm looking forward to being lighter and not having this extra 10 kg to carry around. This is a healthy choice for me.	
Integrated: Part of what's really important to me in life is to be a role model for my children and to have enough energy to be fully involved in their lives. Losing this weight and having more 'get up and go' will enable me to be a better mom and do that	
Inherent: I am enthusiastic about losing the weight. I enjoy trying out new things and this new lifestyle way of living looks like lots of fun.	

Motivational Outlook: Look behind the outlook for confirmation. Answer the following questions	
Questions	Your reflection on your subject

<p>Would you describe your satisfaction of the three psychological needs related to your subject as high or low quality?</p>	<p>Autonomy</p> <p>Relatedness</p> <p>Competence</p>
<p>Is the quality of your self-regulation related to your subject high or low?</p>	<p>Mindfulness</p> <p>Values</p> <p>Purpose</p>
<p>Are your needs for ARC (Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence) being satisfied or not? (Gap analysis)</p>	
<p>Are you employing MVP (Mindfulness, Values and Purpose) to self-regulate or not? (Gap analysis)</p>	

<p>Example</p>	
<p>Questions</p>	<p>Weight Loss Goal</p>
<p>Would you describe your satisfaction of the three psychological needs related to your subject as high or low quality?</p>	<p>Going on this diet means I can't eat everything I want to. My Autonomy is undermined.</p> <p>I now have the urge to eat everything – I am not supposed to eat! Due to low quality autonomy – and that causes feelings of guilt and annoyance at self.</p> <p>This diet is supported by my doctor and my family. I'm afraid of disappointing them – yet I do on occasion resent their interference. What happens if I don't do this I will feel ashamed and guilt from eating what I'm not supposed to, leaving me with low quality relatedness with family and doctor</p> <p>My competence has been undermined. The doctor and my family made it clear they don't trust my ability to take care of myself. They might be right. When I lost weight in the past, I've regained it and more.</p>

<p>Is the quality of your self-regulation related to your subject high or low?</p>	<p>I don't practice mindfulness. When I eat food I am not supposed to – I try not to think about it. I tell myself I'll begin after the weekend.</p> <p>I never thought about aligning my values with my eating. I haven't thought about why losing this weight is meaningful or important to me - other than skinny is beautiful and fat is ugly. My values of integrity, loyalty and honesty support me at work, but how do they relate to my lifestyle and diet.</p> <p>I've not connected a life nor work related purpose to losing weight because I don't have one. Who has time for that – it's a bit airy fairy and I'm too busy supporting my family.</p>
<p>Are your needs for ARC (Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence) being satisfied or not? (Gap analysis)</p>	<p>No – each are low quality with a sub-optimal outlook ; the outlook is imposed and expressed through feelings of being manipulated, shame along with fear and resentment from my side</p>
<p>Are you employing MVP (Mindfulness, Values and Purpose) to self-regulate or not? (Gap analysis)</p>	<p>No – as per above</p>

Now that you have seen this example, What conclusions have you reached about your own motivational outlook? Does it match the one you identified intuitively at the beginning of this exercise?

Comments on First Part of the Activity:

Skill 2: Shift or maintain an Optimal Motivational Outlook

Now, the task is to choose which motivational outlook is preferable and identify a strategy for closing the gap between here and there. Each outlook has pros-and cons. We examine

these in detail in the document 'Pros and Cons of the 6 Outlooks' which you can access by clicking the button below.

You can use this document as a reference as we continue to work our way through Skill 2.

The aim of moving above the line and making the shift to an optimal motivational outlook, is to satisfy the psychological needs for ARC. The vehicle through which the shift is made, is the development of Self-Regulation. We have already seen that there are three points of focus for this to happen. MVP – Mindfulness; Values and Purpose.

- **Practicing Mindfulness:** Take a quiet moment, and notice yourself – your inner thinking and ask the question as to which motivational outlook you wish to embrace. The very process of pausing, stopping, and taking time to identify current motivational outlook and then considering what might be a preferable option is a moment of self-reflective mindfulness.
- **Taking a Mindfulness Moment:** This is a process of noticing emerging conditions that might take you into a self-regulation challenge. Being aware of past patterns, triggers, contexts that have resulted in your losing your centre – and notice when they start to emerge in the here and now. Then consciously taking a 'Mindfulness moment' – to stop, check in with self, breathe and open the self-up to what might want to come forth without judgment nor attachment nor, most importantly reaction.
- **The Power of asking Why?** We already explored this idea of the Why, Why, Why question to get to the root cause in a previous session. However, this WHY question is very helpful when applied to something you've been assigned to do, or feel you need to do, but are disinterested in or are only doing it for the money, or because of a sense of obligation. The steps are easy : Ask –“Why don't I want to do this?"; and then with that answer – follow up with another 'Why?' question. Continue to peel through the layers of distraction to where you find clarity around your choice (autonomy); find some meaning or purposeful purpose (relatedness); or identify how you might learn and grow from the experience (competence). Asking why is a method of developing mindfulness around a specific topic or instance.
- **Align with developed core values:** This is another question. This time it is a 'What' question. The question is – “What do I value more, than my current sub-optimal motivation outlook?. This may throw up a distinct choice that connects over and above and initial impulse to your higher nature. EG. You are about to send a nasty email to a colleague because they made a decision you disagree with. Ask “what do I value more – proving myself right and the other wrong OR collaborating for a better outcome? Depending on the answer – the tenor of such a mail and any further action will be different.

- **Connecting to a Noble Purpose beyond just the self:** What beyond ourselves, and our short-term focus do we want to be part of, making a real contribution to bringing to life. This is something that we may find is part of our legacy – it often answers the question “How might the world become a better place – due to the fact that I walked here? How might I contribute and to what?”

Skill 3: Reflect

To Reflect, begin by asking the self how you feel after moving through the steps of making the shift in motivational state. Feelings of well-being are at the heart of maintaining an optimal motivational outlook. Now, this might feel like it's outside the comfort zone – the point is, however, that everyone has feelings and feeling responses whether we like it or not. And many are out of touch with their emotions or moods, or try to ignore them. The paradox is, the greater the denial the greater the leverage emotions will have over behaviour, due to that blindness limiting expression of emotion to their dysfunctional patterns.

As the Reflection skill is applied we are looking for indicators of well-being. These are:

- The presence of positive energy
- A sense of physical and emotional harmony
- Calm and grounded-ness from being in supportive and secure relationships
- Little or no negative energy, stress or anxiety
- A sense of continued learning, personal growth and accomplishment
- The knowing that what is being done, in work and/or life is contributing to something socially meaningful

And when Identified – cultivating an appreciation and gratitude for holding the new optimal motivation state will support the maintenance of it. Coming back again and again to the experience of the higher energy and aliveness.