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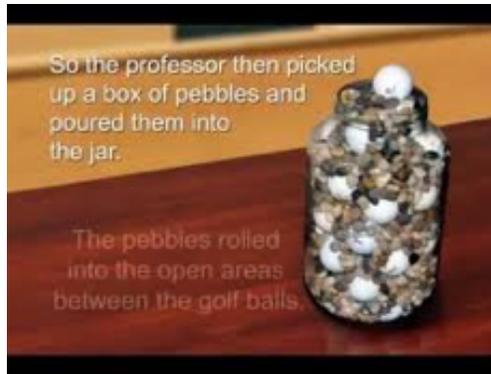
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TOPIC THIS ISSUE: PERSONAL CHANGE & GROWTH



"Change is inevitable... growth is optional. To grow you must see the value in yourself to add value to yourself and others. You must know yourself to grow yourself, and it is hard to improve when you have no one but yourself to follow."
John C. Maxwell

IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOUR PERSPECTIVE



A professor stood before her Philosophy 101 class and had some items in front of her. When the class began, wordlessly, she picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to

fill it with golf balls. She then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. So the professor picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. She shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. She then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was. The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. She then asked once more if the jar was full.

The students responded with a unanimous – yes! The professor then produced two cans of liquid chocolate from under the table and proceeded to pour the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

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"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things - - your family, your spouse, your health, your children, your friends, your favorite passions - - things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car." "The sand is everything else - - the small stuff.

If you put the sand into the jar first," she continued, there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Take care of the golf balls first the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One student raised her hand and inquired what the chocolate represented.

The professor smiled. *"I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for chocolate!"*

PERSONAL GROWTH: MOTIVATION: THE DRIVE

By: Jim Taylor, Ph.D.



According to the research of Dr. Anders Ericsson, motivation is the most significant predictor of success. In simple terms, Dr. Ericsson found that experts in many walks of life, whether sport, music, chess, dance, or business, had put in the most hours at their

craft. He coined the phrase, "It takes 10 years and 10,000 hours to become an expert." Other research has show that the longer someone is in a career, the less important innate ability (i.e., intelligence) is and the more important motivation becomes. In other words, the most successful



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people just keep plugging away longer than others. Why is the relationship between motivation and success so robust? Because high motivation will ensure total preparation, which will, in turn, ensure maximum performance and results.

This same concept of motivation applies to making changes in your life. The reality is that change is difficult because, in all likelihood, you have been the way you currently are for a long time and your habits are deeply ingrained. Your ability to find and maintain your motivation for meaningful and long-lasting change will ultimately determine whether you're able to break long-standing habits and patterns.

Defining Motivation

Let's first consider what motivation is in very practical terms. Motivation can be defined in the following ways:

- An internal or external drive that prompts a person to action;
- The ability to initiate and persist toward a chosen objective;
- Putting 100% of your time, effort, energy, and focus into your goal attainment;
- Being able to pursue change in the face of obstacles, boredom, fatigue, stress, and the desire to do other things;
- The determination to resist ingrained and unhealthy patterns and habits;
- Doing everything you can to make the changes you want in your life.

Impact of Motivation

But it's one thing to saying you are motivated to make changes and achieve your goals; it's another entirely different thing to have that motivation translate into actual action toward those goals. Motivation is so important because it impacts every aspect of your efforts at change:

- Preparation to make the changes;
- Patience in giving yourself time for the changes to occur;
- Persistence when old habits and patterns resist your efforts;
- Perseverance in overcoming obstacles and setbacks;
- Lifestyle that supports the changes;
- Ultimate achievement of the desired changes.



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**Effort vs. Goals**

All else being equal, whatever you put into your change efforts is what you will get out of them. A problem I see among many people who say they want to change is a disconnect between their efforts and their goals. People say they really want to change, but their efforts don't reflect that stated motivation. What this tells me is that there is often a gap between the goals many people have and the effort they are putting into those goals. It's easy to say that you want to change. It is much more difficult to actually make that happen. If you have this kind of disconnect, you have two choices. You can either lower your change goals to match your efforts or you can raise your efforts to match your goals. There is no right choice. But if you're truly motivated to change, you better make sure you're doing the work necessary to achieve your goals.

The Grind

The difficult nature of making changes means that you will likely be putting in effort that will take you far beyond the point at which it is inspiring or fun. This junction is what I call The Grind, which starts when actions necessary to produce meaningful change become stressful, tiring, and tedious. The Grind is also the point at which your efforts toward change really count. The Grind is what separates those who are able to change from those who are not. Many people who reach this point in the process of change either ease up or give up because change is just too darned hard. But truly motivated people reach The Grind and keep on going.

Finding the Motivation

Finding the motivation to change means maintaining your efforts consistently when it would be easy to give up. It involves doing everything possible to achieve your change goals.

Motivation to change begins with what I call the three D's.

The first D stands for direction. Before you can begin the process of change, you must first consider the different directions you can go in your life. You could continue your life as it is now, make immediate and dramatic changes, or take a slower route to change.

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The second D represents *decision*. With these three choices of direction, you must decide on one direction in which to go. None of these directions is necessarily right or wrong, better or worse, they're simply your options. Your choice will dictate whether you make changes in your life and the amount of time and effort you put into those changes.

The third D stands for *dedication*. Once you've made your decision, you must dedicate yourself to it. If your decision is to make significant changes in your life, whether quickly or slowly, then this last step will determine whether those changes are realized. Your decision to change will then become a top priority in your life. Only by being completely dedicated to your direction and decision will you ensure that you have the motivation you will need to achieve your change goals.

Four Obstacles to Change

By: Jim Taylor, Ph.D.



An unfortunate aspect of life is that we often create obstacles, usually unconsciously, that may serve some sort of immediate purpose, but end up being long-term liabilities. These barriers are often driven by some of our most basic needs, for example, to feel competent,

to be accepted, to feel in control. Regrettably, these obstacles become intractable and end up preventing people from changing (or even attempting to change) when they shift from being beneficial to being burdensome.

Baggage. Like all of us, you bring good things into adulthood from your childhood. And, as a human being, you probably also bring some not-so-good things, what is commonly called your "baggage." The most frequent types of baggage include low self-esteem, perfectionism, fear, need for control, anger, and need to please. This baggage causes you to think, feel, and behave based on who you were as a child rather than the very different person you are now as an adult. Most of this baggage causes you to react to the world in an unproductive way that



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can sabotage your efforts to achieve positive life change.

Habits. When you experience thoughts, emotions, and behavior that are driven by your baggage with enough frequency, they become deeply ingrained *habits* that dictate how you act on and react to the world. These habits are much like athletes who practice bad technique. This poor technique becomes wired into their "muscle memory" and comes out in competition. Similarly, when your baggage becomes ingrained as habits, they produce seemingly reflexive response even when they are neither healthy nor adaptive. The challenge is that, again like athletes, once habits are ingrained, it is difficult to retrain them.

Emotions. Negative *emotions*, such as fear, anger, sadness, frustration, and hopelessness, can act as a powerful deterrent to life change. For example, many people don't change out of the fear of failure. They might think, "What if I can't change, then I'll prove myself to be even more of a failure than I am now." They then say, "I've been this way for a long time and I'm getting by, so it's not worth the risk." These negative emotions become substantial barriers to change by being triggered whenever you feel uncomfortable, incompetence, or unsupported. And the only relief is to retreat back to the way you have been.

Environment. You create an *environment* that helps you best manage your baggage, habits, and emotions. You surround yourself with people who are supportive of the way you are and make you feel comfortable and safe. You engage in activities that play to your strengths and help you either mask or mitigate those obstacles. Unfortunately, this environment reinforces who you are, even when you don't want to be who you are, and can cause you to continue down a path that interferes with your happiness and achievement of your goals. This environment may, at a minimum, not support change and, at worst, discourage change.

In all four cases, when you allow these obstacles to control your life, they have the effect of sabotaging your efforts at changing your life in a positive way. Even worse, you feel stuck, frustrated, and helpless to change your lot in life.

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I wanted to change the world

When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town. I couldn't change the town and as an older man, I tried to change my family. Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself, and suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family. My family and I could have made an impact on our town. Their impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world.

Written by an unknown Monk around 11th century

