

WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR MOTIVATION TO WRITE

By Dr. Lin Stepp

Motivation, according to David Myers, refers to a need or desire that serves to energize behavior and to direct it toward a goal. There are many theories as to why people become motivated. People are motivated by inborn drives, by aroused states, by deep needs, and by incentives. When both needs and incentives are present, motivation is stronger.

What are some factors that increase motivation and incentives? The answers come from multitudes of books on the subject. Here are some highlights that might help you to get more motivated to write:

1. FORM A DEFINITE SENSE OF PURPOSE

A purpose is a clear objective or aim. What is it that you want to write? Figure that out. Decide on a clear purpose and objective. Don't be all over the place with your ideas. Get focused and on track with one aim and one objective that you want to pursue right now.

2. DEFINE SOME CLEAR REALISTIC GOALS

Goals are the specific outcomes you want to accomplish or attain. These need to be planned out and written out. All research studies in this area have found that people who clarify and write out their goals meet with more success than those who don't. Don't be vague. What are your writing goals for the year? To finish one book? Two books? Set your goals. Then break your yearly goals out into monthly goals and weekly goals so you have something clear to work toward.

3. DECIDE THAT YOU REALLY WANT TO SUCCEED

This may sound silly, but it's not. You can't have a vague general idea that you'd like to succeed. You have to passionately want it. You have to get purposed to pursue your vision. You have to be willing to rearrange your time and to give up other things in your life in order to accomplish your goals. This doesn't mean you need to give up your day job. If you are not making disciplined time for writing now, it is not likely that you will make disciplined time for writing when you have more time. Busy people accomplish more than people with much idle time; that's a long-proven fact.

4. DETERMINE THAT YOU ARE WORTH IT

Stop belittling yourself and thinking defeatist thoughts about yourself. You are as deserving of opportunities and success as anyone. Give yourself appreciation for all the gifts and talents you have. If you wait for someone else to do that for you – you may never get it. Throughout childhood we are socialized to stay in line and to conform. We learn to wait for permission to act. Unfortunately, we carry those seeds into adulthood, and often are waiting, if unconsciously, for someone to tell us we are worthy enough to seek after success. Or simply that we are worthy at all. Here's your permission: You're worthy. Go after your vision.

5. GET PAST THE NEGATIVE, CRITICAL ATTITUDES OF OTHERS

I hate to be the one to tell you, but you will probably not get a lot of positive encouragement as you pursue your new purposes and goals. You are stepping out of line. You are following a different drummer, daring to be different. You are

not staying in the mass of mediocrity. Whenever you step out on a serious path to do anything new – there will be someone to tell you that you shouldn't or that you're not good enough. There will be someone to criticize you in the name of helpfulness with criticism that does little to help and only hurts. Keith DeGreen wrote that there will always be a percentage of the population that takes pleasure, indeed delight, in pointing out the imperfections of what we do. He also notes that it is often those with the least right to offer criticism that give the most.

6. SET A SCHEDULE AND KEEP TO IT

All successful people have a work schedule. Writers write. They don't just dream about writing, talk about writing, and think about writing. They write. How much time you write in a week will depend on your goals. An hour here or there every week is not serious writing. If writing is your purpose and completing a book is your goal, writing needs to be your 15-20 hour part-time job. And only you can plan when those hours will be worked into your week. The best way is to schedule them out on your calendar or day book. Put them in pencil so you can change them when you have to but be diligent to keep to your schedule.

6. PLAN INCENTIVES FOR YOURSELF

When you meet your writing goals for a week, reward yourself in some way. Take yourself to a movie. Have lunch with a friend. And when you meet your writing goals for a month, reward yourself with another incentive – perhaps one you've written out on your calendar book to work toward. A friend of mine puts a picture of something she will let herself buy at month's end if she meets her goal. We all work well for planned incentives.

7. BE YOUR OWN MOTIVATOR

Countless research studies have proved that what you think about yourself and say to yourself affect what you do and become. You have to be your own daily motivator and your own daily cheering squad. You may attend a meeting or a conference that motivates you to want to write – that fires up your inspirational juices. But after a day or two, it's back to you and the computer. Shad Helmstetter said: Your success is inexorably tied to the words and beliefs about yourself that you constantly store in your conscious and subconscious mind. Think and speak positively about your goals. Keep yourself positively motivated.

This summer – and this year – can be the year in which you finally buckle down and write as you really want to. Love yourself enough to do it. The world needs your stories.