

A woman with long dark hair is captured in mid-air, jumping joyfully. She is wearing a dark t-shirt and light-colored shorts. Her hair is blowing in the wind, and her expression is one of pure happiness. The background is a clear, light blue sky with a blurred field of dry grass at the bottom. The entire image is framed by a thick red border.

# **The Fabulous Motivators**

**By Avani Mehta**

# *The Fabulous Motivators*

## *- Get Inspired To Take Action!*

*By Avani Mehta*

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*Wanting something is not enough. You must hunger for it. Your motivation must be absolutely compelling in order to overcome the obstacles that will invariably come your way. ~ Les Brown*

The beginnings of a new goal, a new project are wonderful. You are all worked up; full of excitement and action. However, somewhere down the line, goals remain, desire to achieve them remains but the action part goes missing. You simply lose the motivation to act on your dreams. And no matter how hard you try, you are stuck. You are stuck with inaction.

To achieve your goals, you need to find ways to motivate yourself to take action. You need to figure out how to get motivated enough so that once again you start running towards your dream.

At times like these, having a backup plan to motivate self and get rolling towards action is very helpful. Here are powerful ways to get set and moving again, to get motivated to take action again.

*Fabulous Motivators That Inspire You To  
Take Action ...*

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# *The Basic Motivators*

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### *The Movers & Shakers*

The movers and shakers are things that make taking action easy for you, things that motivate you to get out of your inertia and act on your plan. There are no wrongs and rights when it comes to movers and shakers. Whatever works for you is the right answer. Ideally it's better to know more than one mover and shaker. So that when one doesn't work, you can rely on the other one(s).

*For some people (like me), it's music. Just crank up some good numbers and they are all set to finish off everything on their task list. The pain, the de-motivation, the frustration, the tiredness ... everything disappears in background when they rock on good numbers. It doesn't matter what the task in hand is ... whether it's writing or exercising or cooking or doing dishes or even studying for that matter – there's right music for every task – Music that motivates to take action.*

Of course, music is not everyone's savior. You need to find out what is motivational for you. What gets you grooving and moving? What turns you on? What are the movers and shakers for you?

***Some movers and shakers (other than music) which are quite effective –***

- Exercising
- Meditating / Visualizing
- Playing
- Reading a couple of inspiring passages
- Talking to friends
- Tracking progress
- Setting rewards
- Setting punishments
- Reminding yourself of the real reason behind your goal
- Reminding yourself of the real cost of not meeting the goal

**Action Items:**

- i. Make a list of at least 3 Movers & Shakers for you.
- ii. Find out easy ways to incorporate these in your day to day life so that you remain on high of motivation always.
- iii. Enjoy one mover and shaker right away.



## *The Deal Breakers*

If movers and shakers are those which turn your switch on, then deal breakers are those which turn your switch off. Presence of these, experience of these is enough to make you not want to work on the task in hand. Deal breakers promote demotivation, lethargy, lack of interest, lack of focus and a lot of inaction. Deal breakers are those road bumps which slow you down or those road blocks which stop you completely from moving forward with your goals.

Anytime you identify something which is a deal breaker for you, remove it from your way. Find a way to get past them or not allow them to crop up in the first place.

*Clutter is a huge deal breaker for me. I need to get my space organized to be able to get to work or even relax for that matter. Creating anti-clutter routines and allotting spaces for organized clutter help me take care of this deal breaker.*

No matter how hard you try, there will be times when deal breakers will come in your way – usually at the most inconvenient times. There will be times when you won't have time or energy to deal with these deal breakers and will have to work on your action item in spite of them. For times like these, knowing some work around beforehand can come in quite handy.

*For example, I have found that if I cannot clear entire space, clearing the area which is in my vision range is enough to give me a breather and get to work. Facing a wall and using desk space while working is quite advantageous in times like these. I stack everything that's on the desk somewhere else and voila, there is enough clean space for me to get to work.*

### ***Some Deal Breakers (apart from Clutter) –***

- Lack of sleep / energy
- Dealing with energy vampires
- Working on too many projects at once
- Working on a huge overwhelming project
- External distractions
- Stress / Deadlines

**Action items:**

- i. Make a list of 3 Deal Breakers for you
- ii. Figure out how can you avoid them / eliminate them from your life
- iii. Figure out a work around for each of them

## *The Momentum Builders*

As the name suggests, the momentum builders help you gain momentum in your tasks. They are all about making you a task ninja. You finish off one task after another in rapid succession, without any pauses. You get so much involved in your work that time stops mattering. The next time you check time, you are surprised at how much time has gone by and how much work you have managed to complete.

Your momentum builders will keep changing from project to project. To identify momentum builders for your current project, break down the entire project in small do-able action items. Prioritize these action items and give them a sequence of operation. From these, the first three action items on your list are your momentum builders for now.

To experience momentum, you need to complete these three tasks in rapid succession. On completion of each important task, you gain motivation. By the time you complete all three tasks, you build up on so much motivation, so much energy that you just keep moving forward – thus breaking out of inertia and experiencing momentum.

### ***The logic behind success of momentum builders is quite simple –***

- i. Make projects seem less overwhelming by breaking them down
- ii. Reduce confusion of what to do and when, by creating a list of action items and prioritizing them
- iii. Gain motivation by completing important tasks
- iv. Take advantage of success and motivation of completing important tasks by working on a few more and thus adding fuel to existing fire – thus building momentum

### *Action Items:*

- i. Pick an important project and find out your momentum builders from its task list.
- ii. Identify three important tasks which you routinely need to do. Experiment to find out whether these can be your everyday momentum builders.
- iii. Every time you encounter something that breaks momentum, list it down and figure out ways to deal with them effectively.

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# *The Inspiration Generators*

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## *The Inspiration Generators*

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When you are inspired, you take action. When inspiration is multi-fold, action is multi-fold as well. As is obvious from the name, Inspiration generators include everything which lifts your spirit and gives you the boost to work towards your goals.

Inspiration generators are reminders of your goals, desires and dreams. They are reminders of the power within you. Inspiration generators encourage you to hold on to your dreams to press on with the task in hand and to not give up. Inspiration generators' sole goal is to keep you motivated.

*Inspiration can be found anywhere and in everything. Here are a few inspiration generators which work very well –*

### *Words of Inspiration*

Words are powerful. Just one sentence is enough to make you feel better; one poem is enough to make you determined again; one passage is enough to motivate you to take action.

If you know of any quotes/poems/passages which touch your heart and speak to you, make most of them. Stick them where you can see them. Read them every day. Begin your day with words that motivate you. Keep them in your vision area always. So that anytime you need some motivation, some form of encouragement, they are there for you ... always.

My love for poems is no secret. I have shared with you on this blog a couple of my favorite poems.

- Edgar Guest's "It Couldn't Be Done" inspires me to tackle any difficult project head on. Even though the project seems impossible to complete and

overwhelmingly huge, “let’s get to action” is the space I find myself in after reading this poem.

- John McLeod’s “Awakening” inspires me to create something. It motivates me to use my creativity and make something beautiful. Every time I read it, it fills me with awe, wonder and promise ... of a life I can create each day.

The best part about words of inspiration is that they are in abundance everywhere. You won’t even have to search hard to find something that calls you to action. Anytime you find something worthwhile, make sure to make a note of it somewhere. So that you can use it again and again and again.

A great way to read and get to know new inspiring quotes everyday is by subscribing to a quote a day facility provided by various websites. You can register at multiple places and keep the ones you like.

### *Vision Board*

A vision board is literally your dream board. It encompasses images and words of dreams that you wish come true. You could focus on a specific dream or a specific area of your life; or you could choose to focus on your entire life all at once.

Just clip images from magazines that inspire you; that represent what you want for yourself and create a collage out of it. This collage that you form is what a vision board is. Looking at a vision board is exciting and fun filled since it’s a visual representation of everything that you want in your life.

*As popularized by ‘The Secret’, creating a vision board sends positive signals to the universe on what you want, and thus that’s what you attract.*

The goal with a vision board is to have constant happy reminders of what are you pursuing and why. Looking at a vision board by itself is a very energizing and motivating experience. It fuels your passion and makes you look forward to act on your dreams.

*For instance, if you are making a dream board for just one goal – losing weight, your dream board could consist of your full size picture in your dream size. You could*

*simply cut paste your head image on a body image you see yourself having in future. You could put in a picture of a weighing scale showing you at your dream weight. You could paste in pictures of how life would be once you get to size you want.*

*Images of you having fun exercising, pursuing active hobbies – like sports, trekking etc or even enjoying healthy foods are a great addition to this board. If you have some target clothes to fit in, images of those too would be the right fit over here. The idea is to have everything that could motivate you to stay on course with your weight loss on this board.*

### **Book of Inspirations**

A book of inspirations is a great way to put together everything that inspires you in one place. Whether it is quotes, poems, passages (from point one above) or pictures that represent your dreams (from point two above) or an inspiring article you come across or stories or even a video for that matter ... whatever inspires you should find its way in this book.

Your book of inspiration could be an actual book or a file on your computer or a blog you maintain ... whichever way is convenient for you. The benefit of creating book of inspirations is that it becomes your one-stop source of inspiration. Since you chose everything that's within the book on your own, you are guaranteed to find something useful as you go through it.

Any time you need inspiration or you need to get motivated to take action, simply take this book out and flip its pages. Each page has the power to tap into your motivation. Each page has the power to re-ignite the passion within to work towards your goals.

A side advantage of creating and adding inspirational stuff to the book of inspiration is that it keeps your mind open to inspiration. You will notice inspirational stuff everywhere, you will allow it to inspire you and motivate you. The same passage, the same video which earlier didn't affect you, you will now find very moving and inspiring – all because you are now open to getting inspired.



Consistently working on the book of inspirations helps you develop a mindset of looking for inspirations in every big-small thing you see/experience around you. This mindset alone will be the reason you stay motivated most of the time.

### *Action Items:*

- i. Pick one inspiring quote/poem/passage which moves you and motivates you. Read it every day – setting it as a daily reminder or computer wallpaper or a post-it note on a highly visible place is a great way to ensure this happens.
- ii. Close your eyes and imagine your vision board. Add images, sounds, words to it one by one as you like. Stay with the imaginary vision board for a while. Enjoy it. Devour it. And see whether you would like to create one for real.
- iii. Every day share one inspiring thing that you found (on that day). You can share your inspiration with your partner, your kids, your family, colleagues, friends ... anyone. In return, ask them to share their inspiration of the day. Add each inspiration to your book of inspirations.

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# *The Savvy Time Shoppers*

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## *The Savvy Time Shoppers*

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Time is and will always be an expensive commodity. It will always be taken away, grabbed and snatched by ... well, who knows who! And that's why you need to master the art of time shopping. When time crunch starts affecting your motivation and desire to take action, the savvy time shoppers will help you get motivated and inspired to take action.

Savvy time shoppers in short are smart ways of finding time to act on your task list without facing resistance. They are all about haggling, finding deals and gaining your way inch by inch in the battle between your dreams and your time.

### *Bargain For Time*

What if I tell you that you need to find one hour everyday to work towards your dreams? The immediate answer will be ... no way! One hour is too much. Taking out that much time is just not possible.

I agree. But if you can't find one hour, can you at least put in half an hour every day? You might say that half an hour every day is also a lot. Had it been once a week ... you could fit it somewhere in your weekend. But definitely not every day!

I say all right. No half an hour each day. What about 10 minutes a day? 10 minutes is nothing! You can take out at least 10 minutes a day to work on 'your dream'.

And you most probably will agree. 10 minutes ... hmmm that can be managed. You will somehow fit it in your schedule every day.

And that my friend is what bargaining is all about. Find out a time period for which you can commit to your dream every day.

### *Time Unit of Least Resistance*

The quickest way to strike a bargain is to find your time unit of least resistance. That is, to find out how much time can you easily commit to? For some, it's 10 minutes,

for some 15. Some people can easily work out half an hour each day. What time can you commit to and stick to without feeling overwhelmed or building anxiety? Figure out that time and assign it to your task in hand.

Your time unit of least resistance acts as an entry barrier breaker. It gets you started. It gets you going. Once you are comfortable spending that much time on your task, try adding time to it in smaller chunks. 5 minutes at a time or 10 minutes at a time. Build up the amount of time you can comfortably spend on the task. Keep the motivation alive.

The advantage of bargaining for time or using time unit of least resistance is that it removes 'lack of time' from the list of things that get you de-motivated.

### ***The Ten Minute Rule***

Whatever time you decide, always remember the ten minute rule. Ten minute rule is quite simple – it says your time unit of least resistance cannot be less than 10 minutes. And you always complete 10 minutes of the action item planned – no matter what.

This means, if you commit to a greater time unit (say half an hour) and are thinking of quitting the task for the day due to lack of time or energy, you can do so – but only after working 10 minutes on it.

The ten minute rule is a great way to beat procrastination and find motivation to do things you don't like to do – like exercise or organize house or write article or fill expenses or sort computer. Once you start working on the task you were resisting, you will notice that you could easily put in more time and finish the task. Taking that first step is difficult; breaking out of inertia is difficult. The ten minute rule helps you do so.

### ***Barter For Time***

Barter is all about trading one thing for another. It's a simple exchange. You get time to do what you need to do by reducing time from another activity that you do. Sometimes, you stop doing one activity altogether to pick up another activity. What activity gets exchanged with which one is your call and your priority.

While bartering right now sounds like something you want to stay miles away from, it's not really that bad. If you can balance your needs, this can turn out to be a win-win for you. And you should always balance your needs – the mode in which you fulfill your needs can change but your need should always get fulfilled.

For instance, you cannot barter all play time with work time. It's a bad exchange. You need some fun time, some play time. It's essential to staying motivated, staying sane and productive. Similarly, you can't barter all work time with play time. You know that too will not work.

You can however barter a chunk of play time with work time. As long as you ensure when you play, you have a blast – the best play time you ever had. You can barter a chunk of work time with play time as well. As long as you ensure you increase your work productivity drastically.

### ***Smart Barters***

And then, there are smart barters. When you figure out how to play at work or work while playing, you are bartering smart. You get best of both worlds ... a complete win-win without compromising at either place. The challenge for you over here is to figure out areas where both overlap.

*For instance, exercise time and play time can overlap. Learning time and traveling time can overlap. Lunch time and socializing time can overlap. Traveling time and relaxing time can overlap.*

List down areas where you spend time and figure out how and where can each overlap. Overlaps need not be 100%. You mostly will not be able to merge entire play time and entire work time. But even if this is possible for 10% of time invested, you have created time for yourself, you have bartered smart.

### *Action Items*

- i. Pick one activity which you have wanted to start since a long time but kept procrastinating due to lack of time. Apply the 10 minute rule to it.
- ii. Find one activity you are willing to do less of to create time for yourself.
- iii. Find at least one overlap in between any two activities you do. Try out smart bartering.

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# *The Day Simplifiers*

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## *The Day Simplifiers*

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Whenever you want a crazy hectic day to go smooth, you use The Day Simplifiers. Long days filled with too many activities, huge projects and no planning can be absolutely terrorizing. They make you worry, think in circles and bring in a lot of confusion. Wherever there is worry and confusion, you will find lack of motivation as well.

With the amount of thoughts that keep randomly buzzing in your brain, what you experience is complete paralysis (not literally of course). When the question of how will you manage your day makes you lose the motivation to start your day at all, use day simplifiers.

To put simply, day simplifiers get you motivated to take action by giving you clarity and focus. They help you plan, prioritize and work efficiently without taking a load of tension. They help you to work on the important stuff. They help you be productive at right places.

*Here are the steps to simplify your day (in sequence) -*

### ***Breathe & Take A Breather***

Breathe. Yes, that's the first thing to do. In midst of anxiety we often stop breathing. So breathe. Take a long deep breath. A couple of more breaths will do you good too. Forget about everything else and just breathe.

And then, take a pause. Give yourself a breather. Take 5 minutes off to relax and slow down. Don't worry, you will pick up pace again; but you need to slow down right now. When you give yourself a pause and mentally slow down, you do yourself a big favor. Often when thoughts race in your mind and you are in haste, you will do things in a wrong and long way. And that's exactly what you don't want to do – especially

not now; especially not today.

So first relax and calm down. And then, get ready to plan your day. Yes, I know it's all there in your mind. But list everything that you have to do today on a piece of paper and use the ideas mentioned below to shrink your list.

### *Shrink Your List*

#### *Use The Task Eraser*

The first and foremost thing that you do with your to-do list is cross off everything you don't need to do. Yeah, you read it right. Figure out list of activities which ideally should fall in 'Would like to-do' list or your 'wish' list but made their way over here. To make most of your to-do list, it's essential that you keep it as a to-do list. Don't go overboard and list everything under the sun in it. The list stops being functional.

So identify tasks which fall in your wish list, and erase them off and see how your to-do list starts shrinking.

#### *Apply Creative Procrastination*

Procrastination is something we all do. There is nothing new in that. When you pick one activity to do right now, you automatically procrastinate others. When you schedule for your activities, you are effectively saying that this I will do first, and those later – which is what procrastination is all about.

Most of times procrastination happens without thought. That's not what you will do. You will be-friend procrastination, make it your friend and use it as creatively as possible.

So sit down with the list and for each task ask yourself, 'Does this need to be done today?' Remove everything from the list which need not be done today. Keep a side list to jot down the items that you are canceling off for future reference. That's it. Procrastination applied.

#### *Forget I, say V*

This is the last step which will help you to shrink the list. For each of the remaining items left, ask yourself "Do 'I' need to do this?" Notice that the 'I' is in quotes and is bold. Because that's where the focus is. Do you need to do this or can someone else

do this for you?

You can always ask for help you know. Sometimes that's all it takes. Ask your family, friends, neighbors, colleagues for some help and they will be more than happy to provide it to you. They might be delighted to rescue you in your time of need.

So see the list again and if there is anything that someone else can do, ask for help and simply delegate it. You cannot do this often. But for one off occasion, no harm is done.

## *Plan & Act*

### *Go Old School – Create A Time Table*

While you can simply start working on the first task you see or like or apply 'eat the frog' methodology, creating a time table can be extremely helpful.

For each task, estimate how much time it should take and jot down. Group tasks which can be done together. Mark the most important ones which need to be completed. If there is any time constraint, like some tasks need to be done before noon or can be done only at night, mark those. You can simply create columns for task grouping, importance, constraints etc or use letters/figures to mark symbolically. As long as it makes sense to you and is easy to scan, it's ok.

Now based on all the information you have, create a time table. Create half an hour slots, one hour slots ... whichever is most productive for you. Don't forget to keep 5 minute breathers in between as well. They will be of great help.

Schedule some time for review and changing your time table based on your progress as well. Yes, your time table is flexible and open to optimization – but only in the allotted time. Once your time table is done, you are all set to work.

### *Just Go-Go-Stop*

Now it's time to take action. Yes, unfortunately, you haven't crossed off everything on the list. And I don't have any more ideas to lighten the load either. For the

pending tasks, you will have to take action. But doesn't the list look better already? And seeing visually how your day will go – via the time table, makes you relax. Whenever I create a time table, I feel as if I got back control of my day.

All you need to do now is take action. Set alarm for your next breather break and keep working non-stop till then. When it's time to breathe and relax, do so. Don't forego breathing and relaxing. They will keep you alert and productive till end of day – which you need to be if you want your day to go well.

### *Action Items:*

- i. Look at your to-do list for the day and shrink it.
- ii. Create a time table for your day – even if today is not one of your crazy days.
- iii. Creating a good workable time table comes with practice. Before starting any task, estimate how much time it should take. Wrong numbers over here can over throw any kind of planning you do.

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*The  
Outrageous  
Dreamers*

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## *The Outrageous Dreamers*

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Truly speaking ... for some of you, it's not really your fault if you get demotivated and can't get motivated. When the tasks are boring and uninspiring, motivation is difficult to catch hold off. What motivation needs is something to look forward to. What motivation needs is a goal – just the thought of which energizes you and makes you want to work. When your goal is such that you can't wait to start working on it, lack of motivation will automatically stop being a problem.

### *The Outrageous Dream*

The outrageous dreamers are all about finding such goals – goals which inspire and motivate you, which challenge you and stretch you. If you want to create momentum and bring on tremendous progress in an area which you are struggling with, set an outrageous aim. Aim something beyond your capabilities, something you would love to achieve but don't know is possible, aim for the moon and see what happens. The outrageous goals are really as outrageous as aiming for the moon.

My 'boring goal' for last year was to exercise. What gave it life was the 'outrageous goal' of finishing the Couch to 5K Plan. For those of you who don't know, the Couch to 5K is basically a plan to get you from being a couch potato to running 3 miles/30 minutes in 9 weeks. Did it work? All I can say is that never in my life have I dreamed of my exercise time and waited eagerly for it. I missed running so much that I started running more than what was mentioned in the plan. From being a running hater I completely transformed into a running lover. Exercise stopped being a problem.

### *Take The Sparkly Test*

One of my favorite quotes by Dr Abdul Kalam captures the spirit of outrageous dreams perfectly. He said ... "Dreams are not those which are seen while you're

sleeping. Dreams are those which don't let you sleep". So dream ... Dream Big. Dream such that you find stars in your eyes. Dream such that you spend all your time working on your dream or eagerly waiting to start working on it. When all you can think of and all you can do ... is about your dream; when you find a mysterious sparkle in your eyes ... just like the one you have when you fall in love ... you know, you have found your outrageous dream.

Do keep in mind that what's outrageous for you, what's inspiring for you, need not be outrageous or inspiring for someone else. As long as your dream meets the sparkly test, and fuels your motivation, you are on the right track.

### ***Don't Lose Your Dream***

The risk of dreaming outrageous dreams is that sometimes that's all they remain – dreams. Even though there is a strong desire to make them come true, no action is taken. Usually this happens for two reasons –

#### ***Two Reasons You Could Lose Your Dream***

- i. You don't set aside time to work on the dream and life takes over. Burdened with long hours of life work, the outrageous dream seems distant and soon you start thinking of the outrageous dream as just a dream. Your dream simply loses its spark. You lose your dream.
- ii. Most 'work' time on the dream is spent on dreaming. Planning, learning, researching ... all fall into dreaming category. Till you actually don't take action towards your dream, you are in danger of losing your dream, and exchanging it for more hours of life work.

Most of you may argue that learning/researching/planning for something which will help you to make your dream come true is a step taken towards your dream. This logic is absolutely fine. But that's not how we will work. All these things by default fall into the category of 'planning to make your dream come true' and not 'working on your dream'.

When you take action on your plan or put to use (while taking action) what you



learned/researched, you can say you have worked on your dream. Till then it is all planning and not working.

If you wish to remove the risk of losing your dream, follow the next step.

### *Schedule For Some Dream Come True Time*

The best way to get a jump-start on your dream and make progress in leaps and bounds is to take some outrageous action right away. Doing something outrageous will shock inertia away and set your system into action mode – that's exactly how you want things to be.

The first thing that you want to do in action mode is to schedule for your dream come true time. Set an appointment(s) in your calendar ... which date, how much time, where – decide on everything. Then show up and start working on it right away.

If you want to take out time to research/learn/plan set some days for it. After that many days, you don't get more time to do so. You have to start working. This might sound tough but is absolutely necessary. The desire to get everything right and the fear of making mistakes won't allow you to begin the journey otherwise – unless, you say stop to planning and set a deadline on 'start working'.

The best way to beat fear and perfection is to take some imperfect action. 'Imperfect' gives you the freedom to make mistakes and be wrong. It gives you the freedom to stumble and fall down. Every time you stumble and fall, pick yourself up and remind yourself that this is how the journey of making your dream come true should be. You make mistakes, you learn and you get back on path. You don't give up on your dream and you don't give up on yourself. You just get back to your motivation and get back to working on your dream.

### *Action Items:*

- i. Become an outrageous dreamer. Practice thinking outrageous. See how far and how crazy can you think. Do this exercise with kids for some good competition and inspiration.
- ii. Pick one area where you struggle with motivation and set an outrageous dream. Take the sparkly test to check whether you set a goal which is good to have or an outrageous dream.
- iii. Take stock of past actions and how you usually tackle a project to determine whether you are bit by the perfection bug or the planning bug. If so, set reminders to not fall into their trap and to take consistent action

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# *The Pause Removers*

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## *The Pause Removers*

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Let's face it, no matter how dedicated you are towards your dreams/goals, there will be a time when life takes over and you have to give your journey towards your dream a pause. It's not really about how much you want your dream or whether you are serious about it. It's not about whether you are motivated or taking action. Life just gets in the way. There are other things which take on higher priority, other things which require your full attention and for some time you have to give a pause to your dream.

Nothing wrong with this. As long as pause remains a pause and doesn't become a full stop.

The thing with pauses is that it's not a simple matter of picking things up from where you left them. Pauses break the momentum you built. Pauses create gaps between dreams and action. Pauses create space for inspiration to slip away. And that's why it's even more difficult to get motivated after a pause.

When you find yourself stuck with de-motivation because you can't move beyond your pause, The Pause Removers will come to your help.

### *What's Stopping You?*

Nothing crashes motivation faster than unrealistic expectations. If you want to surge forward to work towards your dream but keep holding back, be assured unrealistic expectations are behind this. Examine your thoughts, dig deeper into your feelings and find out how are you obstructing your progress by creating pressure of unrealistic expectations.

#### *Unrealistic Expectation Of Complete Clarity & Speed*

When you are working everyday on your dream, when you live it and breathe it, your mind can process everything related to it with ease. You can navigate through myriads of scenarios and possibilities effortlessly. It's easy to take decision, it's easy

to know what you need to do and what's pending, what requires attention and what can be postponed. You can say you are on top of everything. This knowledge leads to confidence. And you are used to this feeling of confidence because that's where you were when you left off.

When you come back, it is a different matter all together. You have to pick everything from where you left it. This means remembering itsy bitsy details of each and every work stream. This means remembering the decisions you made and why you made them. This means remembering every small mental note you made of things to do, things to track, calls to make, research to do etc. This will take time. Getting back in shape, getting back in the game will take time.

### ***Identify Unrealistic Expectations Through Feelings***

The expectation of complete clarity & speed the moment you pick your dream is dangerous. It's unrealistic. It leads to feelings of frustration. It eats away your confidence and makes you feel not good enough. It produces fear. These feelings of frustration, lack of confidence and fear will stop you from moving ahead.

The easiest way to know that your road block is unrealistic expectations is through your feelings. If you feel confused, frustrated or afraid to take action, you know that somewhere within you are expecting from yourself something that's not possible or fair. If you identify and release the expectation that's holding you back, your road block will disappear.

### ***Identify Unrealistic Expectations Through Language***

Another way to know that you are burdened with unrealistic expectations is through the language you use. Take note of what you are saying to yourself and to others about your work. Phrases of 'should be', 'used to be' etc are an easy way to identify what do you expect from yourself and where are you comparing your productivity with that before the pause.

To correct these unrealistic expectations through use of language, question yourself everytime you tell yourself how things should be (e.g. : ask yourself 'is that so?') catch yourself everytime you are comparing yourself now with what was before the pause. The more you catch yourself, the more you will realise how are you unnecessarily pressurising yourself and setting up yourself for failure. As you negate your unrealistic expectations, you will free yourself to take action and gain

motivation that you are missing.

### **How to move forward?**

It's clear that unrealistic expectations are the reason you remain stuck in your pause. Identifying these expectations and naming them as unrealistic can help you remove them and get free of them.

To move forward beyond pauses is then a simple matter of taking action. Following are three simple actions you can take to move beyond your pause -

#### ***Travel Back Through Time***

The most logical and common sensical first action to take is to travel back to time when you gave your dream a pause. Start getting updated with everything related to your dream. What have you worked on so far, how things were, where did you leave them, what was your plan of action then ... brush up everything the way you would brush up your study material after a long study break. Get a firm handle on everything pertaining to your dream.

Knowledge is empowering. When you gain clarity over every minute detail, you can make informed choices and correct decisions. You may be slow but you would be moving in right direction. This slow and steady progress is the key to building confidence and creating momentum.

#### ***Set Yourself For Success***

Based on your refreshed knowledge, create a monumental list of simple action items. Be as specific about the task as possible. Short and clear tasks that can be completed fast with very little scope of making mistakes. Target to finish only one task at a time. By doing so you would be eliminating possibility of failure and set yourself for success. This initial victory is important. It will give you the feeling that you are on top of things. It will help you get back in charge and remove your fear of making mistakes.

## *Make Dream A Priority*

The only problem to tackle now would be lack of time. Not finding time to start working on your dream again is a common and valid problem to have. When you gave a pause to your dream, you took it down the priority list for time being. Something else of higher priority took up the time allotted to your dream. This was required then.

However the thing with time is that it will always get filled with something or other. If you don't claim free time consciously, something else will wiggle in and claim your time. This must have already happened by now. The time that should have been allotted for your dream must have got allotted somewhere else.

In order to reset this, make your dream a priority again. And then, look at the way you spend time with fresh eyes. And see how can you create time for your dream. (hint: scheduling a daily appointment is a sure shot way of making your dream a priority and finding time to work on it).

When you make your dream a priority, you show up everyday to work on it. When you persistently work on your dream no matter how frustrating the initial days of slow pace, confusion and indecisiveness are, you make progress. With every small margin of progress you make, you rekindle your passion for your dream, you find your lost motivation and soon the pause becomes non-existent.

**Action Items:**

- i. Find a dream/goal which has got stuck in a pause.
- ii. Identify unrealistic expectations creating this pause.
- iii. Take three steps in direction of your dream.



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# *The Fear Busters*

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If it were up to fear, you would never reach anywhere. Paralyzed, you would spend a life constantly wanting to do something but not being able to because you are afraid.

It doesn't matter how charged up and motivated you are, with fear and without courage you will not be able to take action. When you sit immobilized by fear, when motivation runs scarce in face of fear, The Fear Busters can get you going.

There are two ways you can make sure fear doesn't get in your way -

- i. Reduce fear inducing actions/thoughts
- ii. Find courage to go on inspite of fear

### *Reduce Fear*

The best way to beat fear is to not allow it to grow. Curb it down the moment it shows up, kill the bud of fear, don't let it grow. Like other negative emotions, fear starts in your mind. If you can control/deal with your thoughts, you can deal with anything. To bust fear creating thoughts ...

### *Think extreme*

*What's the worst thing that could happen ?*

When thoughts of negative future, possibilities of things going wrong keep getting in your way, you might want to try this out – think of the worst possible thing that could happen to you in that scenario. If you can deal with that, you can deal with anything less worse that happens.

To your surprise, you might find that the worst case possible is not as bad as you

thought. You will be able to deal with it. This knowledge that no matter how bad things go, you can manage will not allow fear to grow.

### *Think Baby Steps*

If you are like me, you want to make sure that nothing comes in your way. This means, you want to be clear of each and every step you are going to take, you want to know in advance how things are going to work out. But the truth is, it is not possible to even think up of all possible scenarios let alone manage each of them.

When thought of unknown future stops you or when you get lost in a sea of plans, you might want to do this ... take a deep breath and tell yourself one step at a time. You will think of just the next step to take. Whatever difficulties you see in future for yourself, you will deal with them if and when they arise. Mark Twain's quote fits perfectly for what I have to say – "I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened" So why waste time thinking about them, why be fearful of something that might or might not happen.

### *Think Not, Do*

While logic can be your best friend, it can easily become your worst enemy as well. If you are highly into logic, fear might be using your own strength against you. It is very difficult to go against well thought out reasoning. If you are someone who gives a lot of buts and cants, you might want to take a closer look at them. Ask yourself 'is that so' everytime you give yourself a reason why something is not possible or why you can't do something. You might discover that you are holding yourself back ... unknowingly of course.

When you jump into unknown, when you want something big for yourself, you will always have to go beyond your current abilities. These buts and can'ts, these logical reasonings might be stopping you from growing. To grow, you have to stretch yourself, you have to be unreasonable with yourself and demand from you something which you thought is not possible for you. To be unreasonable, you will have to face fear.

A simple tactic to use when you find yourself immobilized by can't do thoughts ... tell yourself you just want to give it a shot. You are going to try whole heartedly .. if you fail it's all right. In short, give yourself permission to fail.

## *Find Courage*

Fear breeds on lack of confidence. Literally. You doubt yourself and you open doors for fear to enter and take over. Each and everyone of us is capable of creating miracles. There is no question about this fact. But lack of confidence can put a stop on any promise you hold.

*When your belief in yourself is a bit shaky, you find courage to take action by ...*

### *Relying On Past Success*

*It's amazing what you can do with success you have had.*

Close your eyes and remember times you had success ... when you achieved something superb, when you did something extraordinary. Remember times when you found courage to do something great which surprised you. Revisit each of these victories and experience again the time you got that success, experience the feeling of being a success. Every experience you visit, will strengthen your belief in yourself and help you find motivation to take action.

And when you visit these amazing journeys to success you have had, learn from them. Learn what did you do that worked for you. Learn how did you find courage then. Learn how did you find your motivation then. Learn everything you can, learn the secret of your own success.

### *Relying on other people's success*

*It's amazing what you can do with other people's success as well. 😊*

If you haven't been victorious in your past, if you have not done anything extraordinary so far, you can begin now. Read through inspiring passages, inspiring journeys that other people have had. There are so many people – known and unknown who have faced more difficulties than you have and still succeeded. Go through these amazing stories and get inspired.

Look around to find people with success stories. And see whether you can learn from them. If you ask, most of them will gladly help you out, they will share with you what works for them. Learn their secrets and see how can you apply them in your life.

## *Relying on loved ones*

Sometimes all you need is a vote of confidence. A thumbs up from friends, a you can do it from a loved one can work wonders on your confidence. When you don't believe in yourself, ride through your entire journey based on belief that your loved ones have in you. Everytime you feel you are falling off the wagon, everytime you feel you are going down, go back to your loved ones to find confidence, to get motivated.

People who love you will want to encourage you and help you succeed. But a lot of times they might not know how or when. Help them help you by telling them what you want and how. If you haven't done this before, this might not feel right in the beginning. But over a period of time you will find that this works wonders. Your loved one will be able to help you get motivated and find courage to take action in no time.

**Action Items:**

- i. Find one area where you are holding back. Take action.
- ii. Create a success journal. Notice your confidence rise right away. Keep the journal for future use.
- iii. Find people who have achieved what you want. Get motivated. Find a mentor from them.

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# *The Cross Examiners*

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## *The Cross Examiners*

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The Cross Examiners fit just right as the last motivator in our series of fabulous motivators. If all the motivation techniques that you know have failed for you, the cross examiners are what you need. The cross examiners will help you take action and put you on a no nonsense track of achieving your goals.

The Cross Examiners do so by asking you some hard hitting questions. As you think and answer these questions honestly, you identify what is blocking you, what is stopping you. Once you know the reason behind your inaction, it becomes easy to tackle it. It's only when the reason is unknown that finding solutions is difficult.

### *Appoint A Cross Examiner*

To make this motivator work for you, the first and most important step is to appoint a cross examiner. Yes, you can do the questioning part yourself and work forward with the answers you get. But in that scenario, you also run a risk of giving up too soon or avoiding answers which lead you outside your comfort zone. This would negate any benefit you might have got through the questioning process. A cross examiner on the other hand can make sure that this process doesn't go waste.

#### *Whom do you appoint as your cross examiner?*

Two simple things to keep in mind -

- i. 1. You are comfortable sharing whatever comes up with this person. You may or may not be best pals but the fear of looking bad or sharing an uncomfortable realization shouldn't put a stop to this exercise. 'Am I willing to share whatever comes up with this person?' is the question you should be asking yourself.
- ii. 2. The person you are considering should be comfortable pushing you forward, and help you see the true reasons you remain unmotivated. 'Will you be able to persist against my anger, irritation, your own frustration to help me realize the truth?' is the question you should be asking the person you are



considering.

So let's begin with our series of cross examination. And remember ... you cannot lie.

## **1. What Is Your Goal?**

Funny as this question may seem at this stage, it is absolutely necessary for you to answer it.

When you are striving to reach somewhere, it is essential to know what your final destination is. When the end goal isn't clear, it is difficult get motivated about it. When you don't know where you are going, when you don't know how you are going to feel when you reach there (wherever that is), there is not much to look forward to.

On the other hand, a clear goal in mind by itself provides good deal of motivation. When you can live and breathe your goal in mind, when you can see the finish line clearly in your mind, it provides ample amount of motivation by itself.

So ask yourself ... 'What is my goal?'. And make sure your answer is as precise as possible.

## **2. Is This Your Goal?**

The second essential question for you is 'Is This Your Goal?'. The first answer that you give right off the bat will be yes. But think about it again.

People spend a lifetime trying to reach a goal, trying to fulfill a dream only to realize in the end that it was not their goal/dream to make true. Sometimes unknowingly, sometimes by choice we pick up on unfulfilled desires of others. Sometimes we start walking on a set path without questioning whether that's the path we want to take or not.

When the goal you are striving so hard to achieve is not a goal which is in alignment of who you are and what you want deep within you, it is but natural that you face difficulty in trying to stay motivated about it.

An easy way to figure out whether this is your goal is to ask yourself why do you want achieve this goal? If you answer -

- Because I am supposed to
- Because my parents want me to
- Because that's what everyone wants

You know, that this goal is not yours.

### *3. Why Are You Not Pursuing Your Goal?*

You might want to sit with a pen and paper for this one. Things are about to get pretty interesting. There is no doubt you have asked and answered the question 'Why are you not pursuing your goal?' at least 20 times by now. You don't even have to think of an answer to this question anymore. You know the answer right away.

But what if I told you your answer is wrong? You don't know the reason you are NOT pursuing your goal.

There is a theory that to most questions like this one, the first answer we give is not the true answer. It is the answer we are comfortable thinking about and sharing with others. But it is not the truth. In fact, the second and the third and the fourth answer is also not true. It takes at least 20 attempts to answer the question to get somewhere near the truth.

For instance, the most standard answer to the question why don't you exercise is ... 'I don't have time'. And you and I, we both know this is a lie. If you were to advice someone else, if you were to help someone else figure out how to make exercise part of their schedule, you will be able to do it with ease this very moment.

So sit down with a pen and paper. And start the 20 question game.

*Your cross examiner will ask you – ‘Why are you not pursuing your goal?’*

*You answer him/her.*

*Your cross examiner will tell you ‘No, this is not the real reason. What is the REAL reason you are not pursuing your goal?’*

*You answer him/her.*

*And you repeat this till you give at least 20 different answers.*

Your cross examiner will jot down all of your answers for future reference and to make sure that none of the answers get repeated.

An interesting off shoot of this is to keep doing this exercise till you give a reason which fills your heart and makes you cry. When your answer touches you so deeply, you know you have found the right one.

*(note: after a point just the thought of finding one more reason to ‘why are you not pursuing your goal’ is enough to make you cry)*

#### **4. What Will It Take For You To Start Taking Action?**

If you wait for the perfect time to begin taking action, you wait forever. Perfect time is a myth. There is no time better than the current time.

By asking the question ‘What will it take for you to start taking action?’, you bring forth conditions that you have mentally set, that need to be fulfilled for the time to be right for taking action.

There are two benefits of asking this question.

- i. It helps you identify the conditions which are already present in your mind but you aren’t aware of on conscious level.
- ii. When you know the conditions, you can do something about them and clear your path to action.

Knowledge offers you choice and freedom. When you know what you are facing, it’s easier to deal with it. When you know what your conditions are, you are free to analyze them. You are free to choose them or discard them. You are free to keep

them as they are, change them, or remove them completely.

As you analyze your conditions, remember that the lesser conditions you have, the easier it is to meet them and of course, this automatically implies easier for you to take action as well. So when you sit with your conditions, this is what you do (in order of preference) :

- i. Remove as many conditions as possible
- ii. Change conditions to make them flexible or easy to meet
- iii. Create a way to meet those conditions with least effort (meeting conditions by itself shouldn't become another 'big' activity on your list)
- iv. Meet your conditions

***How does this work out in real life? Here's your practice assignment –***

Let's say your end goal is exercise. You know you need to exercise. You know you want to exercise. You know how important exercise is for you. But somehow, you end up not exercising or exercising for a day or two only.

So take a pen and paper and start jotting down what needs to happen for you to exercise. In other words, what's the perfect picture/scene in your mind when you think of you exercising regularly? Here are some ideas to get you started -

- You are getting good sleep at night
- You wake up at 5 in the morning
- You feel like exercising
- You are excited about exercising
- You are empty stomach but not hungry
- You are energetic
- You have good workout clothes
- You have sports shoes
- You have one hour to exercise
- You have a workout buddy
- You have a workout video
- You join a specific kind of class – tai-chi / abs / spin etc

- You have good music to keep you entertained
- You have space to exercise alone
- You have a time slot in which you can exercise everyday

Get the picture? If you sit for sometime, I am sure you can come up with a list which is longer than this one. Work on the list and see how many unnecessary conditions we add to taking action.

Waking up at 5 in the morning used to be my favorite condition for anything new that I am starting. Once I dropped it and scheduled evening time to exercise, things started falling in place.

### *5. Will You Take Action?*

This question is not about 'will you take action some day?'. This question is about 'will you take action right away?'. Have the buts and can't which stop you from taking action (and justify you in not doing so) gone away?

If you answer a simple 'Yes' and get started, you are on your way.

If you answer 'Yes but ... ' then there is something you need to think about ... do you really and I mean really REALLY want to work on this activity? Or are you lying to yourself that your end goal matters to you and you want to work on it?

If you really REALLY want to go for your goal, quit making excuses.

If the goal doesn't matter to you, stop forcing the goal on yourself and stop wasting your time on it.

**Action Items:**

- i. Find your cross examiner and start working with him/her right away.
- ii. Find out what is a SMART goal and set your goal accordingly.
- iii. If you are ready to take action, first take action, then plan for continuous action.

## *Some Final Words*

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This book has been a labor of lot of love. I hope you enjoyed this e-book as much as I enjoyed writing it. If you think someone you know will be interested in reading this book or will benefit from it, feel free to send him/her a copy of it.

While motivation books are fun to read, to make best of them, it is important to take action. I suggest you immediately put to use at least one new idea you had while reading this book. If you have done all the action items, you must already have lot of ideas in hand. If not, go back to the action items and complete them. They are there for a reason – to help make motivational ideas practical rather than solely theoretical.

If you like this book, you will like my site as well. Visit my site [www.avani-mehta.com](http://www.avani-mehta.com) and consider subscribing to it for latest articles.

I would love to hear from you. If there is anything you would like to communicate to me, you can reach me at [avani@avani-mehta.com](mailto:avani@avani-mehta.com) or post in a comment at my site.

Help me create an even better e-book next time. Comments, Suggestions, Feedback, & Topic Ideas Most Welcome

*Love & Happiness,*

*Avani Mehta*