

Seven Keys To Getting Motivated—A Worksheet



Different people get motivated in different ways. What works for a friend may fail dismally for you. In these pages, you'll learn seven basic keys to getting motivated. Each one has helped a number of people reach their goals. Which one will help you unlock your potential? Try them all to find out!

Turn The Key

You'll notice that each of the following seven keys has questions for you to answer. Some also suggest drawing a picture or writing a poem or essay. These exercises will bring out both your logical and creative sides. You may find that one side works better than the other for you. Try doing all of the exercises so you can find out.

As a first step, write down something that you are trying to motivate yourself to do:

Key #1: Make It Wonderful

Think about the project or lifestyle change you want to take on. Imagine how much better your life will be after you've completed it. What are the benefits you will be working toward? Close your eyes and actually visualize yourself gaining these benefits. Now write a few sentences about your successful completion of the project or behavior:

Next, fill in the blank: I allow myself to fully feel how much I want _____.

Do you know anyone who has successfully completed a similar project or lifestyle change? Write down any names here:

What benefits do these people seem to be enjoying that you would like to have for yourself?

Key #2: Love and Respect Yourself

This key helps you focus on your positive qualities and free yourself from negative thinking.

Complete the following statements:

I have personal strengths that will help me reach my goal. These strengths include:

Past successes and failures have taught me skills that will help me reach this goal. These skills include:

I, (fill in your name) _____, deserve to succeed at what I'm trying to do. I forgive myself for my past mistakes, making up for them wherever I can. I focus on the good in me.

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Key #3: Consider the Costs

Some people find it helps to focus on the costs of not reaching their goals. Other people are discouraged by this approach. Decide for yourself whether this key will help you or harm you. If you think it will help, complete the following statements that focus on the negative effects of not achieving your goal. You should only fill in the statements that apply to you.

I am tired of _____.

I believe the following will happen if I allow things to stay the way they are now.

I feel _____ when I think about things staying the same.

Key #4: Involve Other People

Support from others often helps people achieve goals. Companionship, praise, advice, gentle nudges, and competition are all examples of support.

Answer the following questions:

Would it help you to talk with someone as you work toward this goal? If so, with whom could you talk?

Would it help you to do any activities, such as exercise, with someone else? If so, with whom might you do them? (A reliable friend who shares your interest is especially helpful here.)

Would it help you to have fun while working toward your goal? If so, how could other people help you make this project fun? (Getting together for a “bake healthy desserts” day could be one example.)

Would joining a support group help you reach this goal? If so, how could you find or start one? (Good resources might include the Internet, a health professional and your local phonebook or library.)

Would it help to have others check in with you about your progress? If so, who could do this for you?

Does it help you to have other people notice or praise your accomplishments? If so, whom could you ask for this praise or recognition?

Does it help you to compete with others who have the same goal or join some type of charitable or team activity? If so, what’s one step you could take towards this option?

Key #5: Make A Plan and Break It Down

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”

—Lao Tzu

Committing to a project and making it manageable are equally important. First, make your goal a high priority so that you set aside time to work on it every week. Then break it down into manageable chunks—a step-by-step list of what tasks you need to do and what skills or information you might need—and set up a time line for accomplishing each step. If you get off track, adjust your plan or expand the time line.

Are you ready to make your project high priority? Are you ready to take the first step? Yes No

If you answered “yes” please continue with this key. If you answered “no,” please continue to use the other keys until you feel a stronger commitment.

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On the lines below, please describe your overall plan:

What, if anything, do you need to learn?

What skills, if any, do you need to develop?

What is the first step you need to take?

How long will it take you to complete your first step?

Do you need to overcome any major obstacles to accomplish the first step? If so, how will you overcome them?

Answer these questions as many times as necessary, as you continue to take small steps toward your goal.

For Key #5, keep in mind:

“Inch by inch,
life’s a cinch.
Yard by yard,
life is hard.”
—anonymous

Key #6: Make Sure Your Environment Supports Your Goal

List the places where you spend a lot of time (for example, home, work, car, business travel by air or car, and so on):

Think about your physical surroundings in these places. Do they support the project you plan to undertake? (If you want to quit smoking, for example, a smoke-free environment will be helpful.)

Now take a minute to think about how you can change your environment to help support your goals. (Can you, for example, remove all cigarettes, ash trays, matches and lighters from the environment and put packages of gum where you usually keep cigarettes?)

Sometimes making changes in your environment requires agreement with someone else. Do you need to talk to anyone about making changes? If so, to whom?

What’s the best way to approach this person?

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In the spaces below, draw two pictures. First draw a picture of one of your environments as it is now. Then draw it as you would like it to be (if you're not comfortable drawing, take the time to close your eyes and imagine the two environments).



Key #7: Pay Attention to Your Feelings

Change stirs up positive and negative feelings for most of us. Your positive feelings may include excitement, anticipation, happiness, hope, and pride. Your negative feelings may include resentment, fear of failing, self-doubt, anger, sorrow, being overwhelmed—even fear of succeeding.

What positive feelings do you have about the change you want to make? Try to state them in single words (happy, excited, and so on).

Focus on these positive feelings as much as you can. Let them wash over you.

What negative feelings do you have about the change you want to make?

Sometimes negative feelings can serve a positive purpose.

Anxiety, for example, may encourage you to carefully consider what skills you need to achieve your goal.

Just thinking or writing about your feelings may help you understand the purpose of a negative emotion and move beyond it. At other times, you may need to talk with a trusted friend or a professional counselor, such as an Employee Assistance Counselor, to do so.

Write down a positive purpose that your negative feelings about your goal might serve.

Is there some action you need to take?

Do you need to talk with someone about your feelings? If so, to whom?
