

Money and Motivation

The question of money as a motivator in the workplace is not new. Years of research, and countless books and articles on motivation include references to money. However, much of the focus on money and motivation points to superficial needs of people or points toward the immediate gratification that money seems to bring. The inquiry around money as a motivator must be explored more deeply if one is to truly understand the nature of the so-called relationship between money and motivation.

There are a number of personal orientations relating to money and motivation. Some of these are:

1. I'm not making as much money as I'd like (the "starving artist" concept), but I absolutely love my work, or the flexibility, or the control I have, or the opportunity for creativity, etc.
2. I need to be in this salary range, make this much money, because I need to be seen as "somebody" as opposed to "nobody" in my circle of friends, acquaintances, family, etc. who view "money" as a merit badge of some kind.
3. It's not the money, per se, but what the money "gets" me....i.e., possessions, stuff, materialism, etc., pointing again, for some, to "being somebody" and being recognized, and gaining self-recognition, based on their material stuff.
4. I need more and more money as I'll never have enough, reflecting the "your expenses always rise to meet your income" syndrome; as I said to an attorney client of mine, "If you feel you cannot live on 2 million dollars a year, what makes you think you can live on 3 million?"
5. Unconsciously filling the psycho-emotional "hole" of lack and deficiency which subsumes one or more of the above orientations and is the driver of the obsession with having money and needing more money, and what money "gets" one in order to feel (albeit fleetingly) whole and complete. The illusion that money provides a sense of self, or a sense of one's worth or value.

At the end of the day, it's important to look at the intrinsic notion of motivation, that motivation is driven by one's inner values and so it's important to explore one's values and from where one's values emanate, i.e., from one's True and Real Self, one's Inner Core or from one's ego-driven needs for control, recognition and security which result in often-

misguided values, the relentless pursuit of which, usually leads one to experience a "lifestyle" (certainly not a life) mired in the self-sabotaging thinking and behaviors reflecting frustration, resentment, anger, hate, rage, entitlement, misguided choices, and the feeling of never having or being enough.

When one comes from one's core values, one's Inner Sense of what is important in life and living, then intrinsic, or self-motivation, is at the heart of a life well-lived, at work, at home and at play...and is at the heart of creativity, self-management, self-responsibility, healthy behavior (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social, financial). Money, in this sense, has a different emotional and psychological energy around it, a softer energy, not unlike the energy reflected in one who says, "I love my work and I can't believe I get paid for doing this."

Many folks, in the relentless pursuit of "money" actually lose sight of what it was in the first place that got their juices flowing, e.g., having the corner office occludes the initial love of the work, obtaining the title interferes with one's initial love of mentoring and supporting others and finding that the relentless pressure to make and have more money becomes more important than the joy one used to experience when one was focused on one's love of the work itself. Losing one's way along the way. The mid-life crisis — that now often starts at 30.

Money as a driver then veils the clarity of one's choices and one often makes unfortunate and self-sabotaging choices when controlled by money. I often experience this kind of illusion in my work with some clients, individuals who have made self-defeating choices in their work life, social life and spiritual life because the lens with which they viewed their world and their place in the world had become "green."

For many of those who believe that "money" is the sign of success, or that money is what it takes to be "somebody", etc., long-term success is often unattainable; it's the "Sisyphian approach to living.

For many folks, it's when they have experienced enough anger, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, terror, and loneliness, that reflected their need for money, and more money, and more money, that they then have the real motivation to change and adapt a life and lifestyle that is truly Values-based, values that emanate from their True and Real Self, where money is important, but not an obsession (conscious or unconscious).

Motivation from this Inner place is much different. Motivation from this Inner place is not bounded by internalized pressures to have more, or by rigid

inner structures or beliefs, or by paralyzing self-criticism that one is not (fill in the blank) for lack of enough money (whatever that is) — that one's true worth and value is not financially driven. That one's purpose in life and the meaning one derives from work is intrinsically driven from one's Inner Core Values.

From this place, one comes to one's world of work or play from the perspective of a whole person, as one whose choices, volitions, motivations and intentions are driven by a freedom that was heretofore restricted and constricted by the "value" of money.

Finally, I have crossed paths with folks who feel that money allows them to be autonomous. Actually, the opposite seems more true — that money has forced many of these folks to live in an emotional and psychological prison whose bars are the self-defeating, self-sabotaging and controlling beliefs and behaviors driving these folks to do, be, and have in a way that forces them into a lifestyle (again, not a life) mimicking the lifestyles of the folks living in their prisons on either side of them...the illusion of autonomy, not the actions of one living from the place of one's True and Real self.

From this Inner Self, the energy of "I am", "I can", "I will", "I have", "I choose", "I love", "I create" and "I enjoy", that is, motivation and intention, flows with a sense of purposefulness, ease, grace, settledness and grounding that does not have a "price tag." Money is almost a by-product.

So, our \$10 food for thought questions are:

- How would you describe your relationship with money?
- Do you feel accountable when it comes to managing your money?
- Do you feel self-responsible when it comes to money?
- Do you know exactly how much you own and how much you owe?
- If you were independently wealthy, would you continue to work?
- Do you balance your checkbook properly and regularly?
- Do you buy gifts for others even though you can't afford them?
- Do you have a tendency to blame others for your financial troubles (boss, parents, banks, credit card companies, etc)?
- Do you constantly worry about money?
- Do your expenses rise to meet your income?
- Is money your primary (or only) motivation for going to work?
- Does your self-worth at work and outside of work depend on how much money you have or earn?
- Do you cheat or lie in order to save money?
- Are you envious of others at work who earn more than you?

- Does your financial state interfere with your ability to focus and be completely engaged in your work during your workday?

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