

What is Motivation?

Motivation has been a hot topic for as long as most folks can remember. Some define motivation as a drive or a desire. Others define motivation as they work they do. For me, motivation is neither. Motivation is, in fact, the energy that is "underneath" the drive, desire and work. It's this "energy" that affects the quality of one's motivation, one's motives, and the quality of the action-result dynamic that results from motivation. More than that, this energy called motivation results from the degree one is living a life "on purpose" and the degree to which one is in alignment with one's true and real self, one's heart.

For me, motivation is an energy...a physical, psychic, emotional and spiritual energy. This energy can be described on one end of a continuum as positive, juicy, strong, energetic, adventurous, exciting, playful, healing, etc., and on the other end as stagnant, blocked, stale, stagnant, depressed, negative, killing, etc.

Motivation is a mind-body dynamic, mostly body-oriented. In my experience, few would say "I think I'm motivated." Rather, I usually hear: "I feel motivated," or the converse, "I don't feel very motivated."

In addition, the expressions "fire in the belly", "His/her heart's not in it.", "gut check", and "the mind is willing but the flesh is weak", as well as many other expressions that center around the belly area (the "energy center" of the body in Eastern traditions), also point to the body as the focal point of motivation (as opposed to the mind), the center of this energy that drives one to actions and supports one to maintain a state of motivation. Motivation, for me, is a "felt sense".

So, for me, everyone is motivated....perhaps just not in the way another would like that one to be, or even in a way we would choose our self to be.

So,

When I choose to surf the net, instead of focusing on the task at hand, I'm motivated.

When I choose to see employees as functions, as opposed to people, I'm motivated.

When I choose to gossip, bully and be sarcastic in my speech as opposed to speaking respectfully, lovingly and compassionately, I'm motivated.

When I choose to cut corners and allow greed to drive my business behaviors and processes, rather than follow an ethical path, I'm motivated.

When I choose to view conflict and negotiation as win-lose as opposed to win-win, I'm motivated.

When I choose to cheat on my taxes and my diet, I'm motivated.

When I choose to take my paycheck and only give 75% of my self to my work, as opposed to showing up 100%, I'm motivated.

When I choose to lie, cheat and steal as opposed to coming from a place of honesty, integrity and trust, I'm motivated.

When I choose to act like an emotional child rather than manifest emotional intelligence, I'm motivated.

When I allow my ego to get in the way, and engage in self-defeating behavior, instead of coming from my real and authentic self, I'm motivated.

When I choose to numb out in front of the TV, instead of enthusiastically diving into my tasks, I'm motivated.

When I choose to have an affair as opposed to working on my relationship, I'm motivated.

When I choose to hate, as opposed to love, I'm motivated.

So, everyone is motivated.

Again, for me, the deal is the quality of the energy of the motivation and, even more, what's "underneath" the quality of that energy.

For me, what drives the quality of the energy I refer to as motivation is: purpose.

For me, purpose is heart-driven, as opposed to being mental-mind-ego driven. Purpose is what gives meaning to our existence. So, again, for me, motivation is related to purpose, and meaning. The difference in purpose as heart driven, and purpose as ego-driven is what determines where folks live, literally and figuratively, in the space between purpose and purposelessness, and meaning and meaninglessness at work, at home and at play.

In much of life, we move from action to result, action to result, action to result. The question is, "What drives my actions? What drives the motivation (energy) of my actions. The direction of one's life is most often judged on this dynamic and many also judge "success" based on this movement from action to result.

In the larger scheme of things, for me, the energy and quality of the action-result dynamic and the energy and quality with which one relates to "success" is related to whether one is living a life "on purpose" and from where one's purpose emanates (ego or heart).

In my experience, for folks at work, at home and at play, the degree of "pain and suffering" (mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, social, financial, etc.) one experiences is based on the degree to which one is living out one's purpose.

So, then, for me, directly related to purpose is what we value...what it is we deem important and the degree to which we assign worth and "value" to what we value.

The Japanese have a decision-making process they refer to as "The Five Whys". Essentially, when one has to make a decision, one asks "Why", and to that response, again asks "Why?" five times...the idea being that if one can drill down five levels, then one can be fairly certain the decision has merit, i.e., a sound grounding and foundation and is not, for better words, an emotional, knee-jerk or gut decision.

So, with respect to values, when I work with folks on values, motives, etc., we ask "Why?" five times. In other words, "What does (that value, that action, that decision, etc.) "get" you?" Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?

At the beginning of the work, the answers are often insightful...and usually bring one to a conscious self-awareness as to what's really, really, really, underneath their thoughts, actions and activities, i.e., their motives.

Most often it's unconscious ego needs, for example, for control, recognition, and security.

It's when we take this first look at values that folks then get to the "heart" of the matter and move into the process of discovering their (heart-felt) purpose and then come to see often vast differences between their heart-felt purpose and what has been, to date, an ego-driven desire they "thought" was their purpose.

The underlying, and root cause, questions that ultimately define our motives, then, is "What do I value?" And, then, even more importantly, "From where do I get my values?" And, finally, "Do my values bring me a greater degree of inner peace, harmony, and sense of

well-being, than they do pain and suffering?"

As this process continues, folks begin to view and approach life with a difference lens; and their internal map of reality begins to change. This change manifests in how they begin to view their world of work (home and play), what's really important to their happiness and sense of well-being.

So, as folks take this conscious journey into exploring their motivation, their values, and their purpose, they often discover there's a vast difference between "striving" and "struggling" as they explore their past and current notions of "motivation" and, relatedly, purpose and meaning of work, of life, etc. They often show up with a new-found "energy" that is positive, juicy, willing, engaging, adventurous, curious, etc.

Assuredly, folks who consciously undertake the requisite deeper purpose and values work, can and will experience challenges, bumps in the road, hurdles to overcome, but now they do so with a sense of striving, with a healthy positivity and energy that, yes, may require sweat, blood and tears, but the energy they expend in the pursuit of their values is positive, disciplined, willful, strong and courageous, exciting and adventurous. They are internally and intrinsically "motivated" and sense an inner peace in their efforts. In this place, there is true purpose and true (not ego-driven) meaning to one's life.

On the other hand, those who find themselves "struggling", usually as the result of ego-driven desires and motives, coming from a "faux" purpose, seemingly are always fighting the good fight, often come from a place of resentment, anger, defiance, compliance, guilt, shame, anxiety, and a sense of plodding. They lack a sense of adventure or excitement; often fail at positive self-management, often live with a "low-grade-fever" type of malaise, sadness, depression, hopelessness, frustration, resentment, jealousy, etc. For them, their purpose and the meaning they effort to experience are often mis-guided, most often externally driven (even though they "think" it comes from their own independent thinking...never having taken the time to go deeper inside and think through their so-called purpose). In reality, most often they are actually living someone else's values (parents, friends, neighbors, reality TV characters...), i.e., someone else's purpose and so it's no wonder they seldom experience true happiness in both the short- and long-term..

So, at the end of the day, yes, both groups of people are, in fact, motivated. Both would say they "have values."

So, concerning their being motivated, and relatedly to purpose and meaning of life, the \$10 questions I might pose are:

How might each view their "sense of self?" And from where do they derive their sense of self?

If they made a list of their values and then made another list of their daily do-ings, be-ings and thoughts, would the second list directly reflect the first? If not, what's underneath the disconnect?

What role might ego play in the dynamics of their relationships, with their own self and then with others at work, at home and at play?

Is there a difference in how one feels about one's self when they are alone, at four in the morning, in their own company, as opposed to being in their new car, or in their new wardrobe, or in front of their new plasma TV screen, or at work, or being the life of the

party, or the standout at the meeting...? And if so, what accounts for the disconnect?  
What's the "cake" and what's the "icing on the cake" and why?

How might each view their world of work and their role in it?

Does work have meaning? How so?

In terms of motivation, how is your energy and where are you generally on the continuum I mentioned at the start of this post?

and,

Why are you on the planet?

(c) 2012, Peter G. Vajda, Ph.D. and True North Partnering. All rights in all media reserved. You may reprint this article as long as the article is printed in its entirety, including the author's information

Peter G. Vajda, Ph.D, C.P.C. is the founder of True North Partnering an Atlanta-based company that supports conscious living through coaching and facilitating. With a practice based on the dynamic intersection of mind, body, emotion and spirit, Peter's approach focuses on personal, business, relational and spiritual coaching. He is a professional speaker and published author. For more information, [www.truenorthpartnering.com](http://www.truenorthpartnering.com), or [pvajda\(at\)truenorthpartnering.com](mailto:pvajda@truenorthpartnering.com), or phone 770.804.9125. You can also follow Peter on Twitter: @petergvajda