

Going Beyond Motivation to Inspiration

Sugar or Natural High

Today, rather than belonging ‘to’ the Human Race, we have found ourselves entered “in” the Human Race. The emphasis on reaching goals, accomplishing objectives and achieving success at any cost has been expensive in terms of our health and quality of life. One key factor contributing to this has been that we have succumbed to ‘motivation’ as our driving force as opposed to coming from ‘inspiration’ in order to be productive and valuable. For me, using motivation is like eating sugar in order to get moving. As we all know, in the short run, sugar can produce instant energy and get us moving however, it can not sustain us in the long term & we will crash and burn. Inspiration by contrast is like choosing a healthier regime which may take longer to produce results but as it does, it supports and sustains us without sacrificing our health in the process. By taking the ‘natural’ route, we become more balanced physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

The Pitfalls of the Motivational Model

Whether on the receiving or sending end of motivation, it inevitably leaves us symptomatically feeling fatigued, stressed and apathetic. This is because it requires a much higher energy investment to push, pull, cajole or even bribe others into action, especially if that is our responsibility! Motivation relies on fear and guilt to get us moving. It uses judgments in the form of “have to’s” and “shoulds”, drawing on the energy of **‘hype’**, much like a shot of adrenaline, to extract the desired end. As such, it cannot support us for by design, we are ill suited to function well under such ‘unnatural’ influences. So the question arises “why & how did we come to rely so much on motivation to get things accomplished?”

The simple answer is that both individually as well as collectively, we have become estranged from our own natural rhythms. Life in the 21st century is anything but in sync with nature, both our own or our environment. Over time, we have abdicated our goals and aspirations to an external source which, we are told, is superior to our own inner knowing. We have sold ourselves out to the allure of success, status & material gain as the defining hallmarks of our happiness and worth and in the process, many of us have sacrificed our passion, our joy and our inspiration for life.

Inspiration for Life

Whereas motivation relies on **‘hype’** for its source, inspiration is based in **‘enthusiasm’!** Enthusiasm is a quality of the heart and when inspired, our hearts open and we feel touched by the words, deeds, actions and stories of others. As well, we also find inspiration in the wonder of how effortlessly, gracefully, easily and unconditionally nature unfolds and shares her gifts of creation. Like nature, with inspiration there is no ‘reward or punishment’ pushing us to act for we act simply because **we love to do it!** No longer do deadlines or the promises of a golden carrot some time in the future move us into production mode. Instead, by being present, inwardly aware and centered in our worth, we connect with an inner voice which inspires us to move in a direction reflective of our essence. And as we do, all our

actions become more meaningful, passionate and energizing. We enter into a process, a journey which characteristically becomes infused with more flow, joy, harmony and true happiness.

Inspiration has no ‘how-to’s?’

Apart from identifying some of characteristics of inspiration, there is really not a fixed ‘how to’ methodology by which we can learn inspiration. Rather, inspiration is a quality which unfolds from within us when we align with situations & surroundings which resonate with the heart. Whereas motivation appeals to the faculties of the head, inspiration will ‘first’ appeal to the heart and then, through its ally enthusiasm, enjoin the head to carry out its goals & wishes. Personally, whenever I feel blocked or unable to go with the flow, I consciously seek out people or places that inspire me. I notice that following a good talk, or being with positive people or by simply observing how creation weaves its magic all around us, I first experience “inspiration” by the message and then become “motivated”! Certainly, motivation results as the outcome of being inspired but without that inner spark, the engine will not start and will have to be pushed in order to get it moving! By shifting our attitudes, know that all the ‘have to’s” in our lives can be transformed into ‘want to’s” through the gift of inspiration, which expands our being so even the most mundane tasks take on a different light.

Motivation or Inspiration: A Checklist

Here is a quick checklist to determine whether you are coming from Inspiration or Motivation in your life!

Motivation

1. Tension, Stress, Effort
2. Guilt, Fear, Invalidation
3. Hype
4. Winds you up
5. Sourced in the Head
6. Needs an external Goal to move
7. Is Linear and involves a “How To”
8. Takes you away from who you are
9. Tries to come up with the “doing”
10. Results in Burn Out
11. Blocks Creativity

Inspiration

1. Flow, Ease, Harmony
2. Validation, Love, Non—judgment
3. Enthusiasm
4. Invites out your best
5. Sourced in the Heart
6. Draws on an inner sense of meaning
7. Is 360 degrees in awareness and asks, “Let’s see how something is possible?”
8. Brings you closer in touch with yourself
9. Opens so that the “doing” comes through
10. Continues to support your energy
11. Gives rise to creativity