

Administrative Associates Conference

Self-Motivate for High Productivity

By Joyce Irby



1) When to Take Action in the Face of Motivation Sappers & Zappers

When you find yourself:

* Eating higher volumes of less healthful "comfort food" and/or consuming more alcohol.	* Experiencing physical symptoms of stress which do not go away, i.e. heartburn, headaches, TMJ, heart palpitations	* Snapping at people or feeling a general lack of patience in situations where you might have been patient before.
* Working through lunch and rest breaks more frequently, when you used to be sure to take them.	* Feeling your "heart sink" frequently when dealing with certain situations or people.	* Making errors, forgetting appointments or tasks, missing deadlines.
* Feeling numb, disconnected or a general "sad-path.".	* Feeling less able to make decisions or move forward.	* Venting more than usual to others.
* Frequently wondering "why bother?"	* Feeling a lack of direction or a meaning for the work you are doing.	* Anything else?

2) Identifying Common Energy and Motivation Sappers & Zappers

* People venting, complaining to or around us.	* Hearing negative or frightening rumors.	* Projects or goals changed mid-stream.
* Budget cuts - fewer resources or materials	* Organizational change such as re-orgs, lay-offs, hiring freezes	* Not being thanked or recognized for accomplishments
* Lack of needed, credible information	* Depending on others who do not deliver on time	* Not enough hours in a day to get everything done
* Feeling stuck without a clear vision of how to grow our careers	* The media telling us only the bad news	* Workflow, process and/or procedure changes
* Working hard while a colleague is hardly working	* No vision or goals to work towards.	* Anything else?

3) Facing Sappers & Zappers Head-on and Tips for Taking Action at Work

Identify the cause(s) contributing to your feelings of de-motivation. Be sure that you drill down to the root cause(s) or "bite-able chunk(s)" beyond broad categories such as, "the economy," "my job," "that project," or "that person." Once you know specifically what you are dealing with, you can choose a course of action. Sometimes, even the act of taking action can increase your level of optimism and positive energy. Turn the page over for some suggestions.

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Check for facts vs. assumptions. When you notice that you are thinking negative thoughts about a coworker, or if information you've heard is bringing you down, start asking questions. Seek more information and avoid assuming you have the whole story. For example, when hearing a potential rumor, ask: What makes you say that? Who gave you that information? How long ago did you hear that? If the source is questionable or if you think there might be more recent updates, seek out your own information.

Another example - if you are not getting what you need from someone and you're starting to think it's intentional, ask them for specific reasons for their lack of needed response. Maybe their supervisor just doubled their workload or maybe their workflow was changed and they are still figuring out how to move forward. Once you know the true reason(s), you can better address them. If it is intentional or interpersonal, look for ideas below or on the sources slide from this class to get more ideas for dealing with that type of situation.

Create your own project plans. Doing this will help if: you are feeling like the end goals of your work are fuzzy; you are feeling overwhelmed; your day-to-day is hectic but you don't feel you're making progress; and if you have simultaneous high priority projects. Take ten minutes and list out the steps of a multi-step project – showing how YOU prefer to do it. Assign target dates that are realistic. Keep your plan handy so you can celebrate little victories as you check off each step. Have your plan(s) ready to email your supervisor when he/she suggests doing it differently or assigns new work.

Ask for what you need. For example, with your project plans or priorities list in hand, identify information, resources, help from others, amount of time required, etc. which you need to move forward. Then ask for what you need. Be specific. Talk about why it's important to the bigger picture/organization that you be given what you need. If possible, mention why it will also help the person you are asking if you get what you need. This method can also be applied to vacation requests! ☺

Lead by example/Be the positive force. Practice forgiveness of mistakes made by others (and yourself.) Do random acts of kindness with no expectation of something in return. Refuse to sulk or ruminate over negative thoughts - replace them with positive self talk. Focus on what is good in your life and talk about it more than what might not be going as planned.

Take control of your career. Try the simple act of updating your resume or creating a list of "all the new skills and experiences I've acquired so far in this job." Doing this prepares you for your performance reviews, interviews (if needed), and reinforces your self-esteem. Updating your resume or reviewing your accomplishments in your career, can boost your morale. Seek out free webinars or classes online. Visit job boards and complete some career self-assessments. Tap into any career coaching resources your organization may offer employees. Start researching the job websites to see what kinds of positions are available –internally or externally – set your own career, goals and start planning how to get there.

Examine and adjust your expectations. Sometimes as the work environment changes we need to re-examine what we expect of ourselves and others. Continuously examine the work climate and be sure you have set realistic goals for what you or others can accomplish given the reality of the moment. Mindfully set boundaries for how much of yourself, your mind space, and/or your time you can realistically give to your job while still staying healthy and positive.

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