

## **Finding Motivation: What To Do When You Don't Feel Like Doing Anything**

Chris Widener

*"The measure of your success usually comes down to who wins the battle that rages between the two of you. The 'you' who wants to stop, give up, or take it easy, and the 'you' who chooses to beat back that which would stand in the way of your success - complacency." Chris Widener*

In all of my interactions with people, I've never found anyone, regardless of their level of success, who doesn't sometimes find themselves simply not wanting to do the things that they need and want to do. It is a part of human nature that there will be times that, in spite of all that we need to do, and even desire to, we will find ourselves not wanting to do anything. And what separates those who will become successful from those who will maintain the status-quo, is the ability at those very crucial moments of time when we are making decisions about what we will do, to choose to find the inner motivation that will enable us to conquer our complacency and move on in action.

I find that I confront this issue in my life on a regular basis, so the following success strategies are not merely pie in the sky techniques, but proven ways to get yourself to go even when you don't feel like doing anything.

### **Honestly evaluate whether or not you need a break.**

This is the first thing that I usually do what I find that I don't want to get to a specific action. The fact is that oftentimes we will have been working very hard and the lethargy we are feeling is really our body and emotions telling us that we simply need a break. And this is where it takes real intellectual honesty because when we don't need a break our mind is still telling us we need a break! But sometimes we do need a break. I'll give you a good example. I don't particularly like to exercise, but I do almost every day. Sometimes, I find myself before going to the club thinking about how I just didn't feel like going. Most of the time I am just being lazy. However, sometimes I realize that my body needs a break. So from time to time I will take a one or two daybreak from working out. The benefits of this are two-fold: One, my body gets a break to regenerate itself. Two, after a day or two, I begin to miss my workout, and eagerly anticipate a turning to the gym.

Other examples: Perhaps you are a salesman who has been phoning clients for a week straight, day and night. You wake up one morning and just don't feel like doing it any more. Well, take a break for the morning. Go to a coffee shop and read the paper. Go to the driving range and hit some golf balls. Take a break and then get back to it!

### **Start small.**

I'm at a point in my workout schedule now where a typical workout day for me consists of 30 to 45 minutes of aerobic exercise, and about 30 minutes of weight lifting. So when I find myself not wanting to get up and go to the gym, I will sometimes make a commitment to go and just do a smaller workout. Instead of deciding not to go, I'll commit to doing 15 to 20 minutes of aerobic exercise and 15 to 30 minutes of weight lifting. This is also good for two reasons. One, I actually get some exercise that day. And two, it keeps me from getting into a cycle of giving up when I don't feel like moving toward action. Other examples: Maybe you are a writer who simply doesn't want to write today. Instead of the long day writing you had planned, decide that you will at least outline a couple of new articles. You will at least get these done, and you may have found that you put yourself into the writing mood after all.

### **Change your routine.**

I have found that what keeps me in the best shape and burns the most calories for me, is to do 30 to 45 minutes on the treadmill every day. Now let me be very blunt. I find running on the treadmill to be extremely boring. Usually I can get myself to do it, but sometimes I need to vary my routine. So instead of 30 to 45 minutes on a treadmill, I will break down

my aerobic exercise routine into a number of different areas. I will do ten to 15 minutes on treadmills, 10 to 15 minutes on the reclining cycle, 5 to 10 minutes on the rowing machine, 5 to 10 minutes on the stair stepper, and then back on to the treadmill for five to 10 minutes. I still get my exercise, but I'm bored a lot less.

Other examples: Maybe you are in construction and you have been working on the plumbing for a week, and it is getting monotonous. Don't do the plumbing today! Go frame-in the office.

### **Reward yourself.**

One way that I motivate myself to do something when I don't feel like doing it, is to tell myself that if I get through the work that I need to, I will give myself a little reward. For instance, I may tell myself if I to get up and go to the club I can take five to 10 minutes off my treadmill exercise, which will shorten my workout routine, and I'll allow myself to sit in the hot tub for a few extra minutes. Hey, it works!

Other examples: Maybe you are a mortgage broker who feels like sleeping in. Tell yourself that after the next three mortgages you close you will take your kids to the fair, or your spouse to the movies. Maybe you'll give yourself a night on the town with old friends.

### **Reconnect the action with pleasure rather than pain.**

Psychologists have long told us that we humans tend to connect every action with either pleasure or pain. Tony Robbins has popularized this even further in the last few years with something he calls Neural Associations. That is, we connect every action with either a pleasure, or pain. When we are finding ourselves lacking motivation, what we are probably finding about ourselves is that we are associating the action that we are thinking about with pain, rather than pleasure. For instance, when I'm considering that not going to the health club on any given day, I am usually associating going and working out with having no time, the pain of exercising and weight lifting, or the boringness of running on a treadmill for an extended period of time. What I can do to re-associate is to remind myself that by going in and doing my exercise I will feel better about myself, I will lose weight, and I will live longer. This brings me pleasure. When we begin to run those kinds of tapes through our minds, we find our internal motivating force unleashed and changing our attitude about the action that we are considering.

Other examples: Maybe you are a counselor who really doesn't want to spend the day listening to people. Your association may be that it will be boring, or that you will be inside while it is sunny outside. Instead, re-associate yourself to the truth of the matter: Someone will be better off because of your care and concern. Think of your clients and the progression they have been making recently and how you have been a part of that.

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Chris Widener is a popular speaker and writer as well as the President of Made for Success and Extraordinary Leaders, two companies helping individuals and organizations turn their potential into performance, succeed in every area of their lives and achieve their dreams. Join subscribers in over 100 countries around the world! Get Chris' FREE weekly Made for Success Ezine by sending a blank email to [success-on@mail-list.com](mailto:success-on@mail-list.com). Get his FREE daily SuccessQuote™ with action point by sending a blank email to [SQ@infogeneratorpro.com](mailto:SQ@infogeneratorpro.com). Get his FREE monthly Extraordinary Leaders Ezine, one of the world's most widely distributed leadership newsletters, by sending a blank email to [leaders-on@mail-list.com](mailto:leaders-on@mail-list.com) or visit his websites at <http://www.madeforsuccess.com> and <http://www.extraordinaryleaders.com>. Copyright 2002 Made for Success. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.