

The Art of Self Motivation

Helping others find their internal drive

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The Miracle Worker

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How to Self Motivate People

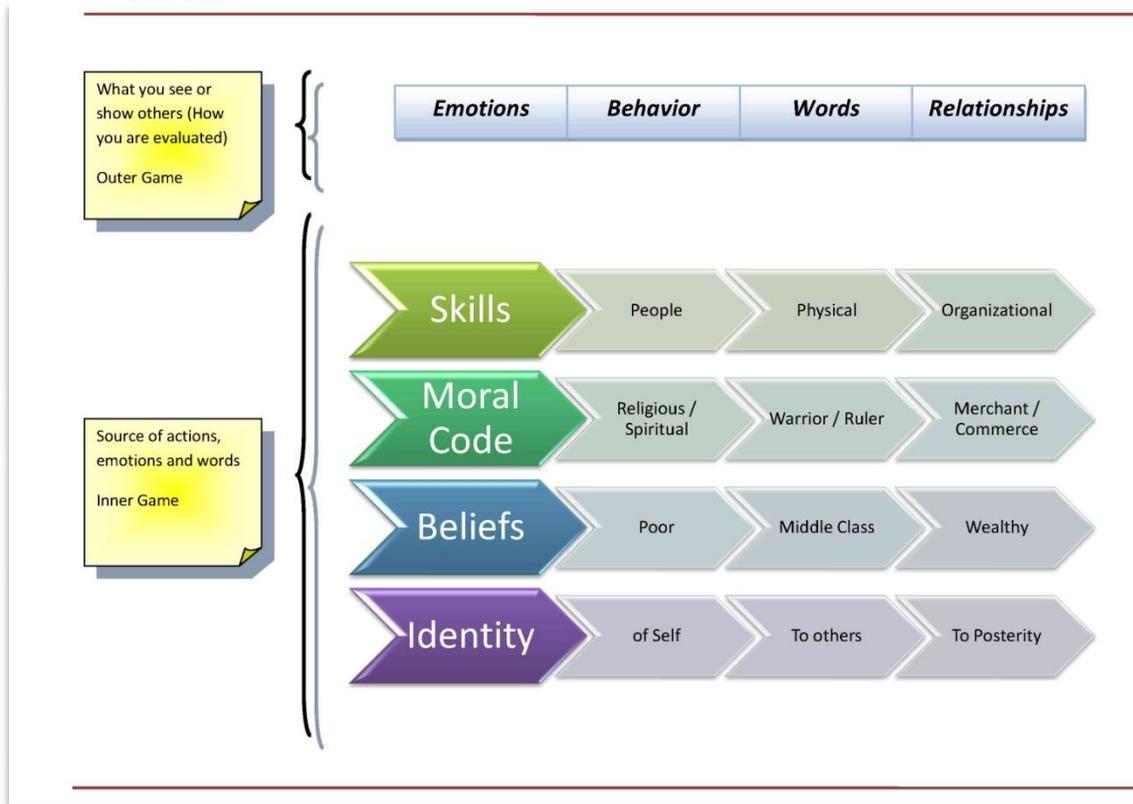
Finding their true inner drive

Do you work with people, perhaps in a sales or counseling capacity? Do you find it sometimes difficult to work with people who seem sincere when they ask for your help but then do something quite the opposite of what you asked them to do? Perhaps you gave them good advice and they acted as if they never heard it?

I have found that people need to be listened to most of all. In order to find a way to motivate themselves they need to have a chance to 'hear themselves think', to hear themselves sort out their own particular path, along with some guidance. Often times I serve as a mirror to their verbal train of thought (and emotional train). Once I'm able to help them hear themselves, I am in a better position to ask questions that help them create a new mental and emotional structure. You can do this as well, it just takes some basic understanding of mental and emotional frameworks; in other words, you know people see things in different ways, but how do they create their unique points of view?

How can you listen effectively? How do you help them listen effectively to themselves?

Often there is more going on beneath the surface than what you see. Take a look at the following:



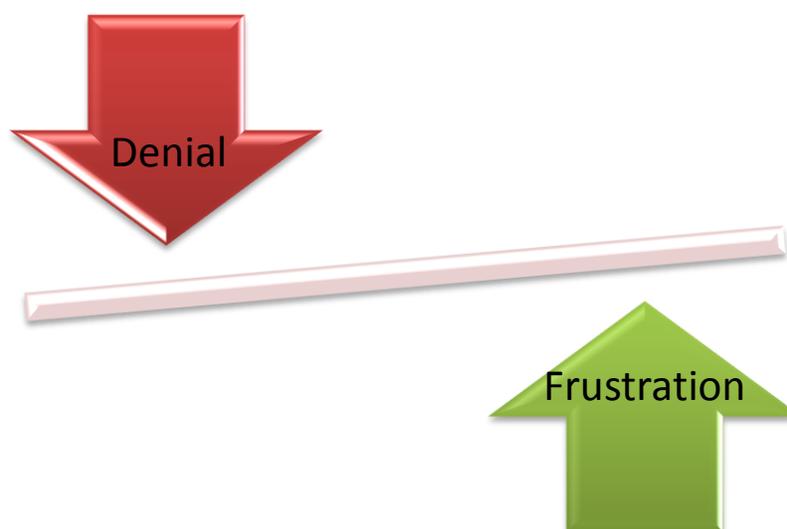
Notice that their activity is above (what you can observe) and the drivers are below (what you can't see). You can't see inside a person to see their beliefs, you can't see their values (or moral code), you can't see how they see themselves and others. You can only see the emotions, behavior, words and relationships that result from the inner self. You can determine a lot about a person's 'inner game' from the 'outer game' though.

When you see someone 'hanging around' people, you know they have a kinship or identity with them on some level. When you hear someone's jokes, you can tell about their values or moral code by what they find funny. Their actions around others will tell you their beliefs about class and standing in society. Take the time to listen to their actions their words, their emotions and relationships to get a better understanding of how they see themselves in relation to their world. This will give you a better handle on where they are coming from and give you a better position to see things from their point of view.

This is the first, most critical step to helping people move forward, understanding where they are starting from and helping them understand it as well. In order to have a point B (a place they want to wind up) you have to have a point A (a starting point).

Frustration and denial

Overall, you have to get them to a point where their discomfort exceeds their denial about their current situation. Too many people believe that it's 'ok' to be in their current state – they can tend to get comfortable about their situation. Perhaps this is part of the coping mechanism or perhaps it's to help them manage their current situation from a more detached point of view. Regardless, a part of your role is to help them see they need to move forward. You can do this by helping them have a new goal to shoot for that is better than their current situation.

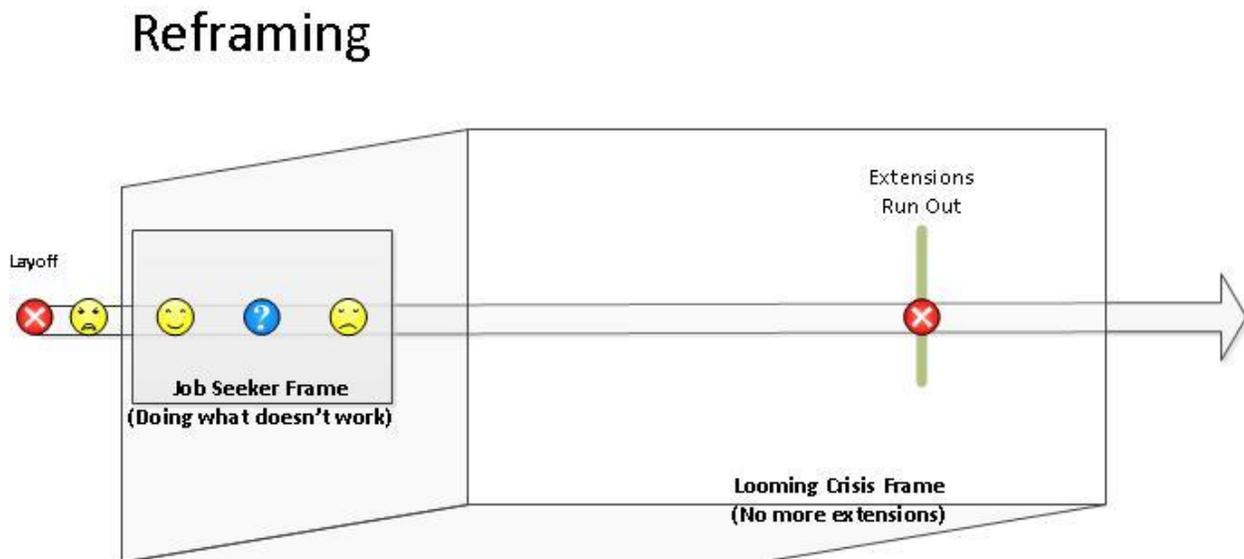


By listening to their current situation you can now find areas and points to compare against with other people's experiences. Perhaps you have other clients who have felt the same way but had success when they changed how they feel. Or perhaps you have a personal experience that relates – a time when you changed your mind about a situation and then were able to create a different outcome. This helps your client understand that you have a perspective that relates and connects to their experience. Have several stories of others experiences available to you in advance. Be prepared and be a story collector. Find interesting stories about others who have transformed their experiences, be ready to share these stories.

The goal is to reposition their reality next to another, more positive reality through others' experiences.

Reframing

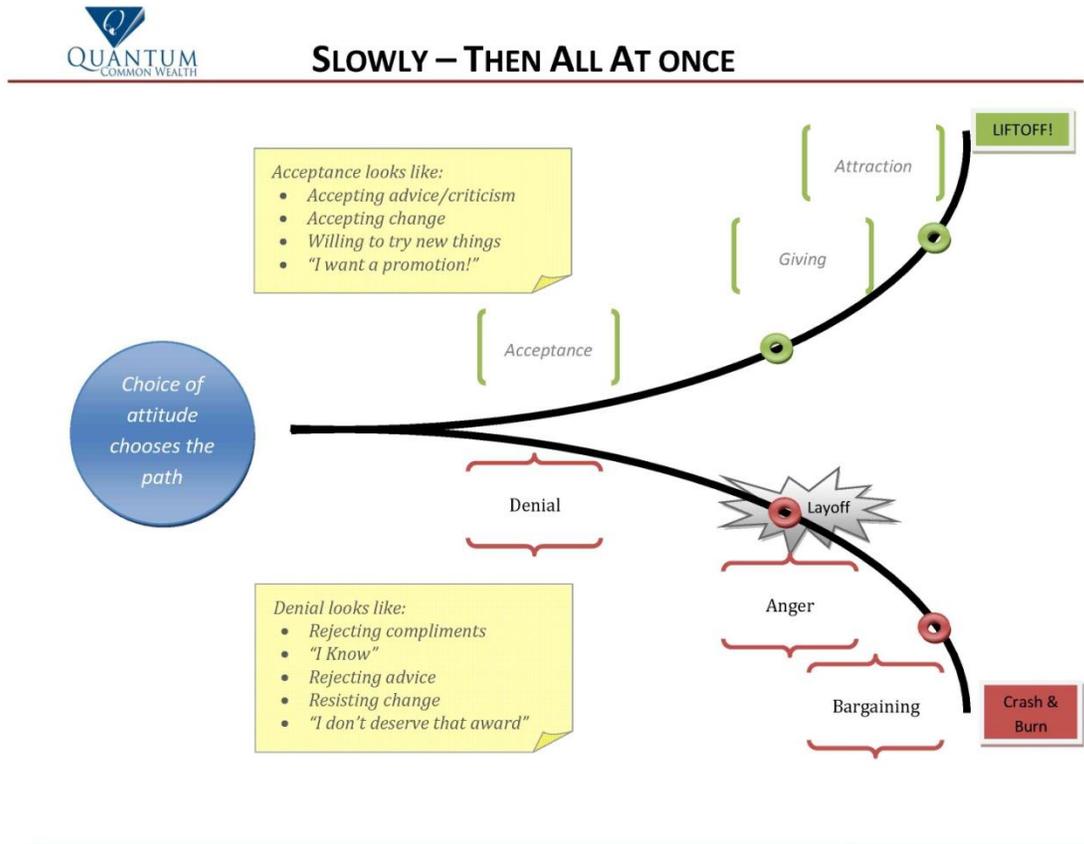
Usually people have at least a vague idea of where they want to be, although they may not have a clear idea of how to get there. It's not about giving them a goal but giving them an understanding that they are on a path that leads to a less desirable place than where they are currently.



As you can see, in the timeline example for job seekers, they get laid off and then can spend time in job search mode (The 'job seeker' frame). Unfortunately, if they do things that job seekers do, they won't get out of job seeker mode and often won't make progress, or at least won't make progress fast enough to obtain employment before their extensions run out.

However, with your external perspective, you can see that they are on a timeline that will eventually cause them to run out of unemployment. Unfortunately, their emotions and their denial won't allow them to see things from your point of view, at least not without help. Help them by allowing them to see things from a 3rd party perspective through your collected stories of other's success (or failure) and ask them to explain the lesson learned.

Here is another perspective chart, this one helps explain how attitude can sometimes trap someone into inaction, again, this is considering someone in layoff, as this can be a very troubling event in someone's life and unfortunately, it's common to know someone in job transition.



This chart helps give a perspective (or reframe) of a longer event horizon than merely the layoff event. It explains that too often our attitude and emotions get the better of us and can freeze us in a path that allows us to drift in job search – as if we're on a boat with no oars or sails, the currents dictate where we wind up, and it's usually in the 'crash and burn' state, against the rocky shores. While that picture may seem a little dramatic, it does give a clear visual picture of where someone is headed if they refuse to take responsibility and ownership of their direction by taking action.

Questions are the answer

Too many times when working with someone we try to help them, and to make it efficient we often supply them with the answer. Sometimes we even type it up in handy reference guides and checklists. Then we're surprised when the person we're helping doesn't take action or 'forgets' what we told them. While in the session they nod, agree and take everything we hand them, only later to have 'misplaced' the notes or 'forgotten' the information. If we're truthful with ourselves, we know they never intended to act on the information we gave them, they were merely being polite while we 'info-barfed' on them.

We do this with the best intentions, and because we believe it's very efficient. Our society and our schooling has taught us that lecture and homework is the only way to learn a new skill or activity. We don't learn by lecture, we learn by experience and feedback.

When I was in coaching training, the best feedback I ever received was from me. But it didn't happen by accident. The exercise was to give a short 2 or 3 minute speech about a slide that was projected. We had just spent several hours learning the material and now were expected to repeat it back. Although no one said we had to reiterate it verbatim, many tried, and their focus was on explaining the information accurately. Others worked on posture, tone, projection or other key speaking skills.

The one thing I noticed that was different than other training events I had been to was the instructor did not provide feedback. Each time a student finished his or her mini-performance, the instructor encouraged a round of applause and then asked the presenter 2 questions: "What did you want to improve?" and "What did you like best about what you did?" The instructor then asked for another round of applause and invited the next person up. No additional feedback was provided from the instructor or the audience.

This allowed the student to be the one giving critical feedback. No one else had to be put in the spot of 'critic' or 'negative Nellie'. Everyone had the answer of what they wanted to improve (for me, it was to keep my hands out of my pockets), and everyone had a great sense of what they did well.

What I learned – everyone has the answers they seek, my job is to help them find the answers that lie within. I also noticed that our instructor got to the answers through questions, not lecture.

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When you have someone seeking help, remind yourself their answers are available to them and *they don't need your answers*; they need your help finding *their* answers. You can do this only through great questions and great listening, and remember to listen to the 'whole person', not just their words.

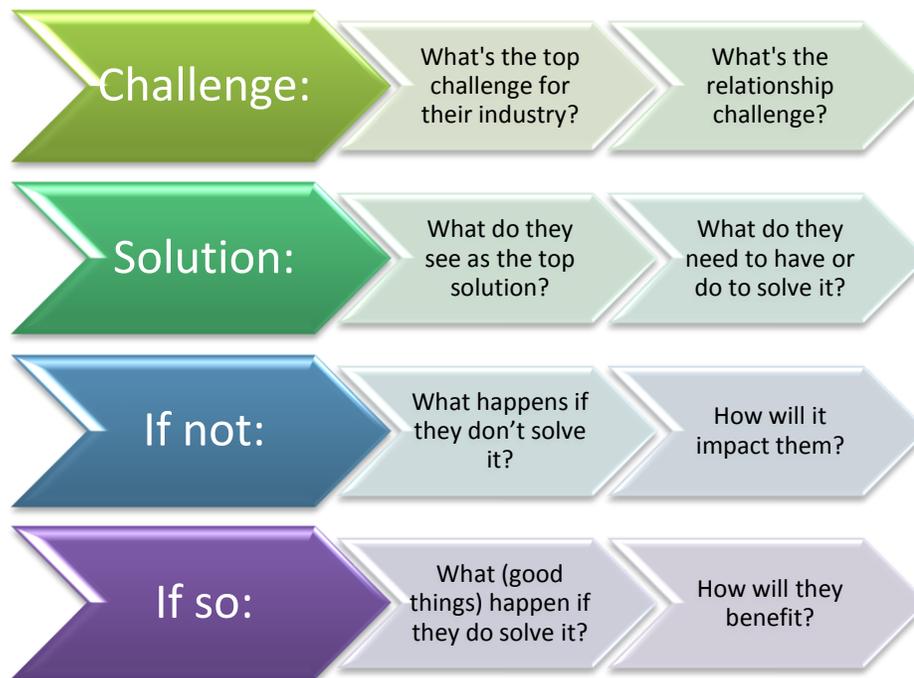
You can ask them to review how it's going, and ask them to explain the steps they are using to achieve their aims. Eliminate the temptation to interject until they have had their say.

Then ask them about others, the experiences they see others having, and what success they are having. Get them to start comparing (reframing) their experience to others. If they don't have any observations, you can share your stories or invite them to imagine what someone would do who was having the ideal success moving forward and what they might be doing differently.

There are four basic categories of questions to ask – no matter who you are working with or what your relationship is to them, counselor, coach, advisor, sales person, or friend. Those four categories are:

- **Challenge** – Questions to describe and fully explain the experience
- **Solution** – Questions to describe what they see as the solution, theirs, others and yours
- **What if it doesn't work** – Emotionally motivate them to understand the consequences of inaction or a choice that doesn't work
- **What if it does work** – Emotionally allow them to attach to the outcome they do want by pre-experiencing the joy of success.

Here is a graphic that shows the four categories. Notice there are lots of follow up questions you can ask, all of them are designed to allow the person the space to explain themselves more fully to themselves. People don't give themselves space and time to hear themselves think and listen to what they feel. These questions are designed to help them listen.



You can circle around these questions and allow the conversation to flow of course. Often conversations move in ebbs and flows, meandering back and forth, but with these questions you'll have an ability to navigate the conversation and allow the person to arrive at their intended destination.

Action Planning

In order for them to effectively take action, they need to see themselves successfully doing the new action. Help them by asking more questions about the '5 w's' (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How). Get them to describe how they will implement the action by asking them questions like:

- Who will they go meet with exactly?
- What will be the topics they will discuss?
- When will they start scheduling appointments?
- Where will they arrange to meet these people, Where do they gather?

- Why will they want to meet with them?
- How will they follow up?

These questions are designed to make them create their own action plan, instead of you handing them a printed checklist of action items.

In this way, you have helped them create an action plan that they can live with, because they were able to describe the actions they can take. If there are steps they are not clear on, they can ask you for advice on how you would do it, or how you have seen others successfully take action. Either way, they're able to move forward now because you allowed them to set their own direction.

Summary:

We've covered how to help people self motivate by getting them involved. First by asking them to describe where they are stuck, and then helping them reframe and see beyond the present to new possibilities. Then we helped them through a series of questions to describe what they see as the problem and more importantly, what they see as the solution. Finally, we ask more questions to get them to develop their own action plan, a plan that they can live with and more importantly, act upon with their new found perspective.