

The Carrot Or The Stick

Most people have heard of the principle of the “*carrot or the stick*,” it is a phrase that describes two ways to make a stubborn donkey move forward.

Either dangle a sweet smelling carrot in front of its face in which case it will move forward to get it, or briskly applying a stick to its behind in which case it will move forward to get away from it.

This “*carrot or stick*” works on people also, we use it on others and they use it on us.

A close examination of any situation where we want people to do something will reveal some type of juicy carrot or an ugly stick, or both.

Another kind of motivation –

We have to admit that the “*carrot and stick*” are effective but they do have one big limitation.

They are administered from outside, by other people, and will only work when we have others around to help us accomplish things.

This is why part of the process of maturing as a person involves developing another kind of motivation, internal motivation.

Internal motivation is able to wield the “*carrot and stick*” within ourselves, it enables us to get things done without much prodding from the outside.

Internal motivation gives us rewards, rewards that outside motivation cannot. It gives us a good feeling to have set our mind on something and accomplishing it, just because we wanted to.

Most of us could use a lot more of this internal motivation.

We have things we would like to do or know we ought to do, but we lack the motivation.

What is it that is keeping us from getting motivated?

Fear of failure is one obstacle to motivation –

Fear can be a powerful motivator, but it can also be a deadly enemy of motivation, the fear of **not** achieving perfection the first time we try to accomplish a task.

This problem is more common than we like to admit, fear of failure keeps us from any success.

One way to conquer this fear is to try to imagine the worst possible consequence of **not** achieving what we set out to do the first time we try.

When we are satisfied that we will not die as a result of our first time failure, go ahead and try again.

Hopelessness is another obstacle to motivation –

Proverbs 13:12 [New King James] *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.”*

It is hard to have motivation to do something if we feel it is an impossible task.

A winner who is motivated says *“let us find out.”*

A loser who is **not** motivated says *“nobody knows.”*

Yet there are among human beings those who have refused to accept the words “I cannot” and found the motivation to do what we might otherwise have considered impossible.

A wonderful example of this is a man called Terry Fox who, although he had lost one leg, found the stamina to run halfway across Canada.

A good way to beat the feelings of hopelessness is to divide the task we face into smaller tasks.

Getting started –

Perhaps this is the most common obstacle to getting motivated, inertia.

Inertia refers to the natural tendency of people to resist change.

The common example of inertia is how hard it is to get to bed at night, then out of bed in the morning. When we are up, our body wants to stay up, then when we are in bed, our body wants to stay in bed where it is comfortable.

To overcome inertia it may be a good idea to give yourself a little extra *“carrot”* as a reward to get going on any project.

To recognise these obstacles to motivation –

To recognise the fear of failure, hopelessness and inertia is helpful, but there is the most single important force that makes us take action which has yet to be mentioned in this article.

This is our own personal desire to do what is our project.

A hungry person rarely has to be coaxed to come to the dinner table.

We need internal *“hunger”* to really become motivated.

Making it work

Remember good intentions are not enough, to make anything work we need several things.

Determination –

This means we have decided we really want something and we are willing to *“hang in there”* and try to get it done.

Discipline –

This means doing things the way we know we must in order to attain the goal we have determined to reach.

“Practice makes perfect” but this only happens when we discipline ourselves to practice every day no matter what.

Patience –

This is more than waiting around for something to happen. It means giving the project time to develop and happen in the right way.

Impatience is opening the oven door before cooking time is complete or stepping on cement before it is dry, tasting the soup before it has cooled.

Impatience gets us nowhere fast but patience pays off in the end.

Additional help –

The best way I know to increase the desire to do what we know is the right thing is to ask the Creator God for help.

Philippians 2:12-13 [New King James] *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**”*

When we have a close relationship with our Creator God and Saviour, He will be more than willing to help us accomplish anything that comes within the scope of His will for us to mature into a created child of His.

Note, not only the motivation but also the ability to accomplish the project can be supplied through the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

[Please download and meditate on the articles on this website under the main heading ‘*Holy Spirit*’ to find out how this motivating and application of projects that are for His future created children can be accomplished perfectly.]