

Episode: 034

Title: Transforming Motivation Into Discipline

Hey, y'all. Welcome back to the podcast. Today's topic is actually one that was requested by Greg. In the last episode, I mentioned at the end that if anyone had any topic suggestions that they wanted to share, please do so. You can comment on any of the podcast episode pages on our website and we'll see it.

It's easy on me when I have suggested topics because it's less time spent on topic generation on my part and of course, I'd much rather give y'all the content that you're actually asking for than give it my best guess. Anyway, thanks so much for suggesting a few topics, Greg.

At first I wasn't sure about this topic of motivation over discipline. My brain kinda went to "avoiding procrastination" and I think that's a very high-level and over-used topic. Like we all know to procrastinate less and put in more work. And I'm a pretty disciplined person. I always have been.

So my first thought was to be honest and mention this but then it's like – why am I qualified to then help you be more disciplined if I'm telling you that it comes easy to me. And then I realized... wait... it's not always easy for me... And I thought about how I feel when I'm struggling with discipline.

What do I feel and why do I feel it? What's hindering my discipline? And maybe this is different for everyone, but I do think that this can help everyone in some way. I don't know - we'll see. But we start with motivation – and that's often the easiest part.

I'm sure you've all felt this in a variety of ways when you start anything new. For me, it's been when I get a new diet book. Not to lose weight but I just love reading about different diets. As a former vegan, I'm always interested in the debates about meat, dairy, gluten, sugar, whatever.

So it's that feeling of finding a new book with a fresh perspective on our diets and then that excitement about making a grocery list and finding a few recipes to incorporate some of these principles into my life – all for the promise of clean energy and gut health and all of that BS.

Anyway, I get excited. Just like when I start learning a new language or even finding a new app or starting a new class within my efforts to learn this language. You go out and you buy the books or sign up for the classes and you take all of the steps to prep for everything.

It's all very exciting for those first few weeks. I felt that with both Spanish and German. Spoiler alert – I am not fluent in either of those languages, although my German is a work in progress and I'm happy with that for now.

The same applies for your business. You take a new course, you hear promises of freedom and money, and you're here for it. You want that. The thing is... it's SO easy to get motivated. Good marketing is what motivates us. But staying motivated is what gets us results.

And that requires that pesky little thing called discipline. Ugh, I don't even like that word. It makes you think of like disciplining a child – like punishment. You know, I was thinking about it and I don't really want to use this word in this context. Because there is a negative connotation to it and this isn't about forcing yourself to do something you don't want to do.

In fact, it's quite the opposite. I think the key to lasting motivation is actually about focusing on positive feelings. Because if it's always about just quote-unquote putting in the work – it's going to feel like a chore and you're going to hate it and it's going to take you longer because you won't help but procrastinate. That's just how it is.

You know why I'm having so much trouble putting in the appropriate amount of time to learn German – the multiple hours a day that it really needs for me to reach conversational fluency – it's because my passion lies elsewhere right now.

What gets me fired up every day right now is my business. All of these changes that Noah and I are making. The updates to the courses that I'm currently writing and recording every day. This makes me so excited and it makes me WANT to work more and to even work weekends. It's the reason why I don't have more time for German right now.

And I've come to terms with that for now because I've decided that I'm okay with prioritizing my business and work right now. It's what makes me excited everyday. And for a while I felt guilty about the German learning. Some days I still do. But I have tried to re-frame the perspective to one of confidence in pride in my business rather than shame and guilt over what I'm not accomplishing.

And the other reason why I'm lacking discipline when it comes to learning German is because I just don't want it badly enough. Sure, I want it. But clearly not enough because I choose to prioritize work above it. If I wanted it badly enough, I would shift my priorities. I still manage to go to class twice a week, and that's okay for me for now.

I think that if we want anything badly enough, we're going to find a way to make it happen. Sure, it's not always in the exact way that we initially imagined it. We don't just get what we want just because we want it badly enough. But I think “wanting something badly enough” is a misnomer in itself. It's not about wanting the result. It's about being fired up for the work itself.

You know, the whole cliché about it being about the journey, not the destination. I both hate and love that expression. It annoys me because it's not comforting at all in the moment and it's even more annoying that it's actually true.

But let me explain and try to rephrase this in a business context that is hopefully more helpful than talking about learning a foreign language. What led me down this thought process rabbit hole was thinking about the times in my business that I have struggled with the discipline to put in the work and to keep going.

Because I've actually struggled a lot with that over the past year. It's been a very tumultuous two years for me with my business, to be honest. From thoughts of selling to calling it quits to then a new business partner. My emotions and confidence and faith in what I'm doing have greatly wavered over the last couple of years.

And even just a few months ago this year. And actually actuallyyyyyy.... If I'm being super honest, I felt a lack of inspiration even for this podcast just a couple weeks ago. I couldn't believe it. I was like, I just brought it back, how could I already be feeling uninspired by it? What is wrong with me?

So when I thought about losing my ability to be disciplined in my business, I wondered, what are the feelings underlying that behavior? Right, like what causes us to lose that motivation and lack the discipline to put in the work to get the results that we want?

I mean, I think you should take a pause and think about that right now. I'm curious to know what words or feelings come to mind when you think about it and whether mine line up with yours.

For me, the two feelings that immediately pop into my head when I think about why I hit these blocks are: Uncertainty and lack of confidence in my direction or what I'm doing. And I think that those two are definitely related. I lack confidence because I'm uncertain about what I'm doing. Or maybe I'm feeling uncertain because I don't feel my own confidence behind my decisions.

I think as a blogger or entrepreneur or creator... anyone who is responsible for their own business in this way... it's super easy to find yourself at this point at any stage of your business. When you're first starting out, well you're generally uncertain about absolutely everything. It takes time and slowly getting some small wins and results here and there that help you build up that confidence.

But man, I've seen people have that confidence from day 1 and start a blog and make \$1,000 on it within just a month or two. I've seen some people do some crazy stuff because they carved a path that they believed in and they made it happen.

But I've also been in a place where my business is really successful and I'm making a lot of money but I can't seem to pivot at the right time or find that right path towards the next steps and it leads to dragging feet and spending months longer than necessary on certain projects.

And it all leads back to uncertainty about my direction and a lack of confidence in what I'm doing. The thing is, you can't always just make these things go away. Imposter syndrome is like... uh... oh man it's like your dark passenger. Has anyone ever seen Dexter? That's a bit of a dark reference but it came to mind because it always lives within us.

Anyway, I won't go completely off on Imposter syndrome now. The point is that you can't force this confidence and make yourself feel certain about what you're doing. So, what can you do?

I think the best thing that we can do is to feel fired up about what we're doing. Like really fired up and passionate about what you're doing. You need to ENJOY it, y'all. If it's work, you're not going to want to do it. Ever. It will be hard and you will procrastinate.

You won't enjoy every aspect of starting and running your business at every moment. We all have to do certain tasks that we'd rather not do. That's part of it. But you have to have the confidence to know that this is all part of something really awesome that you're building.

I remember in the early days of working tons of overtime and making zero dollars on our first blog... I really enjoyed it. I loved learning about WordPress and graphic design and then when we started getting traffic and I could see the numbers and then eventually tweak those numbers to impact my sales... I really really enjoyed it and it got me excited every day.

I'm a numbers person, so I found what part of the business I really liked and I spent more time on that. Of course all parts of the business matter and some more than others, but it's about the one whole thing that they all make up. And I've had days where I feel like a fraud and like I don't know what I'm doing. But I was just talking to Noah about this a couple days and was shocked to find out that he also had a lot of these feelings when he bought into the business.

And then we started talking about what we wanted from the business – not money and financial gain. But like the impact that we wanted to have on our audience and how we wanted to help our students.

The overall direction that we wanted our business to go in, in the future. And we both just got so excited about it. And I FEEL that, y'all.

It made me want to jump on this podcast again because it fired me up. I've just finished completely updating Launch Your Blog Biz from scratch – every single lesson is brand new. And we're working on the rest of the courses now. I've been working a lot of hours and even some weekends to make this happen because I'm really excited about it. Because there is no uncertainty that this is what is necessary for the success of my students and I have complete confidence in that.

So I've been super disciplined to put in the time to make that happened, even when focusing on marketing or ads or something could make me more money quicker. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I think you need to find what lights a fire in your mind for your business. This shouldn't just be about money. This should be about really enjoying the work – the journey – because that's what makes you disciplined without even thinking about it.

That's how you transform motivation into discipline. Find joy in learning new skills, even when you don't love every task. And if you're getting stuck, take a step back and think about what you're doing and why you're doing it. Think about your current path and overall direction and make sure it makes sense for you and your audience.

I'm a super impulsive person... like bad... anyone who knows me well knows that I'm like this. And sometimes it's great because when I get on an idea, I'm ready to do it now and do it 100%. It's what makes me such a disciplined person but it also means I'm not as great at taking that step back to think about the bigger picture. I'd rather just stay working with my head down. You don't want to be too much of either of these types – too much work and losing sight of your direction – or too much dreaming of ideas without plan to work and implement.

So try to be aware of these things and these feelings. When you feel stuck, take a step back and think about WHY you feel stuck. What are the underlying feelings? Fear, doubt, uncertainty, and lack of confidence suck but they're all totally normal.

The only real way to combat these things is just to enjoy what you're doing. That will help you feel certain that you're on the right path, even when you can't yet see the light at the end of the tunnel. If you don't enjoy it, y'all. You're probably not doing it the way that you should - the way that is right for you.

Anyway, I hope that that helps. I know it was a good exercise for me to be more self-aware when this happens. Find a friend or a colleague or a mentor to chat with if you need a sounding board. That's also why we offer a community as part of our courses.

And as I said before, I'd love to hear from y'all. Whether it's a review that you loved this episode, or a comment to suggest a topic for the next episode... I really appreciate it! I hope each and every one of you has a great day and I will see you on the next episode!