

MOTIVATION DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN

A 5-Point Checklist for Creating the Motivation You Need

Thom Rutledge

Author of *Embracing Fear*

Motivation doesn't just happen. We have to create it, and then --- here is the hard part --- we have to know how to maintain it. So as you plan for change, consider the following checklist: brief descriptions of the five essential ingredients of solid motivation. Use this information to create the fuel you will need for the new year, and, more importantly, use the list to trouble-shoot when you feel your motivation slipping.

1. Dissatisfaction. Typically, we think of dissatisfaction as a negative thing – to be dissatisfied is to be ungrateful or to be a complainer. Dissatisfaction is not “just complaining,” and it is not necessarily an absence of gratitude. Dissatisfaction is the important first ingredient in our recipe for motivation. If we do not experience dissatisfaction, there is no reason to change.

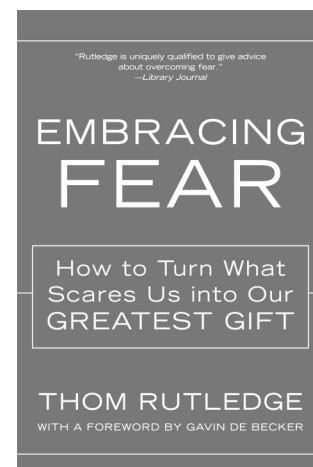
2. Desire to make a change. It is possible to have a certain level of dissatisfaction and not have much of a desire to change. Anyone who has experienced addiction knows this. It is important that we do not assume that just because we are dissatisfied, we have a sufficient desire to change. Ask yourself, “Do I really want to change this?” and do not proceed until your answer is a determined “Yes.”

3. Belief that you deserve positive change. This ingredient in motivation is easily overlooked. Too often, we sabotage ourselves because deep down, we don't believe we deserve to have what we want. This may be a specific message from our past, or simply a part of the cultural taboo of allowing ourselves to *want* anything.

4. Belief that change is possible. If we have the first three ingredients, but do not believe that the change desired is possible, we will be stopped dead in your tracks. This is why we all need supportive others in our lives who have already made the changes we desire. If they can do it, so can we.

5. Willingness to do what it takes. The knowledge that change is possible, even the knowledge of how to make the desired change is not enough. There is still one more essential ingredient in our recipe for motivation. We must become willing to take whatever action is need to accomplish our goal. Willingness to act on our own behalf puts the previous three ingredients into play.

Put these five ingredients together and you will have what it takes to fuel those New Year's resolutions. Keep the checklist handy: put it or your bathroom mirror on the refrigerator doors. And when you feel your motivation slipping, use the checklist to determine where you need to reinforce your resolve.



In a nutshell: *Motivation is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice.*

Thom Rutledge is a psychotherapist & author in Nashville, Tennessee. In addition to his private therapy practice and writing, he serves as program development consultant for The Ranch, an extended care treatment facility in Nunnelle, TN. (www.recoveryranch.com). Thom presents his innovative INTRApersonal Therapy model in both personal growth and professional training seminars in the United States and Australia. For more information and to subscribe to his “Thom’s Nutshell Wisdom” monthly e-mail feature, visit www.thomrutledge.com. Or email thomrutledge@earthlink.net.