

HOW TOP ACHIEVERS STAY MOTIVATED



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Happy New Year!

By now many of you have made your resolutions and set your goals for 2011. The real question at this point is what are you going to do to stay focused and motivated to achieve them. If you recall last year's goals (*which tellingly may look very much like this year's goals*) you probably started out all pumped up and inspired. But, like most of us, you hit the wall, early on, and never fully got done what you had planned. There was that one thing you were just not motivated by and never found the energy or enthusiasm to do it. So, here is that goal back on your list this year and unless you do something about it will probably be there on January 1, 2012.

As a business therapist and motivational speaker, I've had the opportunity to meet many very successful people. What I've noticed about them, without exception, is that they know exactly where they are going and how they are going to get there. They can also pinpoint what it is they have to do to stay focused and prevent themselves from losing their drive. One common trait they all have is that they do something to program themselves for success on a daily basis.

There are a great many of ways top performers systematically keep themselves fired up, focused and energized. Here are just a few I found that work for me:

1. Write your goals on index cards and look at them twice every day.
2. Spend 10-15 minutes listening to motivational tapes on the way to work.
3. Read something inspirational before you go to work in the morning.
4. Set a daily goal and don't go home until you've achieved it. Make that goal the last thing you think of at night and the first thing you think of in the morning.
5. Use self rewards. Any behavior that is followed by and connected to a pleasurable experience is likely to be repeated. It is easier to connect a given behavior to something that provides instant gratification than to a long term reward. That's true even though ultimately long term rewards typically are far more valuable and satisfying than short term gratification. To get your motivation to stick, you need to be reinforced with concrete, visible and satisfying rewards all along the way. They will be infinitely more behavior-changing than rewards you have to wait weeks or months to receive. So, decide on a daily reward for yourself. What reward would you be willing to work for today? How about a book or CD? *I suggest skipping the cookies and candy bars—that will just cause more problems down the road.*
6. Have and use an "accountability buddy." All of us, at times, need someone for more than advice. We need a rigorously honest and trustworthy colleague or coach who is willing to hold us accountable to do the things we know we should be doing. High achievers recognize that even Olympic champions, the best athletes in the world, have someone to keep them on focus and motivated. Setting and achieving your daily goals can be difficult but stick with it, one day at a time. In a short while you'll tune out your internal complaints and accomplishing your goals will become part of your daily routine. Ultimately, that is what will contribute greatly to your long term success.

See you at the finish line!

Ellen Cooperperson is the founder and President of Corporate Performance Consultants, Inc. For over 25 years CPC has supported organizational leaders and top achievers in implementing and managing change and profitable growth by providing a full-range of consulting services. Contact Ellen at (631) 300-0009 and go to her website www.cooperperson.com.