



# Inspiration Above Motivation

Achievement only comes from self-reflection.

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“I insist on a lot of time being spent, almost every day, to just sit and think.”  
—Warren Buffett

## Motivation

The reason your relationships suck, your home life is on the rocks, and your personal development is going nowhere is because you're motivated, but you're not inspired. Materialism is all about getting things done, hitting a target, achieving a goal, and gaining a reward. You've adopted this as a strategy; it's your modus operandi.

This is operant conditioning. You've been trained like a dog. This is why you don't make a real effort to find an alternative. You know that real change might threaten your hopes. You don't know which way is up so you're taking the middle course, which is nowhere.

You've been trained to be efficient. You've accepted the attitude of productivity as your own. It won't matter how efficient you are if your actions are not meaningful. Without meaningfulness at its heart, your efforts produce spiritual garbage.

Think about what you've been taught. Reflect on the values that you've accepted. You most likely believe that you need to know how to do something before you can do it. You've been told that the right way forward is to learn what you're taught and follow the lesson plan.

"Get your passport before you can travel."

"Learn from the mistakes of others."

"Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain."

"Don't be a trouble-maker."

"Everything can be yours with fame, power, or money."

These directions will not get you what you need, but you don't want to admit this because you're invested. You've bought the promise. No one likes to admit they've been taken, and most people would rather suffer than "kill off" an aspect of their self-identity. That's the reason that you're suffering. It's called the "sunk cost" fallacy.



## Guidance

You have an inner voice. When it speaks it will enlighten you, but it will not argue with you. It will not compete for your attention. Your inner voice knows that without your compliance you will not act honestly and you will betray it.

Your inner voice knows how to get your attention, and it's not by raising its voice, it's by waiting for you to put yourself into crisis. Your inner voice will help you get there. It will put sand in your shoes, fleas in your underwear, and make you sick.

Your inner voice knows that until you stop doing the wrong stuff, you're not going to learn about the right stuff. It will take from you all the things that are meaningful, one by one, until you realize that something is missing because, certainly, if you don't recognize something's missing, you're not going to look for it.

Your power drives the means of production, and these means produce the goods you sell and trade. Other people buy and barter for them. They're on their own treadmills. The whole system is a wind-up machine with each gear driving another.

This all works well until it runs out of energy. One of the parts that's running out of energy is the earth. Another part is society, and another part is you. Your mindset is one of many springs that is unwinding at the same time that it's driving you.



## **Intelligence**

The system has a mind of its own. The purpose of the system that we're in, which is both our culture and economy, is both creation and destruction. What we create, we leave behind. Destruction is its partner.

Destruction furthers evolution and stimulates new growth in ecologies and in consciousness. Creation, or what we see as the creation of goods for our own use, is stultifying and retards change. A self-perpetuating workforce changes nothing. Once the field of similar opportunities has been explored we

will have exhausted our resources. Then comes the inevitable collapse and necessary changes. We tell ourselves that we'll see it coming and change. I don't think so.

This destructive force for change focuses our efforts by providing incentive. Some of these incentives are the need for recognition, approval, power, and money. These are rooted in your underlying feelings of insignificance, unworthiness, and inadequacy. These are the character traits of a well-socialized person. A person who needs the system to reward them because they cannot reward themselves.



## **Institutions**

When you're part of a larger system you sacrifice your autonomy. You both work for and believe in something bigger than yourself. Inevitably, you are asked to believe that the larger system of which you're a part is more important than you.

The organization represents an ideal or value that will give you meaning and without which you will lack meaning. The ideal could be freedom and justice, or safety and comfort, or commerce and progress. In aligning yourself with this ideal you lose personal authority and independent value. You become valuable only as part of the system.

What is not made clear is what you lose. This is papered over with money, power, and respect—or perhaps fear—of the institution. Your needs are met. Your options are constrained. Your future is limited. Your self-worth is contingent. What is left is your energy to create products, not the autonomy to raise a family or yourself.

It's a Rumpelstiltskin bargain, except you're expected to sacrifice both your first born and everyone as well. Empathy is drained out of you. The system works by making sure there are no loose wheels, and in this way, when it breaks down, it collapses. That's what forces evolution. As long as you are a gear in the machine, you won't live to see it.

Organizations that portray themselves as fostering change, and portray you as an essential agent, are blowing smoke. They'll sell you whatever you're buying because they know that if you're ready to buy your identity from them, then you don't know how to value your own identity.



## Autonomy

The alternative is to be your own agent of change. To do that effectively you must be autonomous. That does not mean you must go solo. You can be part of a team if the team is organized to support the individuals. In such a system, the inspiration of the individual is the goal, not the output of their labor.

I'm not sure what this kind of organization would look like in a large institution. I've only known these as project-based efforts and partnerships. In these, each person defines their own role within the context of what's needed. Each person understands their scope of authority, responsibility, and reward. In such partnerships, everyone plays a recognized and valuable role. When one person objects, rejects, or rebels, the whole partnership is impacted. In contrast, in organizations where one person's objection is of no concern, that person is liable to be exploited or expelled.

Creating an inspired organization depends on evoking the inspiration of all individuals within it. As our systems break down due to indifference, corruption, or lack of resources, it's more likely that we'll train or create individuals who can create something better. But inspiration is not assured. It's not something that we've been trained to have or to recognize.



## Inspiration

Inspiration is not taught; we're told it cannot be taught. That's a lie. Inspiration is knowing which way is up. It's knowing what your heart is saying to you. It's not following orders, not getting things done, not hitting a target or achieving a goal. Inspiration is doing what makes your life meaningful. Inspiration is the most seditious thing in a business, unless it's your own.

Respecting the inspiration of others is more difficult than finding your own. This sort of respect runs counter to our training. We've been trained to salute the flag, fall in line, and abandon the outliers. But another person's inspiration is always unique to them and their circumstances, and that's true even if they describe their circumstances in the same way you do.

What we mean by what we say is rarely clear and is never fully expressed. Recognizing the inspiration of another always means accepting a degree of wonder and amazement. Inspiration is ineffable and dynamic. Even if it were fully contained in a description in the moment, it will change.

Finding one's inspiration is a process of speaking the unspeakable, investing in something that can change in an instant, and whose only real allegiance is the love you have for it. Inspiration is fearless and directed. It is a combination of a source and a measure of energy. The source is a wellspring from your subconscious; the measure is your conscious sensation of its pulse. If inspiration was a horse, then you are the horse whisperer.

The way you find your inspiration is similar to how you become a horse whisperer: you live alongside it and you speak to it, speaking all that you feel. And, as with a horse, it's not what you say that's important, it's what you mean.

Speaking to yourself about things that are meaningful to you is a means of finding inspiration. You will find that something in you will answer back, but you have to listen. You have to be ready to listen. And if you don't hear any response, then rest assured it's not for lack of inspiration, it's because you're not ready to hear, or you haven't learned how to listen.

If you think you're ready to listen but you don't know how to hear, then contact me. It's a matter of tuning. It's a matter of lessening the noise. It's something one learns.

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