

SHAWNPHILLIPS

Mastering Motivation



The Path to Fitness Freedom



The *STRENGTH FOR LIFE* Series

A Guide to the Joy of Training

SHAWN PHILLIPS'

**STRENGTH
FOR LIFE**

Chapter 14
MASTERING MOTIVATION

**The Fitness Plan for
the Best of Your Life**

by

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Mastering Motivation

We all want it. Many of us think we need more of it. But just what is motivation? A mix of discipline and desire? A spark that we draw upon whenever needed? While you certainly know what it's like to be motivated as you were during your Transformation, you may not be entirely sure just exactly what motivation is or how to create it. Perhaps you're asking yourself, and wisely so, "How am I going to stay motivated now? How am I going to keep moving forward into greater strength, vitality and freedom?"

What gets you to do something, let alone stick with it?

It takes substantial discipline and force to begin a Transformation, and even more fortitude to complete one. Now that your Transformation is behind you, there may be a sense that you can ease up a bit. And while there's certainly some truth to this as far as your body is concerned, this is no time to let go of the reins. This is a time of great risk, where most people falter after completing a Transformation. You're at a crossroads: will you choose a life of strength or will you allow it to fade away?

A new challenge awaits you—the challenge of going the distance, sustaining your drive and motivation and continuing on the path to a life at full strength. Learning how you can take control of the energy that moves you—the force that propels you into action—is the key to effortless sustainability. I'm not talking about the "rah, rah" stuff but rather the tools and a map, both necessary for you to skillfully navigate the road ahead. Instead of fighting to stay disciplined or relying upon fire and brimstone speeches, in this chapter you will discover how to master motivation, moving beyond discipline to find the joy of being fit and strong, staying engaged for the year ahead and beyond.

Motivation comes from the Latin word *motivus*, meaning "to move."

Motivation is the catalyst to action. It's energy for motion—it propels you to *do something*. Without motivation you have no forward motion in life, your life stagnates. And when you're not growing you're declining.

More so than any other factor, more than knowledge—even more than the perfect plan—your ability to create, sustain and renew motivation determines your success in fitness and in life. The perfect plan for certain success is of no use in the absence of the drive to take action. It's through motivation that the rubber hits the road and things get done.

While there are certainly times when it feels great just to have any motivation toward fitness, all motivation is *not* created equal. Some motivation is very intense, others quite subtle. Some motivation has a long shelf life by design while others pass very quickly. The two basic sources of motivation are *external* and *internal*.

External motivators, the most well-known, are commonly referred to as the “carrot and the stick.” This is the terrain of things we move away from (the stick) like fear, pain and punishment and things we move towards with desire, like the carrot compels the donkey to pull a cart up a mountain. As the name implies, these motivators reside outside of you. They impact your inner experience but stem from beyond your own body and mind. The hallmark of external motivation is that the reward is almost always in the future. External motivators can be strong and highly effective yet they generally are not sustainable, easily derailed, and require much effort and discipline.

Internal motivators, on the other hand, arise from within; they're self-generated. Often more powerful, always more sustainable, meaningful and persistent, internal motivators triumph even in the face of great obstacles. The hallmark of internal motivation is that the reward is found within the activity itself. It's worthy to note that for the large majority of people, the external motivators—the carrot and stick—are the only source of motivation. Hence the reason why the

internal motivators are referred to as the “higher reaches” of motivation.

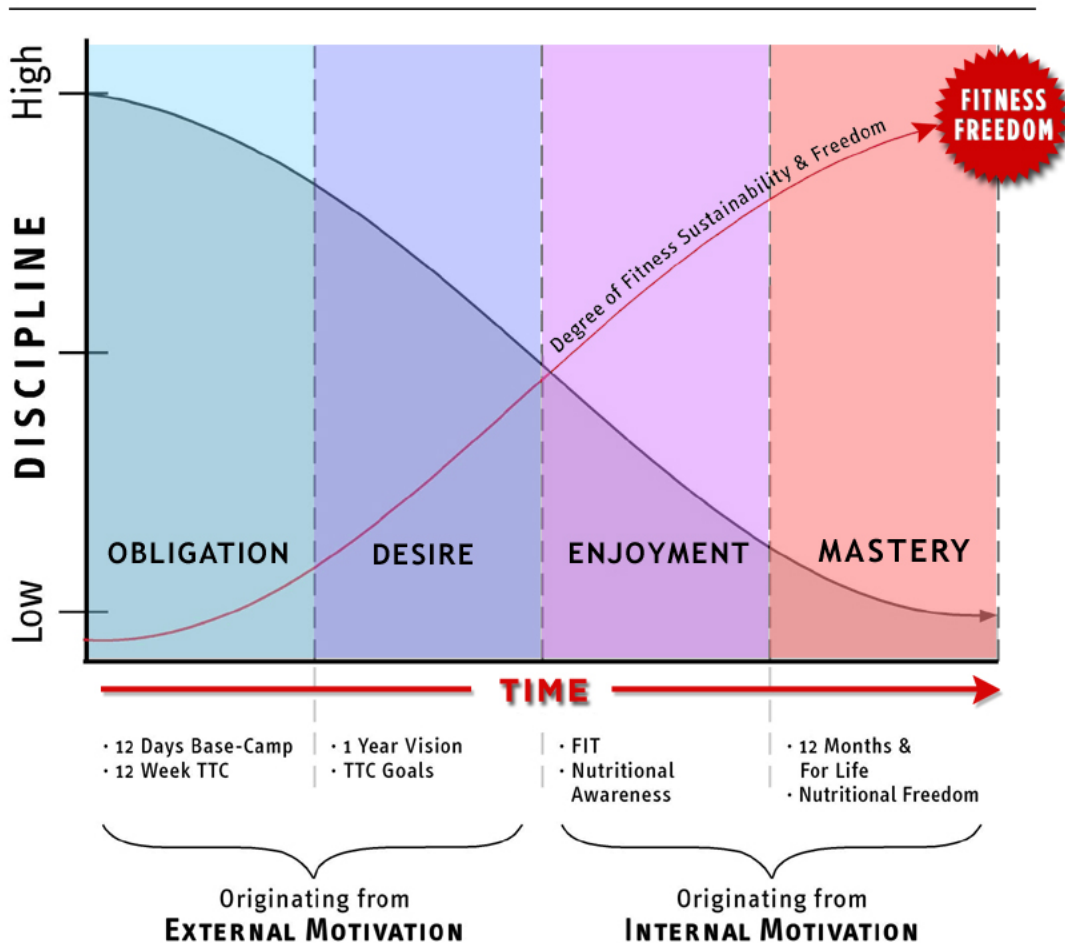
From Discipline To Mastery

Contrary to popular myth, a lifetime of fitness is not the product of rock solid discipline. When you first take on a new challenge in any area of life it takes a strong compelling reason and considerable discipline simply to engage. Discipline takes great effort and is a short-term strategy—it helps to get you going but only motivation can keep you going strong. When it comes to sustaining a lifetime of strength and fitness it’s a steady stream of ever-evolving motivation that will carry you to new heights.

When I was 13 I decided to learn to play the guitar. I thought it would be a “cool” thing to do. I had this fantasy of playing music. Then I got a dose of reality—while I had ample desire and energy to get started I came face to face with the difficult work: practice. In the absence of the progress I relied on a great amount of discipline to sustain those first six months. As time went on my efforts began to pay off. Finally I had a noticeable improvement and just like that, discipline gets a break. In comes in a surge of motivation, fueling a desire to play more. The key was the feedback—the recognition from myself and others, that there was improvement, began to stoke my desire.

If you’ve ever had the feeling that getting in shape takes an extraordinary amount of discipline, you’re absolutely right—it does, for a short period of time. Furthermore, if you’ve said, “there’s no way I can sustain this type of discipline to stay in shape for life,” you’re right once again. Thankfully, you don’t need to. Discipline carries you only so far because it’s short-lived. Motivation carries you the distance. But I’m not just talking about any kind of motivation, I’m talking about the type of motivation that delivers you freedom and sustainability.

THE PATH TO MASTERY



Motivation fills the gap between *wanting* and *having* by generating the energy for *doing*. In the absence of motivation nearly anything you do becomes a great effort—a grueling exercise in discipline. The stages of motivation that follow show you how to move beyond discipline to the higher reaches of motivation, which are not fueled by requirements but by your passion. When you are doing what you love because you love doing it, everything changes.

Stage 1: Obligation-Based Motivation: “I Should”

People who struggle maintaining a fitness lifestyle, tend to lug around a bucket overflowing with obligations in the form of “should.” You hear them say they *should* exercise, *should* eat right, and *shouldn’t* miss a training session. They should

because their doctor told them to; they should because they would have more energy and be in better shape.

This type of external motivation is based on *Obligation*—sustaining it requires discipline—not just your run of the mill discipline but heaping truckloads of it. *Obligation*-based motivation is frustrating, draining and difficult; it's like pushing an enormous stone up a mountain just to have it roll back down again. With each effort, you tell yourself that you “should” get the stone up the mountain. The cycle persists until you're exhausted from the futility of sustaining the task. It's only a matter of time before gravity wins.

Obligation-based motivation is a common point of entry into fitness. It may be enough to get you in the gym or hire a trainer, but it lacks sustainability. It's the motivational style employed by most dieters, hence the reason 95% of them fail.

Stage 2: Desire-Based Motivation: “I Want To”

Many people begin training not because it's fun but because they *Desire* the body, self-image, confidence, strength or fitness that their training promises. While still an external source of motivation, at this stage you're moving toward something, not away from it. A positive attraction to a future vision and goals gives *Desire*-based motivation more power and sustainability than *Obligation*-based motivation.

Desire, the next stage in the evolution of motivation, is the way out of the endless cycle of obligation. It operates on the principle that you have to do something to get what you want. You'll stay with your commitments longer and enjoy higher motivation if you use strong and clearly defined goals, as you did in your Transformation.

Moving with focus and intention is a step in the right direction, however *Desire*-based motivation has an endpoint: the “win” or goals achieved. As such, goals

are not the answer to sustainable motivation, but rather tools to be leveraged along the way. This stage is limited in that the big pay off is almost always in the future leaving you constantly in pursuit. Many who satisfy their goals and complete a 12 week Transformation quickly revert back. Their loss of motivation a mystery, they recall their experience of transforming fondly and speak of the desire to “get back at it.”

You evoke the Desire-based motivation in your one year vision and Transformation goals.

Stage 3: Enjoyment-Based Motivation: “I Love To”

I’d like to invite you back in time to when I first learned to ride a bike. I was an adventurous boy eager to ride and anxious about balancing on two wheels. Yet, never did I question if I would go for it. I knew my friends would be riding soon if they were not already and I didn’t want to disappoint my parents. Any fear of falling paled in comparison to the *Obligation* I felt to perform.

It didn’t take long for me to get the hang of it, soon cruising around at full speed. I felt like I was flying! There was no discipline involved—I rode all day long, stopping only when my parents called me home. I didn’t ride my bike to get to places, I invented places to go just to *Enjoy* the ride.

Enjoyment-Based Motivation

Wanting a sculpted, lean body does not signify Enjoyment-based motivation. Having a deep interest and passion to do the activities that naturally lead to such a body is. Enjoying the outcome isn’t necessarily enjoying the process of getting there—therein lies a crucial distinction.

What do you so love doing that you become lost in the activity itself? It could be anything—reading, cooking, painting, fly-fishing, music, an intimate conversation—it’s different for everyone. When you deeply enjoy something, your

mind is graced with the presence of the moment.

Stage 3 motivation shatters the “discipline myth” as you’re naturally drawn to your fullest expression of life and your true potential. There is no sense of obligation and no need for external pressure.

As enjoyment is found in the depth and focus of your attention, FIT is the perfect practice for fully integrating and engaging your mind and body, producing a deeply enjoyable flow-state experience. With FIT, instead of watching the clock you’ll look back and wonder where the time went.

Stage 4: Mastery: “I’m Inspired, Just Try and Stop Me!”

When an activity ceases to be something you do and becomes a way of life, you begin to experience the pinnacle of freedom, Mastery. It arrives unannounced when your practices become integral to your life. At this stage of motivation you do not rely on the first 3 stages—that’s not to say that you don’t use these types of motivation as stepping stones; however, you are free from dependence upon them.

Mastery of training frees you from struggling to “get your workout in.” You train because that’s how you approach life. Your body is strong and vital not because you train; rather you train to celebrate your strength and vitality. Training is a natural movement for you, just as breathing is a natural spontaneous activity.

In Mastery you move and take action effortlessly from the perpetual flame of *Inspiration*. Here motivation is self-sustaining because it is strengthened by the very actions it motivates. Mastery does not arrive on schedule—it doesn’t come in 12 days or 12 weeks. Even the most amazing “after” photo does not assure this freedom and sustainability. Mastery comes only through your steady and full engagement for the 12 months ahead and a consistent annual commitment to strength. It’s your path to true freedom and sustainability. Be patient, Mastery takes

time.

“Almost without exception, those we know as masters are dedicated to the fundamentals of their calling. They are zealots of practice, connoisseurs of the small, incremental step. At the same time—and here’s the paradox—these people are precisely the ones who are likely to challenge previous limits, to take risks for the sake of higher performance, and seem to become obsessive at times in that pursuit. Clearly, for them the key is not either/or, it’s both/and.”

- George Leonard, author *Mastery*

Moving From Obligation to Inspiration

1. Trade in Your Obligation for Desire

If you feel as though you *should* take up a training program but it doesn't connect to something you truly Desire, don't do it. It's that simple. Just make sure you fully accept and acknowledge the consequences of your actions. If you encounter an Obligation that connects with something you truly Desire, use it to work for you, but don't rely exclusively on Obligation-based motivation.

If you're feeling strong energy from this level of motivation, transition through it as fast as possible before your discipline runs out. Get on the short track to changing your Obligation into a Desire. Get focused on the future, on a result you truly want.

Tip: Leverage a trainer or training partner to provide a positive obligation, but be sure to stay focused on what you truly *Desire*.

Examples:

Before: Obligation	After: Desire
“I should be healthy”	“I want to be strong”
“I should get in better shape”	“I want to look 10 years younger”

2. Find Clarity and Inspire Desire

Motivation is as strong as it is clear. In the absence of clarity and focus, motivation's energy turns to frustration. Take the time to figure out exactly what you truly Desire (your carrot). Look within: What is a vision, goal or destination worthy of your time, attention and energy? Once you are clear about what you truly Desire take steps to educate yourself about what it will take to attain it. Use the skills discussed in chapter six to fuel your motivation.

Tip: Engage in friendly competition. Little activates one's innate desire like the competitive spirit. A friendly Transformation challenge can elicit powerful motivation to help you achieve things you would not otherwise contemplate. Even in competition your aim should not be to surpass others but to constantly surpass your own previous best. Competition can inspire your greater potential.

Tip: Measure your progress; use this feedback to fuel Desire.

3. Learn to Love the Process

The most important step in mastering motivation, yet in many ways the most difficult, is learning to love the process. If you're committed to growing beyond the carrot and stick to a truly sustainable form of motivation then you must learn to fall in love with training itself and not just the results. Patience, commitment and persistence are all essential ingredients; however, ultimately you must aim for joy and you'll discover, in the least expected of moments, Mastery.

Connect with your passion—what really *moves* and *inspires* you. As you discover how to love the training leading you to the goals that matter most, you will transform discipline into freedom, struggle into grace, and willpower into passion.

Tip: Avoid the struggle between where you are now and where you "should be." Embrace where you are now. This is your gateway to Mastery.

Tip: Be patient. Be consistent.

Strength for the Journey

Your life is a journey and motivation is the fuel that keeps you going strong.

Sustaining motivation is vital to your continued growth along the path of life and it can be tricky to navigate. Over the course of weeks, months and years, motivation rises and falls. It will come on strong and wane in your seasons to follow. At times you may find yourself struggling with discipline and Obligation, other times you'll be soaring with Inspiration.

Freedom is found in the higher reaches of motivation, but the true power is in the mix—an ever-changing blend of the stages of motivation. The path to your ever-evolving personal best lies in your acceptance of what is and your commitment to confidently move forward. It's the delicate balance of tension between these two points—where you're at now, and where you're going—from which motivation propels you into action.

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SHAWN PHILLIPS

“The Philosopher of FIT”

“Your body is strong and vital not because you train; rather you train to celebrate your strength and vitality,” says *The Philosopher of Fit*, Shawn Phillips. A deep thinker with a knack for making the complex simple, Shawn’s rebelled against

the terror of mediocrity since he was a child. Revered for his lean, balanced physique and perfect six-pack abs, Shawn has amassed a lifetime of experience as he enters his third decade as one of the most respected names in the health and fitness world.

Author of the best-selling books, ***ABSolution*** and ***Strength for Life***, as well as thousands of articles on health, fitness, nutrition, mindset, motivation, and more, Shawn brings unique perspective and depth to the questions most fear to ask.

Integrating body, mind and soul, Shawn’s “*Zen of Strength*” practice features the techniques of *Focus Intensity Training* (FIT), which blends the intensity of martial arts, the mindfulness of yoga with the muscle of strength training.

Alongside his brother, Bill, Shawn was instrumental in the explosive success of EAS and the *Body-for-LIFE* movement. He pioneered the computerized strength system, *Powerbuilding*, launched an online supplement knowledge base, Nutros.com and is the founder of the “**lifestyle nutrition**” company, *Full Strength Nutrition*—which helps men live *freer, clearer and stronger in the prime of life*.

One of the most photographed physiques of a generation, best known for his symmetry and signature abs, Shawn is better known by family, friends and associates for his radical insight, inspiring vision, relentless humor and a passion for helping people live great lives.

Find Shawn at:

FullStrength.com The World's Most **Premium Nutrition Shake** (Clinically Proven)

MyStrengthforLIFE.com Shawn Phillips **Strength-for-LIFE** the Book site

12DayReBOOT.com **The 1st Move:** Get Your Body & Mind at Full Strength!

StartStrongMonday.com Weekly Wisdom on Strength and Life (Since 2006)

ManonTop.com The Place for Men to Get Your **Mojo Back**

21dayFIT.com The Fastest Fitness Plan on Earth

Kryptonite Report Keeping **You Strong** in a World Robbing You of Strength & Vitality

Neuro-Strength.com Reach Your Peak Strength of **Mind and Body**