

# **How To Inspire Yourself ... Now!**

*7 Powerful Techniques To Use Right Away*

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## Getting Inspired

Welcome! I'm delighted that you are joining a growing community of people who are living and working in a more inspired way.

Inspiration is a key that will unlock fantastic possibilities for you. Inspiration brings huge levels of energy; it gives you a laser-like focus; and it's a catalyst for taking action. Inspiration is concerned with what you hold most dear – what is truly important to you.

Be aware – inspiration is life-changing!

### Who is it for?

All of us can be inspired. It may seem a bold claim but it is true for these 5 reasons:

1. We've all been there. It may be rare, it may be long past, but at some time and place we have all been inspired, at least once. We know what it is like to feel fully and absolutely alive; to tingle with special energy and speak with passion
2. Being inspired is a great state to be in. It is life-affirming and satisfying; it's enjoyable and fulfilling. Naturally we want more, so the motivation to seek it is there
3. If we learn how inspiration works for us as individuals, we are able to take control and become inspired whenever we choose
4. The techniques to get inspired build on what we like to do naturally
5. When other people, from a wide range of occupations and backgrounds, share their experience they confirm the truth that we can all be inspired

## My Story

The reason being inspired is close to my heart is because I know what it is like when it is hard to be. One such experience comes from my early career when I had a job as a computer programmer. While this may be a noble profession, for a number of reasons, I hated the job. Monday morning blues were a weekly event. So I did what many people would do – I changed my job.

I got a new boss, different colleagues and a smarter desk. Yet despite the change I was still not inspired. One morning driving to work I got caught in a bad traffic jam. When I realised I was going to be late, I began to get stressed. Then suddenly the pointlessness of it all overwhelmed me – I was getting stressed because I could not get somewhere I did not want to go!

I cut out of the jam, pulled over and sat at the wheel in a sort of daze for a couple of hours. I needed to make sense - find a meaning - in what I was doing. It was only when I had reached a resolution in my own mind that I was ready to drive on.

For me back then, the resolution was to learn to fly – pilot an aeroplane. There was an airfield nearby and I had already spent some lunchtimes watching the take-offs and landings. Now I was going to enroll, and the point of working – the meaning – was to fund my flying. When I went back to work, things looked the same but everything was different - I was inspired!

It was years later that I gained the knowledge and skills to understand what I had done instinctively in the heat of the moment. Back then, I had discovered that I had a choice – either to put up with an intolerable situation or to do something about it. You can do the same.

I had taken control of my mental approach and set an inspiring goal. In turn this generated energy and focus and allowed me to create a meaning that was important to me. I had discovered how to take off!

This document shows you how you can start today – here are 7 powerful techniques that you can use straightaway.

So read on ...

## 1 – The Key To Everything

This is the key to everything that follows. Without it no other techniques would work. With it you will literally be able to build an inspired future.

It starts with the fact that sometimes it is easy to feel powerless. There are many things you can't control. Try fixing the economy, stopping an earthquake or delaying the sunrise. Closer to home, you can't make your friend more punctual or your neighbours invite you to dinner whenever you feel like it.

Because we could build a long list like this, it's easy to miss what we can control. Then we become rather passive with the mistaken idea that other people or circumstances determine our experience.

A typical example is when you might say 'He makes me angry' implying that somehow your anger is an involuntary response. What is actually happening is that you are choosing to be angry. He can't plant anger inside you against your will. Unconsciously you are making a choice. The anger may or may not be justified but the fact is that you create it.

This principle is at work all the time. Each day you make hundreds of choices but most are out of conscious awareness. Today you can begin to bring them back into mind. The reason is that when you know you are making a choice you can often make a better one.

Leaving your choices entirely to automatic habit or knee-jerk response puts you effectively into the role of victim. Then it seems that you don't have the power to change and you rely on others to 'fix it' for you. The problem is that you will wait forever.

### Getting Practical

This is about flexing your 'choosing muscles'. Before you sleep tonight, make one choice that you have not made before. Choose something likely to bring a positive result (simply wearing your shoes on the wrong feet may be a choice you have not made before but it is unlikely to be enjoyable!)

*The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results* Benjamin Franklin

## 2 – Inspiring Goals

If you want to an inspiring future, you need to **choose** inspiring goals. Without goals, life just seems to 'happen' and the results are random. If we don't set goals, can we really complain about the outcome?

But we all know that some goals are better than others. Some goals just add to our workload, bring little personal benefit and seem to be a struggle to keep going. Many a new-year resolution that sparkled in January can be rather faded by March or April.

One trap is to settle for pseudo-goals. It is easy to fall for them because pseudo-goals have a subtle disguise. To uncover them ask yourself this question: when you express the goal, does your language includes 'should', 'ought', 'must' or 'have to'? If it does, you are adopting a goal from another person or persons. This includes peer pressure, fashion and culture. Is this a goal that you really want?

The better sort of goal is the one that actually inspires you, bringing its own energy. It lifts you from mere labour and you feel alive and self-motivated. These are the goals where you don't need to wait until you achieve them to get benefit because working towards them creates its own satisfaction. When you do achieve them, you want to celebrate. These are the goals that are really worth setting.

### Getting Practical

How about choosing one truly inspiring goal? You can check that your goal is truly inspiring like this:

1. Imagine yourself at that point in the future when you have achieved your goal
2. Take a few moments, there in the future, to see what is going on, hear what people are saying and feel what it is like
3. How inspired are you? Give yourself a score out of 10
4. Using your score, are you are inspired enough? If not, can you refine your goal to make it more inspiring? You can check it again by starting at step 1.

When you have your truly inspiring goal, write it down. Keep the note safe so you can refer to it later. You could even choose to have a reminder on view somewhere that you see every day.

### 3 – Triggers

Do you know you can **choose** your state of mind? Many people think this is outside of conscious control but you will see how easy it can be using simple triggers. It works like this.

Have you ever been transported back to a vivid memory by a certain song? The same thing can happen when you look at a photo from your holiday. Automatically you re-experience the sights, sounds and feelings that you experienced at the time. The song or the photo are acting as triggers.

The reaction we get from a particular trigger is a combination of physical, emotional and mental components. So when watching a film, an eerie sound track may trigger goosebumps (physical), a scary feeling (emotional) and a curiosity as to what will happen next (mental). This combined reaction creates your state of mind.

During a typical day, your state will change many times. Even in a short period your state of mind can change several times, perhaps switching between relaxation, boredom, happiness, frustration, curiosity, anxiety and exhilaration.

The upshot is that you have two options: you can either be passive about your state letting it 'arrive' without intervention or you can be proactive and choose it.

If you are going to choose your state then it makes sense to choose a positive one. The state that is perhaps the most energising, productive and enjoyable of all is that of being inspired. When inspired we are at our very best:

\*\* Physically we are – energetic, awake, poised, powerful, effective

\*\* Mentally we are – alert, focused, creative, motivated, meaningful

\*\* Emotionally we are – confident, passionate, connected, balanced, fulfilled

#### Getting Practical

What inspiring triggers could you easily bring into your daily life? (any sight, sound, touch, taste or smell).

Choose at least 3 triggers to incorporate into your day from now on.

*We are each responsible for all of our experiences* Louise Hay

## 4 – Role Models

Who do you admire? Who do you find inspiring?

It may be someone who triumphed in adversity, a person who achieved great things or someone who lived an alternative life style true to their values.

Your role model may be famous or not. They could be someone in the media or a member of your own family. They could be a historical figure or someone alive today. A role model may even be a fictional character – perhaps from book or film. You can have many different role models. What matters to you is that they are inspiring.

There are two ways you can use your role model to help you be inspired:

1. Use the physiology of your role model:

- How would my role model walk, stand and sit?
- What is their posture?
- How would they make eye-contact?
- How would they speak?

For example, if you act with the confident physiology of your role model for a minute or two, you will feel genuinely more confident.

2. Use your role model for new insights:

- What is their advice to you?
- What do they believe is possible?
- What outcome would they want?
- What action would they take?

### Getting Practical

Who would you **choose** as your role model for today?

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world* Mahatma Gandhi

## 5 – Voting for Inspiration

We make choices every day, although we are often unaware we are doing so. Voting is about becoming aware of those choices and then making them consistent with what is really important to us.

However long, our lives are finite. There are 168 hours in a week which means that there are 8760 hours in a year. Each hour can be lived only once. To live one million hours takes until the age of 114.

The physical world imposes constraints that we have to accommodate. We can only be in one place at a time. Making one choice automatically excludes others.

Our bodies are not machines and we need to eat, exercise and sleep to stay healthy. Our other resources are not unlimited, for example we have a certain amount of money.

How we choose to spend our time, energy and money will have a major influence on the levels of inspiration we experience. If you want more inspiration you have to vote for it!

### Getting Practical

How do you **choose** to spend your time, energy and money? Look back over the last week and ask yourself:

- How much of your **time** were you inspired?
- What can you learn about the way you spend time?
- How much time do you have left?
- How do you really want to spend your time?
  
- How much **energy** do you devote to being inspired?
- What energy are you wasting?
- How could you lighten up on yourself?
  
- How are you spending your **money** in inspiring ways?
- How do you choose how to spend your money?
- How much money is enough?

*The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark Michelangelo*

## 6 – New Perspectives

Habits are automatic behaviours that save us from re-thinking every experience from scratch. I doubt whether you have to think much when you tie your shoelaces or brush your teeth. These activities became habits years ago and they still work well. The trouble occurs when habits outlive their usefulness. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the way we use our senses.

Every day your five senses are bombarded with information. Sights, sounds, feelings, smells and tastes come at you thick and fast; some studies say 60,000 times a day. Fortunately we have mental filters to trim this down to a manageable number. This is just as well for our ability to make sense of reality and to stay sane.

In the novel 'Perfume' by Patrick Suskind, the main character has an extraordinary sense of smell. Unlike the rest of us, he lives in a world overwhelmed by different scents. Without effective mental filters, it is this abnormal experience that contributes to his insanity. If you've read the book you'll know it isn't a happy ending!

While your filters keep you safe, perception can become so habitual that it no longer engages with the real world. If this sounds extravagant, think back to when you could not find something (car keys?) and, after much searching, you eventually found it in a place where you had already 'looked'.

In contrast, can you remember a day when you noticed something for the first time that actually was there all along? This can happen spontaneously and it shows that all the circuits are there to create new and inspiring perspectives of the familiar world.

### Getting Practical

You can wake up your senses by making a deliberate **choice**. A musician trains her ear for greater sensitivity and discernment. A wine taster cultivates his nose and palate. It starts by breaking a habit such as your journey to work: get off the bus a stop early; walk on the opposite side of the road; buy coffee at a new place.

1. Choose one activity that you are going to do today anyway
2. Deliberately change the way you do it - break the habit
3. Notice the new perspectives your senses pick up

*Habits are at first cobwebs, then cables* Spanish Proverb

## 7 – Taking Action

We are always taking action of one sort or another. At the very least we breathe, we move, we occupy space. Sometimes taking action can be inspiring.

For action to inspire you, it needs to be strong enough to overcome inertia – the tendency to revert to the original position.

Think of this like a marble resting in the bottom of a basin. There the marble will stay unless some movement is given to it. Then it may roll around the basin before settling back to rest.

A large force might flick it high up the basin sides where it might circuit like a cyclist on a banked track until it loses energy and gradually falls back to the bottom – the original position.

The only way to make real progress is to give the marble so much energy that it leaps out of the basin altogether.

The action you **choose** will be one of three possibilities.

1. **Timid action** – just sufficient to prod the marble into small movement. This is the cautious action of low confidence. There is no real commitment to change and it is never a way to escape the basin

2. **Realistic action** – logical, planned and measured. This will give the marble significant movement. It can be exciting while it lasts but it's no guarantee of escape

3. **Bold action** – determined, energetic and continuous. When you pile on the action – the more techniques you use the better - this will lift the marble out of its prison and lift you into an inspiring new world

You are like a tennis player about to serve. With timid action the ball hits the net; with reasonable action the opponent returns the ball; with bold action the player hits a winning shot.

## Getting Practical

Book an **Inspiration Date** (This is adapting an idea from 'The Artist's Way' by Julia Cameron).

Be bold and set aside a block of time (at least 2 hours) to do something that inspires you.

Your Inspiration Date could be a day's excursion, a film, a walk or a book by the fire. It could be a cycle ride, a visit to an art gallery or a boat trip. It will be as individual as you are; the only criterion is that it has the potential to inspire you.

Just like a romantic date, there can't be a guarantee of success but there should be plenty of promise!

When you are choosing your date, and running through the options, treat it like you do when selecting a gift for a loved one. Savour the possibilities and enjoy the choosing.

Finally, make sure you keep the date!

## What's Next?

By using the 7 techniques you've made a great start - the challenge now is to keep going. Things can get in the way so building **momentum** is essential. Momentum can come from many sources including:

- Having an inspiring goal
- Being clear about the benefits of reaching the goal
- Surrounding yourself with reminders (discrete and otherwise) of the benefits
- Making a commitment to yourself (and possibly others)
- Setting a time frame
- Building accountability to yourself (and possibly others)
- Rewarding yourself for reaching milestones
- Spending time with like-minded friends and colleagues
- Creating a support network
- Using a professional coach
- Reading inspiring stories of other people
- Taking regular action that gets you closer to your goal

Remember that **Inspiration at Work** is here to help you. Check the website [www.inspiration-at-work.co.uk](http://www.inspiration-at-work.co.uk) for the latest resources, offers and events.

Best wishes for your journey

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