



# Motivational Intelligence

The Ability to Enthusiastically and Powerfully  
Take Action and Live a High Performing,  
Vibrantly Successful Life!

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## **Our Brains Are Designed to Effectively Motivate Us**

*“Motivational Intelligence (MIQ) is our brain’s functional process of cultivating and managing the nature and quality of our motivation to take the optimal action that will best realize our aspirations and make us happy in the process.”*

*- Dr. Blair C. Relf*

Our Brains Motivate Us! This neurologically-based, motivational process is one of the core functions that make up our human intelligence! Some people have learned to be really good at this and some people have not yet developed the skills. How effective you become at optimally motivating yourself will profoundly – and this cannot be overstated – directly and dramatically affect your happiness and success in life!



How effective you are at motivating yourself is a powerful determinant in your professional success, your physical fitness, your academic success, even your social and financial success and all that you aspire to experience and achieve. This has profound implications for companies, teachers, coaches, trainers, leaders, parents and our selves.

## **Motivation Varies Greatly in Quality Depending on Your Motivational Abilities**



Motivation is broadly misunderstood. It is not just ‘High’ or ‘Low’, it has a nature and a quality. Your Motivational Intelligence determines the qualitative nature of your motivations and their effectiveness for any and all of the many, many purposes and pursuits in your life. Is your motivation, for the important areas of your life, based in enthusiasm, or self discipline, or

resentful obligation? Is it impulsive or enduring? Is it motivating you to do things that are good for you or things that undermine you? Can you moderate it – or is it out of your control? Is it driven by diverse motives and resilient or is it one dimensional and potentially fragile? Does it create an enjoyable motivational experience and, is therefore, self renewing or is it stressful and depleting?

Our motivational intelligence works every minute of our waking lives. The degree to which it has been developed into great ability, it then cultivates and shapes all the causal



motivational factors within and around us and produces the motivational forces within us to experience, achieve and enjoy. These forces are some combination of positive energies like enthusiasm, attraction, and intrinsic enjoyment; more neutral energies like willpower, self distraction, and commitment; and more negative energies like fear, aversion, and obligation. All of

these forces can be used, but the more positive energies are more psychologically healthy, more productive over the long term (and often in the short term as well) and certainly more enjoyable.

The way you are motivationally engaged and the type of motivational experience you create for yourself is a powerful determinant of your happiness and satisfaction in life. People too often make the mistake of driving themselves with stress, fear, disgust, desperation, intense dissatisfaction or any number of other negative forces and pay the price, as they find that they have ingrained this way of operating throughout their lives and regardless of their success are unable to change this motivational style.

### **There are Dozens of Skills that We Can Use to Greatly Impact Our Motivation**

There are many, many motivational skills, but they all ultimately impact one of five vital elements of motivation that must all be present, active, and vibrant in order to be well motivated. The first element is that we must value the opportunity in one or more of three ways – by intrinsically enjoying





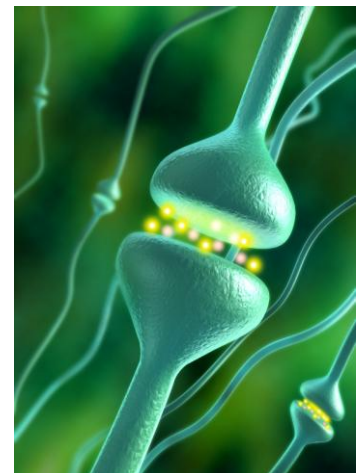
the activity, by being extrinsically attracted to the positive rewarding results, or by striving to avoid the extrinsically punishing outcomes that will result if we fail. The second of five vital elements is that we must believe there is a conceivable way to succeed. Third, we must have confidence we, personally, can perform. Fourth, we must be ready to pay the price in whatever form – whether it be effort, money, or

sacrificing other alternatives. The last element is that we must be able to initiate, have the igniting power to shift from what we were previously doing.

Each of these five vital motivational elements within us is influenced by MANY factors. Dozens of skills help us to impact each of these motivational elements. We have to know which of these is best used at each moment to keep our motivation alive and well and to assure that our motivation is built and ready for all that we want to do in the future. If we are not actively motivated to do something that we want to achieve, it means that we have not done the motivational pre-work in the hours, days, and even years leading up to this challenge. Building great skills in shaping these vital motivational elements is fundamental to your success.

## **The Motivational Neurochemistry of Our Brains**

The truth is, the nature of your motivation for each and every desire you have, for each of your many intentions, and for each, of an unlimited number of possibilities, is unique, has a unique neurological representation in our minds, both related to our memories and its functional activity, and is a relationship, between you, and your pursuit, and this moment in time. Your brain manages these important motivational relationships between you and what you pursue by incrementally changing its neurological connectivity, adapting its neurochemistry, and its vascularity. Of course, you experience these changes as how you feel, how you think, and how you act, but neuroscientists observe these physical and

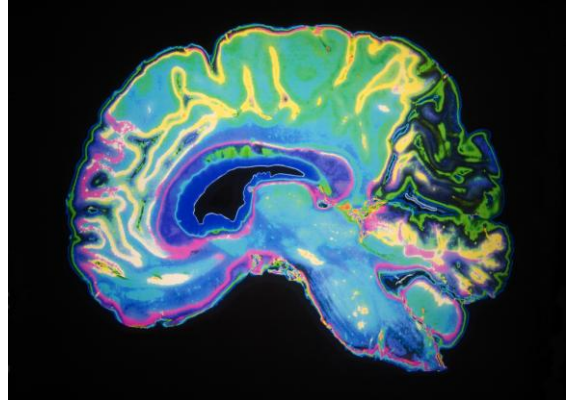


chemical changes every day as their research reveals this complex web of our brain's



motivational processes.

These changes in your brain happen according to natural principles and according to your learning whether you are conscious of it or not and whether you learn to do it well or not. You then live the activity and experiences that your motivations produce. Your motivation causally determines a great deal of your the success or failure, and the enjoyment of your motivational engagements in each area of your life – in your physical fitness, your romance, your work performance, your creative output, your financial health and in all your intentions and aspirations. Extensive research has recently shown that your brain is highly plastic (changing and physically adaptive) and that you can teach it to do extraordinary things, not just in childhood, but throughout adulthood and into the twilight years of life. Your brain’s motivational patterns and approaches can be changed to extraordinary effect.



### **Motivation Helps Us Achieve More, and Learn Faster – More Enjoyably**

Most people operate with relatively low quality motivation much of the time. We are all in a position to mobilize more of our talents and to accelerate the development of our capabilities in all areas of our lives faster with higher quality motivation. Also, because higher quality motivation is so much more enjoyable, improving the quality of your motivation is just as important for the purpose of increasing our happiness as it is enhancing our success.



### **The Brain’s Primary Purpose is to Motivate You to Survive and Thrive**

Your brain’s motivational functioning is learnable as are other fundamentally human capabilities like communicating, thinking, creating, or artfully moving our bodies!

In initiating and propelling us to do all that we do, Motivational Intelligence, greatly determines the activities, enjoyment, and success of our lives. This is a highly developed form of intelligence that attempts to balance our pursuits of everything from our most basic and immediate drives of hunger and physical attraction, to the goals we consciously pursue, to our creative and energetic expressions of who we are, to our highly sophisticated, long term, altruistic aspirations.



### **We Can Greatly Influence the Many Factors That Cause Our Motivation.**

The causes of, and forces that impact, our motivation are many, highly varied, and often influence our motivation for a long time. These factors can be organized into groups like the way we think, how we manage our feelings, our spiritual beliefs, our physical fitness, our relationships, the actions we take, our diet we keep, and the goals we set.

Importantly, the things we have done years ago impact our motivation today, like the values, interests and skills we have developed. We can learn to more effectively influence most all of these motivational factors, whether they are right in the moment, or if they are things we do today to affect our motivations from this point forward. The artfulness with which we rapidly and regularly identify these factors, and skillfully impact them in our favor determines how optimally motivated we are.



### **The Great Motivational Challenge of Life That We All Face**

Most people play many roles in life. We have many aspirations for each role, and our brains generally produce dreams and nominate aspirations far faster than we can achieve them. So we end up with hundreds of intentions and goals, clear or vague, conscious or subconscious. We naturally have intentions, hopes, plans and goals for each day, perhaps each hour, for each role

we play, and each area of our life. To make it even more challenging, for every intention we have, there are dozens of options that are interesting, and there are also a great



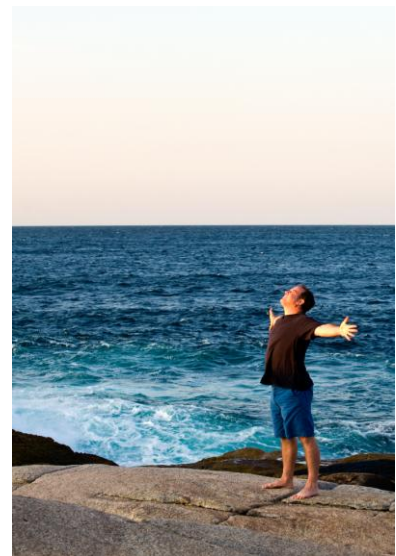
number of distractions that we are really not interested in and temptations that we do not really want. Our motivational intelligence then cultivates and allocates the motivation we can produce in an environment of changing circumstances such as when we fall sick or we lose a customer, or people we love need something from us and of shifting stimulations; for example a birthday cake is pulled out, or an

interesting email shows up at our desk. Our life is constantly changing and what is most important and what is needed is constantly changing. We have to be adaptive – adjusting our motivation to suit the new and changing challenges.

### **How Can We Increase Our Motivational Ability?**

The truth is that anyone can learn to better cultivate quality motivation, just a little bit, in several focused hours. However, to integrate and automate greater skill into our natural brain processes, so that we intuitively motivate ourselves more enthusiastically and more effectively, takes about four to six months if effective development methods are used.

Change is difficult, because our brains readily and comfortably fall back into ingrained patterns. If we want to raise our sales, reduce our weight, improve our grades, or lead our people better we have to invest effort and time in a highly effective approach to development. With motivational skills too, discovering our unique style, building on our unique strengths and developing the self-management capabilities is possible, if we use illuminating assessments, receive consistent and engaging feedback, enjoy significant social support, and are taught with easy and accessible learning modules.



The real challenge is developing a masterful ability to know

what you need and when, and to innovatively and adaptively optimize your motivation in all your pursuits dynamically.



Here below are just a few examples of the types of interventions we must make to deliberately and artfully impact our motivation.

- Calibrating our goals so they are of optimal difficulty
- Building relationships to support us
- Strategically developing skills that increase our confidence
- Cultivating our thoughts to be motivation-serving
- Choosing our methods insightfully
- Encouraging our dreams artfully
- Managing our diet intelligently

Along with many other things, all in a motivationally intelligent way.

Our motivational intelligence can be thought of in four core motivational competencies.

### **We Have Four Core Motivational Competencies?**

There are four primary motivational competencies that help to focus our development. Each of these is important and any improvement in one will contribute to your overall motivational effectiveness and consequently your action, success and happiness.

- Motivational Perception
- Motivational Optimization
- Motivational Understanding
- Motivational Self-Leadership



Big gains however, are only achieved through building upon all of them. Let us look at them one at a time.



## 1. Motivational Perception

The ability to sense the nature of your motivation and all its attributes is vital to making good decisions. Should you commit to doing something for your boss or a friend? Will you be able to follow through? What path should you follow in life? What will be inspiring and intrinsically interesting? Should you buy a new kayak, or is this a whimsical interest with too many 'costs' and barriers to overcome to really get any good use out of? You make decisions everyday that involve an insightful motivational awareness. If you do not do this well, you may start too many things, fail to start some that really matter, have difficulty following through, and let a lot of people down.



Because we live in a constantly changing world, the ability to sense the causal factors influencing our motivation and to recognize those which may change quickly and what the effects will be, is essential to being a successful person that others can rely on, and one who can steadily achieve the things that make us happy. Are you unmotivated simply because you do not know how? Or, is it because you do not have anyone to do it with? Or, is it because of a fear of some sort? Is it a fear you should face and drive through, or is it a fear that is trying to tell you something you should listen to? How do you let fear influence your motivation?



## 2. Motivational Understanding

In order to effectively perceive, and to know what to pay attention to, it helps to have a causal understanding of what is generating and impacting your motivation. This understanding helps us to determine what interventions we can use to change our motivation. We must have a good grasp of what levers can be used to change the motivational elements, which combine synergistically to produce the motivation you need, which then cause action and results.



It can be a complicated causal chain. Our motivation also is impacted differently depending on whether we are in the *Preparation* or the *Follow-through* phase of a given pursuit. *Preparation* to pursue something is very different than *building momentum* and *integrating it into our life*, which is again different from *recovering from a setback*, or *following through* and *completing* something. The motivational demands in each of these phases are different, but the challenges of a given phase across

various pursuits are surprisingly common.

### **3. Motivational Optimization**

This is the most active. The first two are more observational and conceptual, whereas this one is where the rubber meets the road. Do you have the intervention skills to impact motivational causes? This is a highly diverse competency and is actually made up of several subsets of competencies, but the length of this article does not allow for that depth of discussion

### **4. Motivational Self-Leadership**

This is the mastery level integration of all the skills. In academic parlance, this would be the highest level of 'Meta Motivation', the most extended, integrative thinking and management. This is putting it all together. In basketball dribbling, shooting, passing, rebounding, and playing defense are all essential, but beyond executing them well, is the challenge of knowing what to do when and which nuanced version of each is required in a dynamically changing environment. The focus with this one is to balance motivation laterally across all your pursuits, to projects needs and causal effects in the future.



## Motivational Intelligence Mobilizes All Our Other Intelligences and Abilities



We all know people who are very emotionally intelligent and skilled at forming relationships, building trust, and maintaining a good attitude, but just do not seem to be able to mobilize their abilities and put forth a strong and steady effort in each area of their lives. We also know many people who are intellectually gifted, getting high IQ test scores and exhibiting a sharp intellect, but unable to motivate themselves to put those talents to use. College admissions know how critical demonstrated effort and motivation are and that is why they are far less impressed by high test scores than they are of great grades. Grades show that the individual knows how to

take consistent and focused action.

One can use the metaphor of a flat screen TV, where the model has all the greatest technical specs, style, and features, but if the electricity is failing, intermittent or just very weak it's vibrancy will not come to life. Our performance, in relation to others, diminishes rapidly when we lose our motivation at work, in fitness or whatever the endeavor. Research has shown that someone highly motivated performs 200 – 300% better than someone with poor motivation.

### **High Quality Motivation Leads to Accelerated, Compounded Learning.**

What is just as important though is that the more we try, the more rapidly we learn and the more we learn the more productive, and usually the more gratification we get out of this pursuit. This sets a virtuous cycle into motion. However, if we do not try much, we run the risk of not learning at all. In athletics and many other endeavors, not trying can even lead to developing bad habits that will move us backward in expertise.



Learning over time accumulates and compounds. The only way to reach high levels of capability is to be well motivated. There is no slow and unmotivated approach to excellence.

Motivational intelligence is developed through the course of your life, but many people's motivational development plateaus just as do many of our skills if we do not practice them in a way that expands our capabilities.



### **Increasing Motivational Intelligence Makes You a Better Leader, Coach, and Influencer of Others**

As we increase our motivational intelligence we become a more effective leader and influencer, as well, in a number of ways:



- through greater insight into what people need to be motivated
- by allowing people the latitude they need to manage their own motivation
- By creating more motivation conducive environments
- through modeling how a highly motivated person motivates themselves
- by actively supporting them in their motivational management and development.

Motivationally intelligent leadership is not the focus of this paper and is a second level of learning that follows a program of developing one's own motivational abilities, learning how to shape motivationally supportive environments, and learning how to facilitate greater motivational development in others.



## How Do You Best Develop Greater Motivational Intelligence?

Developing motivational skills that become automated into our natural and intuitive way of functioning is a challenge, but done right, great improvement and great rewards can be achieved. Most people do not give it the attention. They do not know how to have fun, learning and growing while they achieve more and more. People's poor, or non-existent, systems of building their motivational ability are why most resolutions fail (at New Year or at any time), why most organizational change initiatives fail, and why many employees are disengaged from their work - performing at about half steam.



Dramatically increasing your motivational intelligence is very possible, but it requires new principles, some unlearning of old beliefs, social support, innovative technologies, dynamic feedback, and a vigorous focus on enjoyment and celebration. There are a number of vital best practices that help to bring these things about. Five best practices that can be especially valuable in developing Motivational Intelligence are:

- Regular Action Learning & Feedback
- Interactive Social Support Systems
- Flexible Methods and Appreciative Inquiry
- Great Fun & Regular Celebration
- Self Acceptance and Systems Thinking
- Adult Learning Methodologies

## What Can I Expect In My Life By Having Greater Motivational Capabilities?

A useful and realistic target of achieving 10-20% gains in a number of action and performance characteristics is reasonable.



When added up, these results are wonderfully experienced, highly distinguishing, and greatly empowering. They also steadily mount and can grow to 50 – 200% improvements. We are specifically looking for these results in:



- Greater Initiative and Timeliness of Action
- Increased Enjoyment
- A Considerable Shift Toward Doing Impactful Priorities
- Greater Intensity and Productivity
- Greater Consistency and Reliability
- Greater Endurance
- Greater Adaptability and Innovativeness

Each of these action characteristics is something we seek to become better at. Invariably, when the right kind of attention is focused and real effort is put forth, improvements can be made that are useful in all areas of life.

Because our motivational capabilities ultimately shape a great deal of our life experience and because with focused effort, they can be developed into masterful abilities to take our lives along the journey that we desire, spending the time to build them is one of the best investments we can ever make.



### **How Long Does It Take to Increase Your Motivational Capabilities?**

One of the great things about developing MIQ is that we are constantly motivating, allocating our energies and using motivational skills, so once we start practicing right, rather than further ingraining bad habits, we begin improving. It is not like painting or golf, where you have to devote special time to getting the clubs or the brushes in your hands. So, you have a continuous learning opportunity and you do not have to devote much extra

time to making gains. Most people begin to improve immediately and increase their motivational ability with as little as a few hours of training and 2 - 8 hours of goal striving. With active participation, gains are steadily built, compounded and integrated into an entirely more powerful and effective way of engaging with life over a period of 3-6 months. Sure it can be done faster, but change is ingrained more permanently at a slower pace spread over time. The 'crash course' approach is not effective without ongoing use.



### **What Makes Motivational IQ Training Especially Valuable to Organizations?**

Increases in motivational intelligence help people to be more productive, but also help people to enjoy their work more and to build a high performing work culture. Increased motivational intelligence in one area of life is quickly generalizable, and helpful in other areas. Motivational intelligence training impacts people's entire lives...

Motivational intelligence yields the greatest productivity gains with people who have unstructured jobs that require a great deal of initiative and self managed motivation.



Motivational intelligence is a long-overlooked and long-neglected source of great opportunity for all. Individuals can be more fulfilled and more successful. Employers can create more vibrant and profitable workplaces. Leaders can build great strength in their teams, and we all benefit broadly as people mobilize more of their talents and make more of a difference!

What would you do if you were more motivated, more confident, more able to overcome your fears, and more able to enjoy challenging pursuits?

**What would you achieve if you were more motivated? What talents would you be able to mobilize? How would your life change? We encourage you to find out!**



### **Motivational IQ – The Company.**

Dr. Blair Relf and Motivational IQ the company, work diligently to provide services that are broadly affordable to all, readily accessible within our busy lives and wildly successful! Our mission is to serve you. We can help you! Please take a close look at some of the dynamic programs we offer! Designed to support and empower you in both your personal and professional life, they are also designed to serve organizations in helping their people live and perform at a higher more fulfilling level.

