

# Business Motivation for Creatives

Working in the creative field usually means that we love the work we do, so finding the motivation to do the nice bits is not usually a problem. Motivating ourselves to tackle the tasks we enjoy less, but which are essential to maintain work continuity and to create more choice, can be a bit harder.

Less enjoyable tasks for some of us include networking, approaching agents, selling our work and managing our finances – the business side of things.

With this in mind, here are some tips to help you stay motivated to do all the tasks needed to be a successful creative freelance.

## Tips to help you stay motivated

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### Set some goals

It's so important to know where you are going so spend some time working on your goals. Take each goal as a starting point, and ask yourself why this goal is important to you. Whatever the answer, ask yourself what is important to you about that! Keep going till you can get no further.

This process of 'chunking your goal up' helps you identify the value behind it, i.e., the real reason you want to achieve it. Sometimes, this process makes you realise that you don't have the right goal. It's better to discover this before you start to avoid wasting time and resources on trying to achieve something that you don't really want. Your aim is to concentrate on goals that are more relevant to your deeper values and will bring you the results that are truly meaningful to you.

Next step is to 'chunk your goal down' by asking: "What steps do I need to take to reach this goal?" Take those steps and work out what steps you need to take to achieve each one of those bigger steps. Keep chunking down like this until you identify actions you can take in the next 48 hours. Then do those actions.

This process is motivating because when you chunk up, it keeps you in touch with why you are doing what you are doing. When you chunk down, you can see a practical way to make some progress towards your goal.



## Measure your progress

To stay motivated, it's important to measure your progress. It's easy to get busy, but are you busy doing the right things?

Make plans and then break those plans into distinct manageable tasks. Mark off tasks as you complete them so you can chart your progress. Sometimes when the work you are doing is all preparation, speculation or part of gathering experience, it is easy to forget how much you have achieved.

Schedule in regular rewards to celebrate your progress. As freelancers, we have to make sure we take time to pat ourselves on the back.

## Don't make unrealistic comparisons

It de-motivating to look at the best in your field, and think: "I'm not as good as them!" You're probably not, but why would you be? If they are the best in the business, they will have years of knowledge and experience that you have yet to accumulate.

It's much more useful and realistic to compare yourself with yourself six months ago. When you do this, you will recognise just how far you have come in that time. Recognising your own progress is incredibly motivating.

## What's your inner voice telling you?

When you talk to yourself in your head, are you your own cheerleader or har-binger of doom?

Many of us have a strong critical voice, which tells us not to 'make fools of ourselves', or to 'watch what we say', or to warn us about what could go wrong. Others have a more benevolent voice, which tells us to 'go for it', or that 'you can do it'.

Figure out what your internal voice is like, and decide if you need to change it. If you're not sure, then imagine spending a day walking behind your best friend and speaking to them exactly as you speak to yourself. Would you still have a friend at the end of the day? If not, you need to find ways to change how you speak to yourself.

No matter how critical it sounds, your inner voice does actually want what's best for you, it may just be using out of date warnings and admonishes to keep you safe. Knowing this, you can stop listening to it as though it is an authority figure in your life.

Practise speaking to yourself in a more supportive way, soften the tone and edit unreasonably negative statements. Use the reaction you would expect to get if you spoke to a friend like that, to judge how reasonable the comments are.

As an emergency measure, just turn the volume down, or make the voice sound like Mickey Mouse!



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**Learn to prioritise effectively**

Prioritising is a balancing act, and there are many techniques to help you do this. It's very easy to get so busy with the detail that you lose sight of the bigger picture.

Here is the important/urgent grid, a tool taken from Steven Covey's 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People'.

Write down each tasks or action on your to do list in the appropriate quadrant of this grid to help you prioritise.

If you discover that you are currently prioritising all the tasks in the non-urgent/unimportant quadrant, then something needs to change!

	Important	Unimportant
Urgent		
Non Urgent		



## Find time management strategies that work for you

Take the time to work out how you spend your time. You can do this by entering absolutely everything you do in your diary for a month. This will give you insight into how productive, efficient and effective you really are. If you have an electronic diary, colour code activities into categories such as ‘core work’ ‘money to eat work’, ‘planning and admin tasks’ and ‘time off’. That way, your main activities will jump off the page when you glance at it.

## Translate tasks into steps that support the bigger picture

Whatever your goals, there are always a multitude of jobs to do that may not feel relevant to where you are going. However, it doesn’t matter what mundane task it is that you’d rather not do, pretty much everything you do is in support of your overall goals. You are not just your career, you are a fully rounded individual with a whole life to look after, not just your work ambition. Everything you do that nurtures the whole you is supporting your ability to achieve your dreams.

For example, you might hate cooking, but eating well and economically will keep you healthy, energetic and solvent. Washing and ironing make you look presentable and in control. Networking is probably how you are going to make that serendipitous connection that will lead to something special. Book keeping is how you can monitor and manage the financial side of your business, and make informed decisions about what you should do more of, and less of. Doing all of these will help you succeed with your goals.

If you can take what you currently see as your more dreary tasks, and translate them into steps towards your bigger goals, you will feel much more motivated to do them.

## Stay Inspired

Check in regularly with the things that inspire you. Whatever experiences took you down this path, wherever you go, or whatever you do to get recharged and re-excited by the work you do. Identify what those things are, and plan to do them as often as possible. Remember to love what you do!



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