

In this two-part series, Fiona Setch looks at how consultants can motivate themselves and others to perform the mundane elements of their jobs

You probably spend a large part of your working day contributing to the motivation of others – be they patients or colleagues. The key word here is contribution.

Doctors have constant demands on their time with a challenging clinical and non-clinical workload. And at times it can be a challenge to keep all the balls in the air at once. But one thing that can really help is feeling motivated about your role.

What motivates you?

Motivation is the driving force that inspires an individual to carry out a particular action. The key word here is inspiration.

I would like to suggest that by clarifying what inspires you in your role, you will be able to work with more focus. Furthermore, you will be more effective in the less inspiring aspects of your role, rather than focusing on the negative aspects.

As a junior doctor you seemed to have a direct impact on patient care. Immediate feedback could be given from patients or other members of the clinical team. But for seniors, it is exactly the same now – it's just that the impact of non-clinical work is not quite as immediate.

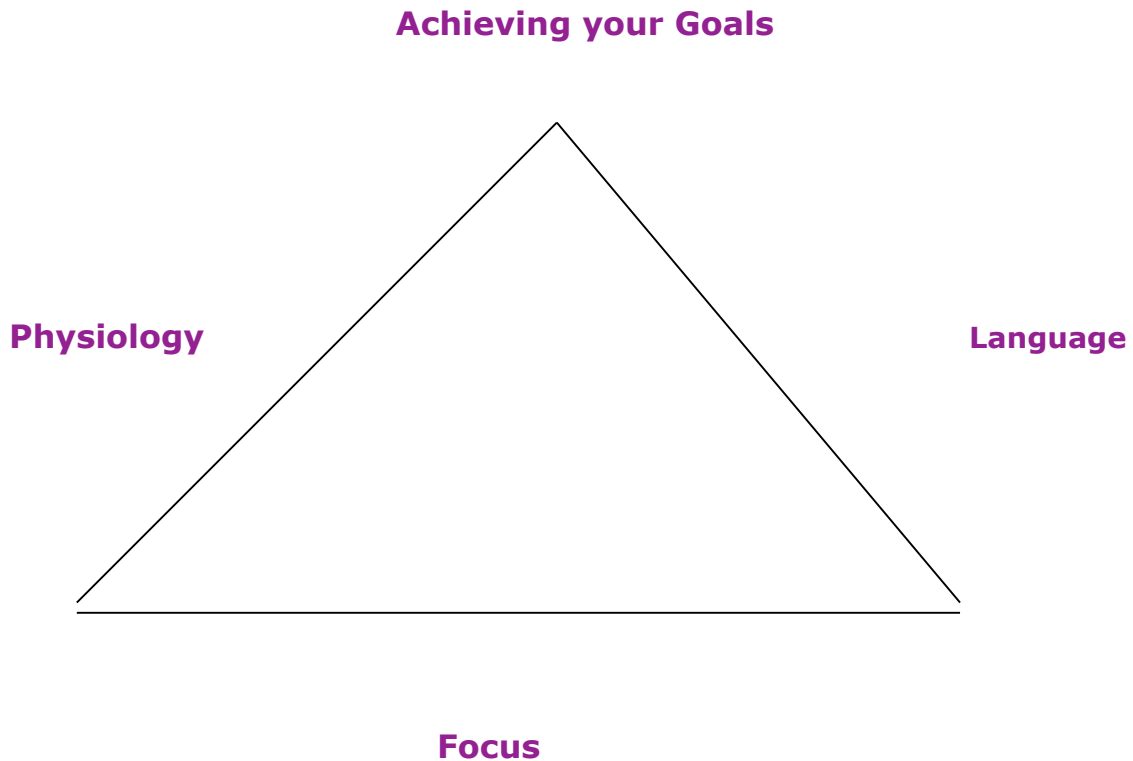
The key factor for motivation is how you view the work you are doing. By reframing your view of this work, you can become considerably more effective.

Before reading any further, you might want to answer these questions as a framework for developing your personal motivation:

- ✓ Which aspects of your role do you really enjoy?
- ✓ Who or what motivates you in life? – include people or events from the past and present as well as any role models.
- ✓ Which aspects of your role do you not enjoy and why?

The next step is to make a model of the inter-relationship between three main aspects of motivation and changing your current state of mind.

Essentially this three-sided approach to tasks is a tool that you can apply to reframe your thinking, so you can control your response to an environment or task.



In order to be able to achieve your goals; all three sides to the triangle need to be congruent and working together.

(Adapted from Michael Heppell, Be Brilliant Training Programme)

Positive Language

The power and impact of positive language should never be underestimated. Our thoughts and actions are stored in our minds using language, so it is essential that we use the most appropriate language for the outcome we want to achieve.

Your brain is like a filing cabinet that stores references each time you use a particular word. This will have a direct impact on your emotional state, including how inspired you feel and how motivated you are.

For example, what do you write in your diary for the time that you have to do paperwork? Probably something like 'administration time'. What does this conjure up in your mind?

How about if you related this task to something that is more likely to motivate you such as 'patient-focused paperwork'. After all, that is exactly what it is and it has a direct impact on patient care.

Be on guard for previous patterns and negative experiences that can affect the language you use.

Physiology

If you are energised and approach your desk with enthusiasm, you are much more likely to achieve progress with clearing your paperwork.

Creating a positive state is something we slip in and out of naturally all the time. Why not do this with complete attitude?

Put on some energising music, make a cup of your favourite beverage and focus on the task. By doing this, you help to create an environment that will inspire and motivate you to spend time at your desk.

Focus

How can you possibly achieve goals if you don't know what they are? Allocating your time and sticking to it will be much easier when you acknowledge that patient-centred paperwork contributes greatly to your patients' care.

Much has been written about motivation and the ways of actually achieving goals, but the most important factor to remember is to focus on what you are aiming for.

Visualise what your desk will look like when it is clear and how happy your secretary will be when you email or hand back the papers that need to be followed up on.

Focus requires the silencing of other thoughts. You may have two or three goals that you are working on – you need to choose one and work out how you are going to achieve it.

What if it feels overwhelming? Chunk it down, look at what is required and avoid procrastination.

Identify what it is that is going to make the difference and just do it.

Positive visualisation is a tremendously powerful tool and is widely used in sports psychology. After all, Johnny Wilkinson had been imagining the kick that won England the Rugby World Cup since he was eight!

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