

STRENGTHENING THE WILL

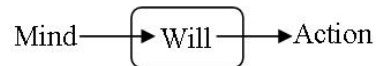
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INTRODUCTION

- A. Terminology: will, choice, motivation, volition, willingness, self-discipline, “wanting to”
- B. Freedom of the will does not mean
 - (a) it is as easy to do one thing as another;
 - (b) there is no drag of past behavior on present resolve.
- C. Note Paul’s Christian experience in Romans 7:12ff.
- D. We tend to suppose that emotions, will, and conscience do what they please. Our temptation is to feel helpless in the face of their inclinations.

I. SOURCES OF MOTIVATION

- A. Mind brings . . .



Mind supplies the set of values we live by.
Will connects mind/values with action.

- 1. Clarity

Good motivation requires the mind to give clear purpose.

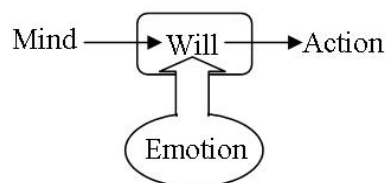
- 2. Certainty

TECHNIQUE #1:
study and think

The mind must have certainty that its course of action is correct (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 4:19-20).

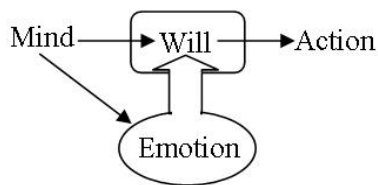
- 3. Duty

- B. Emotion brings . . .



4. Desire

We find the time to do what we want to do.



Emotions and feelings we should not think of as uncontrolled phenomena. We shape them with the mind and give them direction by the values we have adopted with our minds.

Honesty is not tied to feelings, but to mind.

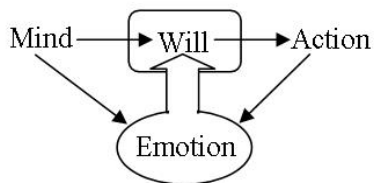
Hypocrisy is not a matter of mind without feelings; it is a matter of saying one thing when we believe another, not doing one thing when we feel another.

5. Guilt

Conscience is the combination of mind/values and feelings.

Guilt is a powerful motivator before an action; it is a destructive experience after an action.

C. Action brings . . .



All we need is enough will to get started.

Often the activity generates the motivation to continue.

TECHNIQUE #2:
get started

If we want to, start to. Getting started at the time when the desire is there helps avoid procrastination. If a new task comes up, do something on it immediately. If it is a small enough job, take care of it at once; it helps us feel on top of things, which further enhances motivation.

We learn to want to by doing what we ought to.

6. Enjoyment

The enjoyment potential in the activity will help us keep at it. Doing good contains its own motivating power to continue.

7. Association

TECHNIQUE #3:
will indirectly

Will to get started perhaps with the paraphernalia of an activity. Doing the activity builds a sense of association with it; to be motivated about something, it must be close to us.

If it is a matter of learning to like teaching Sunday school, for example, we can volunteer as a teacher's helper just to get into the situation and develop a sense of connection with teaching Sunday school classes.

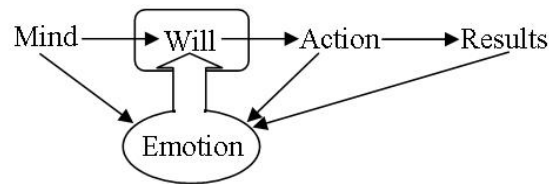
8. Variety

In order to help our motivational level, we may need to overcome the dried-out feeling by doing something fresh and new: hobby, "change of scenery," vacation; work on more than one thing at a time for variety's sake.

9. Physical condition

Lethargy often comes from inadequate diet, exercise, rest. Getting these needs taken care of pays dividends in more energy to do work. Our bodies will not be working so hard against our minds, will, emotions.

D. Results bring . . .



10. Success

Success begets success because it motivates.

The success can be in the experience of other people if not in ourselves.

11. Rewards

Good actions yield "peaceful" fruits (Hebrews **12:11**).

We can even establish self-reward systems: If we complete a project, we allow ourselves some enjoyable experience.

Evil acts usually leave negative results, which is good for us to remember for motivational purposes.

12. Fear

Fear is helpful in those matters

that are not especially enjoyable. The alternatives to acting rightly are not acceptable to us.

TECHNIQUE #4:
Obligate yourself in situations that push you into getting results.

The advice here is the opposite of temptation advice, which is to avoid bad situations so we do not get tempted. Here it is avoidance about the results we fear to have in our life.

E. Other people can contribute:

13. Love

Love is the best motivator where we are motivated by another's love and where we are motivated by our own love for another we can help.

14. Trust

15. Hope

What we use to communicate motivation:

16. Speech

Hebrews **13:22**

Francis Bacon: *"Rhetoric functions to harness reason to imagination for the better moving of the will."*

17. Example

Philippians **1:14**: Note the inspiration of other people's commitment.

TECHNIQUE #5:
fellowship

The Mission of the Twelve and the Mission of the Seventy were two by two. Hebrews **10:24**: Through fellowship we encourage one another to love and good works.

TECHNIQUE #6:
pray

Philippians **2:12-13**: *"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that's working in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure"* (hence, our prayer to help activate his special help to us).

2 Thessalonians **3:5**: *"May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God."*

II. IMPORTANT VARIABLES IN MOTIVATION

A. Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation arises out of matters germane to the activity: motivation to practice a musical instrument because the music you can produce is pleasant to hear.

Extrinsic motivation arises from factors not germane to the activity: stickers that a music teacher may put on our practice piece if we do it well.

B. Experiential vs. goal orientation

Experiential motivation refers to the enjoyment that comes from the variety and stimulation present in actually doing something. Goal motivation is the delayed gratification that increases through the added element of expecting we find in hope, reward, success.

C. Internal vs. external center of control

Christians need a healthy balance between external and internal centers: too much internal creates a sense of works; too much external control creates a sense of fatalism.

Interpersonal existence encourages personal initiative that recognizes the need for encouragement from other people.

D. Impersonal vs. interpersonal motivation

Motivation is most effective when it comes from other people and when we do it to other people.

CONCLUSION

We live by values instead of by drives.

We live by purpose instead of impulse.

We live toward people instead of things.

We live toward other people instead of ourselves.

The will establishes these patterns and is further developed by them.

Emotion is a prominent part of our contribution to our motivation. Love is the most prominent part of other people's contribution to our motivation.

A. The initiation and perpetuation of properly using the will comes largely from external influence of other persons.

B. Accumulated past success helps our present resolve.