

Momentum: What it is and how to get it

An adaptation of Dan Rockwell's summary of John Maxwell's work

Momentum is a bit like a steam locomotive. When it's at a standstill even a small piece of wood will keep it from moving. It takes a lot of steam to get the wheels moving slowly. Once it starts moving it gets into a rhythm. It slowly builds speed over time. Soon it's up to 60 mph or more. By then it'll run right through almost anything.

When a people have no momentum, even the simplest tasks seem impossible. On the other hand, when they do have it on their side, it's like they're running at 60 mph.

5 truths about momentum:

1. Momentum magnifies success.
2. Momentum shrinks problems and obstacles.
3. Momentum energizes.
4. Momentum enhances performance.
5. Momentum makes change easier.

Momentum isn't:

1. Cheering people on.
2. Giving compliments and affirmations.
3. Positive feedback.
4. Pumping people up.

These four things **may** fuel momentum, but they aren't momentum. Momentum can't be faked.

Momentum:

1. Momentum whispers, "You matter."
2. Momentum feels things are getting better.
3. Momentum believes wins are very probable.
4. Momentum is hope, courage, energy, and focus combined.

The difference between excitement and momentum is depth.

Building momentum:

1. Momentum is a series of successful endings not beginnings. *Excitement happens at the beginning. Momentum builds at the end.*
2. Momentum sneaks up on you. One day you look around and say, Wow! We're going places. *Excitement flares up; momentum builds up.*
3. Every win is one step toward momentum. *If you can't define the win, you can't achieve momentum.*
4. Reach big wins through a series of small wins. *Successful leaders build small wins into big initiatives.*
5. Momentum begins with successful endings, but requires next steps. *Momentum cools when you stop moving forward.*

Successful leaders build momentum. Lousy leaders destroy it.

Momentum busters:

1. Devaluing small contributions.
2. Talking problems more than progress.
3. Separating deliverables from people. People, not processes, get things done.
4. Focusing on weakness rather than strength.
5. Controlling rather than releasing. When people ask permission they lose momentum.
6. Momentum builds slowly with hard work. But, lousy leaders let the steam run out quickly. Of all the things you do, make building momentum a priority.