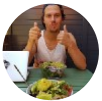


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The Motivation Secret: How to Maintain Intense Motivation as a Hacker (or Anything)



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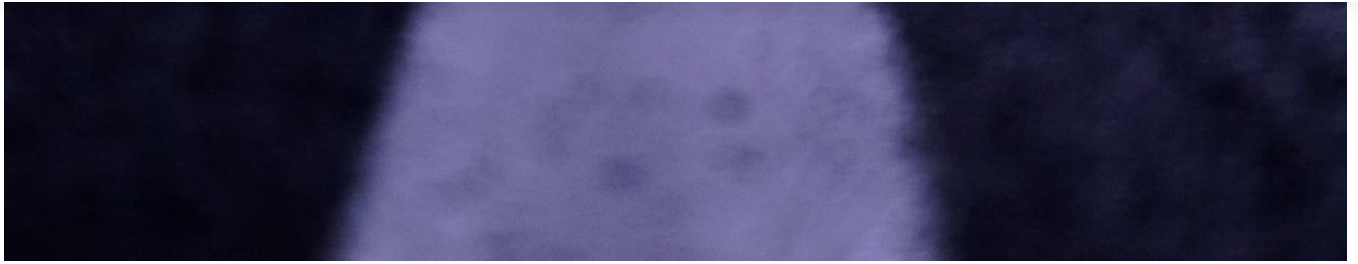


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I'm an ethical computer hacker, and I follow a lot of others in the same profession on Twitter. In many ways it is a demanding job because it requires constant learning. Every day there are new techniques and vulnerabilities to exploit. To be a reasonable ethical hacker, you need to be on top of all of them. This may sound exciting, but it can quickly turn from exciting to exhausting.

I've noticed a lot of tweets lately from people saying that they have *no motivation* to hack or learn anything new. They might have enough motivation to turn on their computer, but the next 5 hours are suddenly swallowed by Netflix. Another day passes without doing that thing you've been talking about.

If this sounds familiar to you, please read on.

Before hacking came into my life, for many years I worked as a trumpet player and teacher. I have a jazz performance degree (it's pretty useless, but difficult to acquire). There were long periods of my life where I practiced trumpet for 8+ hours every day. Playing trumpet requires intense concentration, and it is physically exhausting.

For this reason, musicians have the same struggles with motivation as hackers. I had these struggles myself, and I saw them in my students. Motivation comes in waves. One month you can't put the instrument down, the next month even touching it feels like



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life when I was not motivated to practice, I was studying something because I thought it was what I *should* be spending time on, not what I was naturally drawn to.

Once I realised this, my trumpet practice sessions transformed from perfectly planned-out, timed exercise routines into long streams of improvised music. Suddenly, practicing was no longer work. I was itching to get into my next practice session. It was a form of meditation and catharsis. Instead of draining my energy, it fueled me. Naturally, I could practice for longer periods of time.

Sure, the highly organised practice sessions set out by my lecturer may have technically been a more efficient way to practice, but I could rarely stick with this for more than an hour or two. Practicing what I was drawn to allowed me to stay motivated for many hours. What I lacked in efficiency was made up with the extra time spent. Using this new practice method, my trumpet ability began to improve at a rate that I had never expected, in ways that I could not have predicted. All the while, the joy of playing music had been reignited within me.

Today, I spend much more time hacking than playing music, but I apply the same practice techniques I learned in music to hacking. I practice what I love in that moment. Tonight I had planned to finish a video tutorial I have been watching, but I was drawn to write this blog post instead, so here we are! Instead of struggling through the video tutorial that I was not motivated to watch, I am ploughing through this blog post with ease.

If you're trying to learn a new skill (let's say, coding) by reading a book start to finish, you'll most likely fail. The reason is that you probably won't finish the book. You think you should, because an expert wrote this book and it has a perfectly laid out method for learning to code but you are not naturally motivated to read this book rather you



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motivation. Over time, you will amass a wealth of knowledge in a variety of areas that you are naturally drawn to, and your entire life will shape around the things you love.

Hacking

Bug Bounty

Motivation



340 claps



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