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Motivation Was Never Going to Get You Through This.

*You Needed a Reason Strong
Enough to Pull You Forward*

By

Curtis Brown

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Chapter 21

Motivation Is a Spark. Purpose Is a Lighthouse

There is nothing wrong with motivation.

That is important to understand.

This book has not been an argument against motivation.

Motivation can be beautiful.

It can be exciting.

It can wake something up inside you.

It can create the moment when you finally say:

“Enough.”

Enough of living this way.

Enough of making excuses.

Enough of accepting less than what I know is possible.

Enough of allowing fear to make my decisions.

Enough of waiting.

Motivation can create that moment.

It can give you energy.

It can make the future feel possible.

It can convince you that maybe—just maybe—you really can change.

And sometimes, that is exactly what you need.

A spark.

But a spark is not designed to guide you through an entire journey.

The Problem Was Never the Spark

Think about what happens when you first become motivated.

You watch something.

You read something.
You hear someone's story.
You experience a painful moment.
You reach a breaking point.
And suddenly, something changes.
You feel energized.
Clear.
Determined.
You can see the future.
You make the plan.
You set the goal.
You begin.
And in that moment, everything feels possible.
But then life happens.
The alarm goes off when you didn't sleep well.
The bills still need to be paid.
The children still need your attention.
Work becomes overwhelming.
Something unexpected happens.
You get sick.
You get rejected.
You make a mistake.
The results don't come quickly enough.
And suddenly, the feeling is gone.
That is when many people make a devastating mistake.
They assume the loss of motivation means they should stop.
But the loss of motivation was never proof that the goal stopped mattering.
It was simply proof that **motivation is temporary.**

A Spark Can Start a Fire

But it Cannot Tell You Where to Go

Motivation can ignite movement.

But movement without direction can become exhaustion.

You can work incredibly hard and still feel lost.

You can stay busy and still not be building anything meaningful.

You can achieve goals and still wonder:

“Why doesn't this feel the way I thought it would?”

That is because effort alone is not enough.

You need direction.

You need something that can answer the question:

“Why am I doing this?”

That is where purpose enters the story.

Purpose Is Different

Purpose does not always feel exciting.

In fact, purpose often feels quieter than motivation.

Motivation says:

“Let's go!”

Purpose says:

“Remember why.”

Motivation says:

“You can do anything!”

Purpose says:

“This is why this matters.”

Motivation says:

“Today is the day!”

Purpose says:

“Even on the difficult days, this still matters.”

Motivation creates energy.

Purpose creates direction.

And when the energy disappears, direction can still remain.

The Lighthouse Doesn't Move

Imagine standing on a boat in the middle of a dark ocean.

The water is rough.

The wind is strong.

You can't clearly see the shore.

And every direction looks the same.

In that moment, motivation would be like a sudden burst of energy.

You feel determined.

You grab the oars.

You begin rowing.

But where are you going?

How do you know which direction will take you safely home?

This is why you need a lighthouse.

A lighthouse doesn't row the boat for you.

It doesn't calm the storm.

It doesn't guarantee the journey will be easy.

It doesn't prevent you from becoming tired.

But it gives you something incredibly valuable.

A point of reference.

When everything around you is dark, you can still see where you're trying to go.

That is what purpose does.

Purpose Gives the Difficult Days Context

The difficult day still feels difficult.

The rejection still hurts.

The work is still exhausting.

The setback still matters.

Purpose doesn't magically remove pain.

But it changes the meaning of continuing.

Without purpose, difficulty can feel pointless.

You ask:

“Why am I doing this to myself?”

With purpose, you may still ask that question.

But eventually, you remember.

“Because this matters.”

And sometimes that is enough to keep going.

Sarah Lost Her Motivation

Sarah had started her business with incredible energy.

She had notebooks full of ideas.

She watched videos.

She took courses.

She stayed up late planning.

For the first few months, she couldn't stop talking about it.

This was going to change everything.

And then reality arrived.

The first launch didn't work.

People didn't immediately buy.

The bills continued.

She had unexpected expenses.

Someone criticized her work.

She began comparing herself to people who seemed further ahead.

And slowly, the excitement disappeared.

One night, she sat in front of her computer and thought:

“Maybe I'm just not motivated enough.”

But that wasn't true.

The problem wasn't a lack of motivation.

Sarah had simply reached the point where motivation could no longer carry the weight of the journey.

She Had to Remember Why She Started

At first, Sarah thought her reason was money.

And money was part of it.

She wanted freedom.

She wanted security.

She wanted to stop worrying about every unexpected expense.

But when she looked deeper, she discovered something more important.

She wanted control over her life.

She wanted to create something of her own.

She wanted to prove to herself that her future didn't have to be limited by her past.

She wanted to spend more time with the people she loved.

She wanted to build something that could help other people.

Money mattered.

But it wasn't the deepest reason.

And when the excitement disappeared, those deeper reasons remained.

Your Purpose Has to Reach Deeper Than Your Mood

Your mood will change.

Some mornings you will feel confident.

Other mornings you will question everything.

Some days you will believe in yourself.

Other days you will wonder why you ever started.

If your commitment depends entirely on how you feel, your future will constantly be at the mercy of your emotions.

Purpose gives you something deeper than your current mood.

You may not feel like exercising.

But you remember why your health matters.

You may not feel like writing.

But you remember the message you want to share.

You may not feel like building the business.

But you remember the freedom you are trying to create.

You may not feel like having the difficult conversation.

But you remember the kind of relationship you want to build.

Purpose doesn't always change how you feel.

It changes what you're willing to do despite how you feel.

Purpose Is Not Always a Grand Calling

This is important.

When people hear the word *purpose*, they sometimes imagine one enormous mission.

They believe they need to discover the single reason they were placed on earth.

And if they haven't found it, they assume they are lost.

But purpose can be much more practical.

Your purpose may exist in how you raise your children.

How you serve your community.

What you create.

What you teach.

What you build.

How you treat people.

What problems you help solve.

What cycles you decide to break.

Purpose doesn't have to make you famous.

It simply has to give your life direction and meaning.

Purpose Can Change

What mattered to you at twenty may not matter to you at forty.

What mattered to you before loss may change after loss.

What mattered during survival may change once you become stable.

You are allowed to grow.

You are allowed to discover new things.

You are allowed to let one purpose lead you into another.

The goal isn't to discover one permanent answer and never change.

The goal is to remain honest about what matters now.

Your Purpose May Begin With a Question

Sometimes you don't discover purpose by finding an answer.

Sometimes you discover it by paying attention to a question that won't leave you alone.

Why does this matter so much to me?

Why does this problem bother me?

Why do I keep thinking about this?

Why do people keep coming to me for help with this?

Why do I feel alive when I'm doing this?

What do I wish someone had told me?

What do I wish existed that doesn't?

What would I create if I believed it could matter?

Those questions can become clues.

Pay Attention to What Pulls You Back

There are things you may walk away from repeatedly.

And somehow, you keep returning.

Maybe it's writing.

Maybe it's helping people.

Maybe it's creating.

Maybe it's teaching.

Maybe it's building a business.

Maybe it's music.

Maybe it's advocacy.

Maybe it's working with children.

Maybe it's solving a particular problem.

You try something else.

Life gets busy.

You convince yourself it's not practical.

And then, somehow, the thought returns.

That doesn't automatically mean you've discovered your life's purpose.

But it may mean something is worth paying attention to.

The Difference Between Being Pushed and Being Pulled

Fear can push you.

Pain can push you.

Desperation can push you.

You can move because you are trying to escape something.

But eventually, being pushed becomes exhausting.

Purpose begins pulling you.

You begin moving not only because you want to leave the past behind.

You begin moving because something ahead matters.

That's a different kind of energy.

The Lighthouse Is Ahead of You

This is why the lighthouse metaphor matters.

The lighthouse represents something beyond where you currently are.

You may not be able to see the entire journey.

You may not know how long it will take.

You may not know what storms are ahead.

But you have direction.

And direction can keep you moving when certainty cannot.

You don't have to see the entire shore.

Sometimes you only need to see the light.

Motivation Makes You Ask, "Can I?"

Purpose Makes You Ask, "How?"

This is one of the most important transitions in transformation.

When you are motivated, you often ask:

“Can I really do this?”

You question your abilities.

You question the odds.

You question whether you are ready.

But when something becomes deeply meaningful, the question begins to change.

You start asking:

“How can I do this?”

The goal stops being a fantasy you admire from a distance.

It becomes a problem you are willing to solve.

That is a powerful shift.

Purpose Makes You More Resourceful

When something truly matters, you begin looking differently at obstacles.

Instead of:

“I don't have enough time.”

You ask:

“Where can I create time?”

Instead of:

“I don't know how.”

You ask:

“Where can I learn?”

Instead of:

“I don't have the money.”

You ask:

“What would make this financially possible?”

Instead of:

“Nobody will help me.”

You ask:

“Who do I need to meet?”

Purpose does not guarantee solutions.

But it encourages you to keep looking for them.

A Lighthouse Does Not Guarantee Calm Water

This matters.

Purpose is not a promise that the journey becomes easy.

You can know exactly why something matters and still struggle.

You can have a powerful purpose and still experience rejection.

You can be deeply committed and still fail.

You can have direction and still become exhausted.

The lighthouse doesn't remove the storm.

It helps you navigate through it.

That may be the most honest definition of purpose.

When You Lose Sight of the Light

There may be seasons when even your purpose feels distant.

Life can become overwhelming.

Grief can change your perspective.

Exhaustion can cloud your thinking.

You may wonder:

“Does this even matter anymore?”

Don't panic.

You may not have lost your purpose.

You may simply need to stop long enough to see it again.

Rest.

Reflect.

Remember.

Talk to someone you trust.

Return to the beginning.

Ask yourself:

“Why did this matter to me before everything became difficult?”

Sometimes you don't need a new purpose.

You need to reconnect with the one you already had.

Purpose Has to Be Strong Enough for the Bad Days

Anyone can pursue something when everything is working.

The real question is:

What will remain when things aren't?

When you aren't being recognized.

When the money is slow.

When nobody understands.

When the results don't come.

When you fail publicly.

When you have to start again.

When motivation disappears.

That is when purpose becomes most valuable.

Not because it makes the difficulty disappear.

But because it gives you a reason not to let difficulty make the final decision.

Sarah's Lighthouse

Sarah eventually stopped asking herself whether she felt motivated.

Instead, she began asking herself a different question:

“What would someone who remembers why this matters do today?”

Sometimes the answer was:

Work.

Sometimes it was:

Learn.

Sometimes it was:

Make the difficult call.

Sometimes it was:

Rest.

Purpose didn't demand that she destroy herself.

It gave her a reason to make intentional decisions.

That changed everything.

Your Lighthouse May Not Be Visible to Everyone Else

Other people may not understand your purpose.

They may not see what you see.

They may question your decisions.

They may believe you should choose something safer.

Something easier.

Something more familiar.

And sometimes their concerns may be useful.

Listen to wisdom.

Consider reality.

But don't surrender your direction simply because someone else cannot see your lighthouse from where they are standing.

They are not in your boat.

They cannot see the journey from your position.

Only you can decide what light you are willing to follow.

Purpose Is Not Just About Achievement

Eventually, you may reach the goal you once believed would change everything.

And then what?

If your entire identity depends on reaching one destination, you may find yourself lost after arriving.

Purpose is bigger than achievement.

It can continue expressing itself through different seasons.

You may achieve one dream and discover another.

You may change careers.

Your family may change.

Your circumstances may change.

But the deeper values behind your purpose can continue guiding you.

The Lighthouse Represents Your Values

Perhaps your purpose isn't always a specific destination.

Perhaps it is also connected to the values you refuse to abandon along the way.

Integrity.

Freedom.

Compassion.

Creativity.

Family.

Growth.

Service.

Courage.

Truth.

Contribution.

Your circumstances can change.

Your goals can change.

But your values can continue pointing you in the right direction.

You Don't Have to Feel Inspired to Follow the Light

This brings us back to where the book began.

You don't have to feel motivated every day.

You don't have to wake up inspired.

You don't have to believe in yourself every moment.

You don't have to feel confident before taking action.

Sometimes you simply need to remember the direction.

Sometimes you need to do the next thing.

Sometimes you need to return after falling.

Sometimes you need to rest and begin again.

The spark may disappear.

But the lighthouse remains.

What Is Your Lighthouse?

Take a moment and ask yourself:

What matters to me deeply enough that I am willing to continue when it becomes difficult?

What future keeps calling me?

What problem do I care about?

What kind of life am I trying to create?

Who am I becoming this for?

What do I want my life to stand for?

What would make the difficult parts of this journey meaningful?

You don't need a perfect answer.

You need an honest one.

The Lesson

Motivation is not the enemy.

It is simply not enough.

It can start the journey.

It can create the first movement.

It can light the match.

But eventually, the excitement fades.

The work becomes difficult.

The path becomes uncertain.

The storms arrive.

And when that happens, you need something more than a temporary feeling.

You need direction.

You need meaning.

You need something that reminds you why you began.

Motivation is a spark.

It can ignite the fire.

But **purpose is a lighthouse.**

It stands in the distance when you are tired.

It remains when the weather changes.

It gives you direction when the path is unclear.

It reminds you that there is something beyond the darkness.

And perhaps that is what you were searching for all along.

Not endless motivation.

Not constant inspiration.

Not a life without setbacks.

But something strong enough to help you continue when those things disappear.

A reason.

A direction.

A light.

Because eventually, every person who wants to build something meaningful will face the same moment.

The excitement will fade.

The road will become difficult.

The future will feel uncertain.

And motivation will whisper:

“Maybe you should stop.”

But purpose will stand quietly in the distance and say:

“Keep going.

You still know where you're headed.”

Curtis Brown – Author, Strategist, Creator

Curtis Brown is a versatile writer and strategist who has worked with everyone from Fortune 500 giants to small, family-run businesses. With a background in creating, marketing, research, and content creation, Curtis is passionate about helping individuals and entrepreneurs create lasting change from the inside out.

As Founder of [Mandie's Safe Haven](#), Curtis partners with his wife, Mandie Brown, to provide resources and tools for emotional healing, personal transformation, and sustainable business growth.

Curtis writes across genres—including business, self-help, fantasy, and personal development—with a focus on mindset, mastery, and purpose-driven action. His mission is to simplify powerful ideas and deliver them in a practical, inspiring way for readers who are ready to elevate their lives.

“Knowledge is not power... unless manifested.”

~ Curtis Brown

Curtis Brown — Published Works:

Business, Income & Entrepreneurship

- ***(Building income, offers, and scalable systems)***
-  ***The Premium Shift***
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