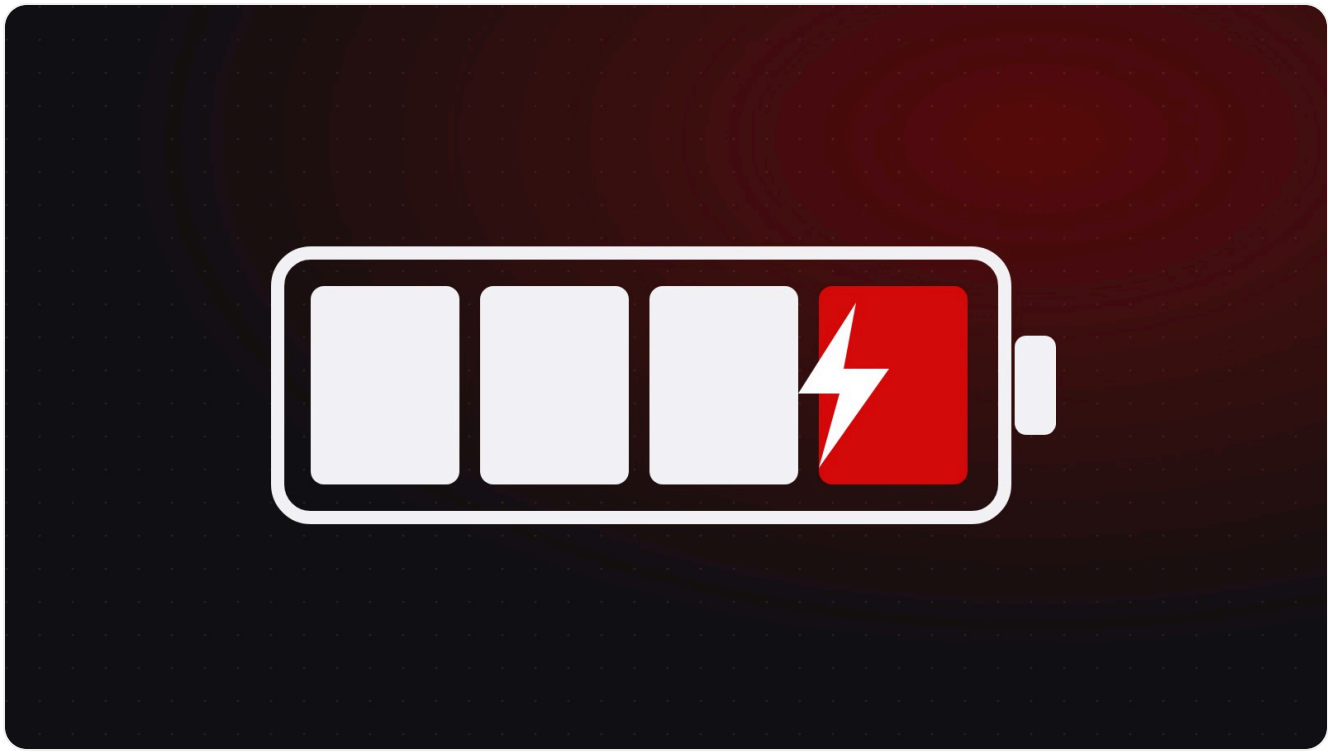
Issue 009 • ON MOTIVATION • AUGUST 14, 2026 • 7 MIN READ

How Do I Motivate Myself?

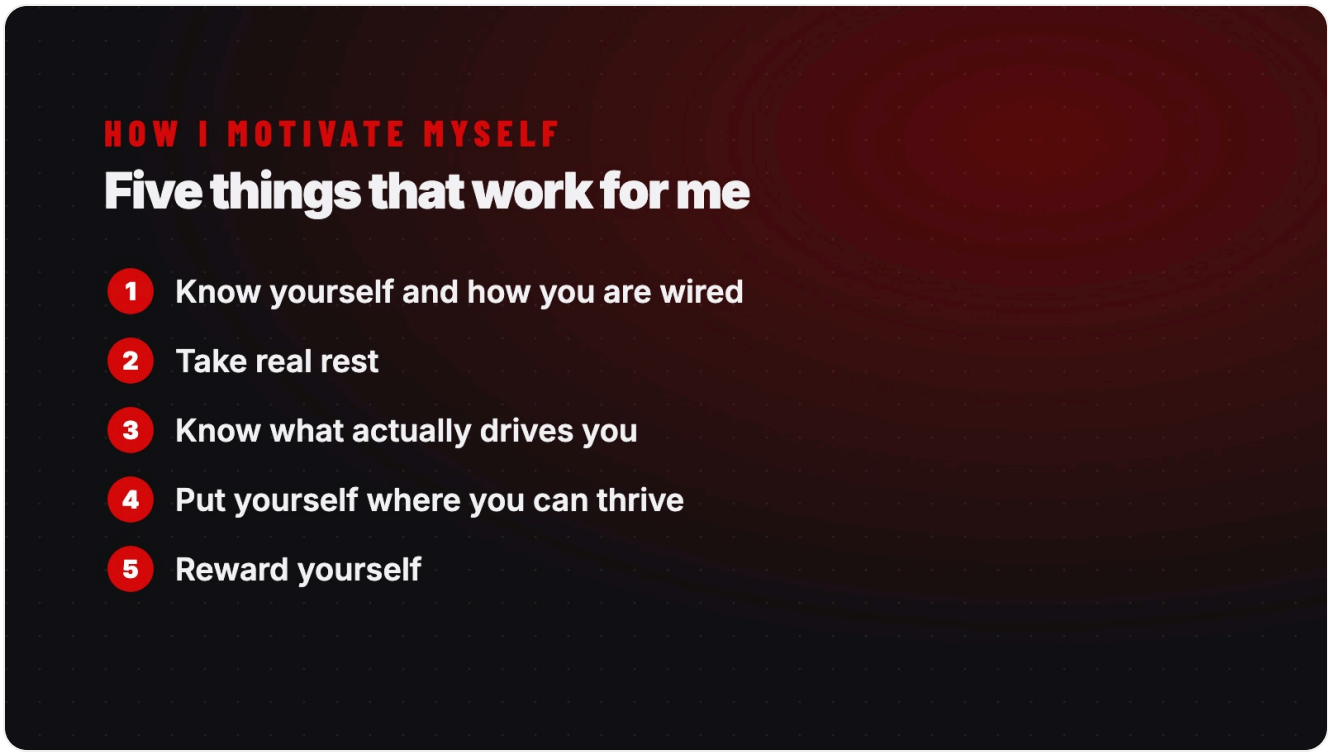


By Tommy Lee



Each of us is different. We are motivated and wired differently as individuals. But every day we get up and we have to get the job done. We have to find some way to motivate ourselves. No one can do it for us, but we must find ways to motivate ourselves to do our “work” (work being defined as anything you are doing from your occupation, your volunteer time, your role as a parent, spouse, or friend).

Here are some of my thoughts on how I motivate myself each day. Note: what works for me may or may not work for you. But this is how my personality is wired.



Know yourself and how you are wired

It starts with self awareness. You cannot motivate a person if you don't understand who you are. And that means being honest with yourself on your strengths, weaknesses, how you are wired, and what you like or dislike.

For instance, I am an introvert. That surprises people because my job calls me to network and connect with people a lot. It's just not something I enjoy doing. If I have too many meetings on Zoom or breakfast or lunch meetings, I get tired and unmotivated. Breakfast meetings are ok, but lunch meetings are the absolute worst for me because I feel it takes away three or four hours of my day from doing work (driving to and from lunch adds up). And then coffee with someone after 3:00 PM, I just can't do it. All of these meetings tire me out and I long to disappear from it all. But knowing this about myself changes everything about how I approach my week or my meetings when I travel. I do not fight who I am, but I do need to adjust and plan around it.

When I am home working, I load certain days with meetings, back to back, all day. I can do that. But I can't do the same thing every day. So on certain other days I try to have little to no meetings at all so that I can work and get things done. I love getting things done. If I do not build those quiet days in on purpose, I find myself getting frustrated and irritable, and I start going through the motions.

When I travel, I don't mind loading up on meetings for the days I am there. But in the evening I am done. I need to go back to my hotel and just catch up on work with a show in the background. I don't do too much sightseeing or need to hang out with people because I've been with people all day. I am totally fine being in my hotel working and have something on my iPad in the background. But that's how I am wired. You may be wired differently.

Know your limits and develop a schedule that keeps you sustainable for the long run. Know how you are wired and be ok with how God has designed you.

Take real rest

I nap. Every day, 15 to 20 minutes. It refreshes me, and I have been doing this for over 20 years.

By about 2:30 PM each day, I start getting tired. I used to try and fight it, but then started thinking, "Why should I fight it?" If I just close my eyes and put my head down on my desk or in a private area for 15 to 20 minutes, I come back out more refreshed and reset my internal clock. If I don't, I find myself dragging for the next hour or so.

Note: DO NOT lie down. That's a disaster waiting to happen. And try not to sleep for more than 15 to 20 minutes, with 30 minutes the max. If it's any more than that, you wake up even more tired than you are and feel like you hit a brick wall.

Further reading: The benefits of napping, from Harvard Health ↗

Know what actually drives you

You have to know what drives you each day, because if you are chasing the wrong thing, no amount of discipline will keep you going. And note this may take time to figure out and does come with some years of experience.

I am not driven by money or power. I really am not. It just doesn't motivate me. What drives me is helping people, and that moment when the light bulb goes off. I love it when something clicks that changes how they see their whole life and calling. That is why giving power away is something I have always believed in, coming alongside men and women from around the world.

Put yourself where you can thrive

I don’t place myself in situations where I have to work with leaders who are slow and bureaucratic. I don’t like leaders who make it all about themselves or want to build their own platform and brand. I don’t like leaders who have a used car salesman personality. I just don’t care for those people even if they are Christians (I believe in the notion you must love people but you may not like all people). You can spot those guys a mile away. They may act Christian and humble brag but eventually their true colors come out. So I pick very carefully who I work with and who I work or serve under.

I know that about myself. Those environments drain the life out of me, and I am just not effective when I am in that situation. I also don’t do well with micromanaging. Give me a job or a task and problem, and I will work with the team, but you must give me freedom to design and create. I can easily make something work out of nothing, but if you are micromanaging me and wanting to meet and needing constant updates, that’s not going to work. And if your meetings are over two to three hours long, that is not going to work either. It’s not that I am more special but with so much to do I prioritize efficiency and ownership.

Reward yourself

YES! I am all about rewards. If I do a task or finish up with a set of tasks I reward myself. This may come in the form of watching sports (NBA, NHL, WNBA, MLB, NFL) or binge watching a show (FBI, NCIS, Criminal Minds, Star Trek TNG, etc). But I don’t reward myself until I get things done. And honestly with two young girls at home they motivate me and I try to do my work as fast as I can to make sure I am engaging in their lives. I cook for our family most of the time. So I am motivated to serve them. But that means it comes with less ME TIME which I am totally fine with.

Every day we have to wake up and get things done. Know yourself and figure out what works for you. Find a rhythm that fits in with your personality and work style. We are called to make an impact for the Kingdom. But how we do it is going to be different for each person.

Tommy

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