

Accountability or Self-Love? The Hidden Shame of Motivation and Accountability

I have done so many episodes on parts of this, but today I wanna speak about accountability and motivation. And honestly, I wanna talk about how we use this against ourselves. It typically looks like this. An example would be you want to, say, start going to the gym at six AM before work, and this is a habit you haven't established yet.

It's not something you do. And so you set an alarm, and the next morning at six AM, your alarm goes off, but you can't get up, and so you hit snooze a lot of times. And then you get up, and you have not gone to the gym and think, "Oh, I will do it tomorrow." But then tomorrow comes, and the same thing happens tomorrow, and you think, "I just need to be better."

So you might try some accountability, and you might even hire a trainer, but you still can't get there on your own. And so then what happens is you try and beat yourself up, and you try to harass yourself into it. You shame yourself, and you feel worse. So then you get yourself to do it maybe for a few days, and then something happens in your life, something circumstantial, something unavoidable.

You get sick, you get called into work early, you genuinely didn't sleep the night before, and you can't do it. And so then you miss a day, and then you quit. And then what happens is you tell yourself you're not the kind of person that can do this. And so you simply decide, "I don't have what it takes to be able to do this. There's something wrong with me. I need to be maybe more motivated. I need to find a better program. I need to do this with a different person." Does this sound familiar to you?

The reason why it's so familiar is because all of us go through this dynamic. All of us go through this. And when we hear this story, whether we're hearing it about ourselves or we're hearing it about another person, there's sort of three things that we believe. Number one, what we might believe is that this person is not motivated enough. Another thing that you might believe is that this person is not disciplined enough. You might even believe that this person is simply not a morning person and that they need to find a different time to work out. Or you might believe that this person simply needs more accountability or more motivation.

But actually, what I see is a completely different solution. I see that there is something deeper going on here that we actually need to address, and ultimately, it's the whole system that surrounds trying to get ourselves to break a habit, right?

So if you wanna break a habit, if you wanna start showing up differently in your life, if you want to start getting up at 6:00 AM to go to the gym, or if you want to start speaking up in social

scenarios, or if you want to stop scrolling your phone and actually be actively participating in your life, if you want to be going for the career that you've always wanted or get back out into the dating pool, what you need to know is that accountability and motivation are only going to take you so far.

And the reason why is because we haven't dug deep enough to understand why we even wanna do this, and what the specific reasons are that are holding you back. Very frequently, I get on coaching calls with people, I get on discovery calls with people, and they share with me what is going wrong, and it is very high level. "I'm not a very motivated person. I can't seem to get myself to speak up. I can't seem to make myself do the things that I say I wanna do. I am struggling being willing to be vulnerable in my relationship." These are very big statements, and the problem with big, all-encompassing statements when we talk about ourselves is they become very difficult to change, very difficult to move.

And I have really found, through my years of coaching, that the best thing we can do is get very specific. We need to know information that we currently don't have here about you. So in this realm of, in the example of, you know, the getting up early to work out scenario, right? I wanna know things like, number one, why do you wanna work out?

What is the current motivation? Like, "I'm not motivated enough" sounds like it's a character question. Motivation isn't about character. Motivation is, what are my reasons for doing what I'm doing? A lot of times what I hear when somebody is entering into some of these things is there's a lot of self-hatred fueling it. "I'm disgusting. I'm too fat. I look gross. I need more muscle." It could even be something along the lines of, "I know movement is good for my brain, but I'm beating myself up because I say I feel like crap, but then I can't get up and I can't get to the gym, and then I still feel like crap." And the motivation is, "I need to do this to stop being a piece of shit." Some form of that.

And when that is the fuel that we use, what ends up happening is we end up being stuck in this scenario where we can force ourselves to do it for a little while, but we can't force ourselves to do it long term because there is a breaking point where the motivation is "I'm such a piece of shit," and so that actually breaks down our ability to be able to show up.

Because one thing that I know for sure is that love is a much more powerful motivator than hate, than dislike, than resentment, than anger, than frustration. Love is a much more powerful motivator. It's not that I think that motivation is actually a problem. I do think that we need to be motivated, but I think that the motivation that we're using is shame. The motivation that we're using is disenchantment. It's disappointment. That's the motivation we're using, and we can't use that motivation long term. It's not a long-term solution to what you're trying to accomplish.

So when I look at somebody wanting to move their body, get up at six AM, I am the perfect example of this. I get up very early to go to the gym. Sometimes I get up before five AM to go to the gym. Is that because I consider myself to be a morning person? Absolutely not. There's nothing about me that screams morning person. In fact, if you talk to me in the morning when I've been awoken, it's probably gonna be unpleasant for both of us, and my family really knows this about me. I don't get up because I have to. I get up because I want to, and the motivation behind it is much more robust than probably what you might imagine.

So number one, why do I get up early in the morning to work out? Because of how it makes me feel. I like how I feel when I work out in the morning. It is also easier for me to fit a workout in in the morning than it is in the afternoon. It's actually true that I will feel more like working out in the morning than I will at, say, five PM. This is just the truth for me, and that is one piece of the puzzle. Other pieces of the puzzle are I enjoy how I feel both during and after. I have had to build into that.

At the beginning, when we're starting something new, it doesn't feel wonderful. In fact, I have a brand-new coaching client that is working with me, and she had said to me after our first session that it felt really hard after that first session, and I was like, "Yeah, that is the truth." At the beginning, it feels like that. When we start anything new, at the beginning, it doesn't feel amazing. It doesn't mean that anything has gone wrong. It's just that we're moving out of what's familiar.

So the motivation is I know that I'm going to like how I feel after. I do it for the health of my body. I do it for the health of my mind. I do it because it's a net positive in my life. I do it because it's something that I agree with the philosophy of, that when I'm consistently doing this, I'm creating a body and a mind that I enjoy having. These are things that we really just want to tap into, we wanna look at, we wanna understand.

When we're able to do that, we're starting to be able to build up our enjoyment in doing what we're doing. So if you look at this workout example, let's say the first morning you go to do it, and this is the fuel, "I'm excited to try this. I want to do this. This is something that I'm doing for my benefit." This is the self-talk that you need to be giving yourself the night before, not, "Oh, shoot, I hope I wake up. I hope I'm the kind of person that can do this." But instead, "I am doing this for my benefit. This is a decision that I've made for me."

The other part of this is we need to be telling ourselves the truth, and the truth is it's going to be hard. Not that it's gonna be impossible, but that we want to remove as many barriers as we can. So whenever I'm coaching someone about getting themselves to do movement, I'm like, "Hey, there's like several things that you really wanna think about." Number one, understand that making decisions in the morning is gonna be very difficult for your brain. You will not have grown any emotional capacity. So have your gym clothes ready to go. Have them folded,

sitting there ready to put on your body. Have your water ready to go. Have your breakfast ready to go. Have your headphones in your bag. Have everything ready to go.

Have everything set out and ready. Don't have this experience of, "Oh, I'm gonna wake up and I'm gonna do X, Y, Z." You're not gonna be able to do that. We wanna remove all the barriers. Removing all the barriers gives you the opportunity to simply get out of bed. So when I'm getting up in the morning, I just let myself know all I have to do is get out of bed.

For many years, I would get out of bed and pour myself a cup of coffee and give myself 20 minutes to just do Wordle, because it was mildly pleasurable, and it would allow me to get on my feet and moving and out the door. Once I get to the gym, I have everything set up. I have my lock. I have everything that I need. I put my stuff away. I put my headphones on over my ears. I have a playlist set up and ready to go. I hit play. I have a workout that has been planned that I am doing, that I am ticking off. This is what allows me to get through that workout.

It's an hour long because it's been programmed by my trainer to be an hour long. I do the hour-long workout. I feel so good afterwards. It's complete. I've done what I've set out to do. I've done what I said I was gonna do. Now, that is how you start building, starting. In order to build a habit, you have to start. You have to begin. In order to be able to begin, the motivation needs to be coming from a place of, "I'm doing this because I want to," not because I have to.

Not because I have to lose the weight because I'm disgusting, not because I have to get to the gym so I'm not such a lazy person. Whatever it is for you, it's none of that. "I have to prove to the world that I'm a morning person." You don't. But what you plan will not happen, number one. So if the plan is, "I hope I get up," that's not a plan. The motivation has to be loving and kind. I am doing this for my benefit. I am doing this for me. I'm doing this, and I'm allowing it to be imperfect at the beginning. We need to start tapping into those things. It's allowed to be imperfect. I don't have to show up in any particular way. I can just show up and begin. This is, to me, the motivation and accountability that we want to be using.

When we're talking about accountability, it's not holding your face closer to the fire so that you can stop being so XYZ. It's I'm doing this for my benefit, and I'm willing to work with myself to figure out what is gonna work best for me. For some of my workouts, I used to wear shock headphones, you know the ones that like vibrate on your ears? Hated them. Nope. When I'm in the gym, I actually want a barrier between me and everybody else. So I used to wear a hat, but it kinda gives me a headache, so I don't do that anymore. But I do wear my over-the-ear headphones because it allows me to separate from everybody else there, and I can just get through the workout.

You may be different. You are gonna have to experiment with what works for you. But the reality is, we have to work with who and how you operate, and you are also gonna have to move through discomfort to get there. And we need to tell ourselves the truth, that I have a brain that wants to stay in the familiar, and that is okay, and that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. Everybody's brain is like this. But to be able to move forward, we must start tapping into I am the kind of person that can change how I think. I am the kind of person that can change how I act. I can get through the discomfort of the initial not wanting to do something and still move forward with something that I know is for my benefit.

We need to change the self-talk. We need to change the way we approach ourselves. It needs to come from a loving place. The example that I frequently give to people that I think could really help you is think about when you have a toddler. Okay? If a toddler really doesn't wanna do something, what are you going to do? Let's say the point in question is they need to get in their car seat and you need to do up the straps, right? Toddler doesn't wanna do that. You have a few options, yes?

Option number one is you could just not let them get in the car seat, but you're definitely not gonna get to where you're going. So this probably isn't gonna work, and long term, if you keep doing it that way, this is gonna get worse, right? Second way that we can do it is we can take the screaming toddler and shove them in the seat and physically manhandle them in there and clip them in and drive away. It's also not gonna make it easier to do that next time.

The third option is to hold firm in the boundaries that you do have. There's two options here, and the options are, we stand here and we have this conversation, it's really uncomfortable for both of us, and I hold the boundary as being this is what's happening and there's repercussions that are coming, or you get in the car seat and I do up the straps. And you can be crying, and that's okay, but we're still gonna move forward with it this way. I'm gonna be kind, I'm gonna be gentle, but at the end of the day, you are getting in the car seat and the straps are going on.

Now, if you look at that, right, it comes from a very regulated place. So being able to be regulated with ourselves is what is genuinely required for us to be able to create change in our life. And too often what we're doing as sensitive humans is we're being dysregulated, and we've been taught that that's the way we should do it.

You've probably grown up in an environment in some way, either in your household, which is certainly how I grew up, which is there was a lot of authoritarian-type discipline, and so lots of dysregulation forcing you into things, and so you start believing that's the only way forward. And so if that's happened to you, either in your childhood or moving forward or just the way society does things, which it does kind of do it that way, right? When we have that experience in our life, it makes sense that that's how we wanna approach ourselves, except that we

dysregulate ourselves, and then trying to create a new habit, a new way of being, a new way of acting becomes very impossible.

We can do it for a little while. It's just not sustainable. We can't create a habit. This is a silly example, but the reality is, is how we build the habit of getting up at 6:00 AM and going to the gym is gonna be the same as building the habit of placing a boundary with a family member that we hold. It's going to be the same as being able to have difficult conversations with people. It's gonna be the same in really just structuring your life in a way that really works for you.

The beautiful thing about doing it this way is, first of all, the resistance comes down. We wanna reduce the resistance. Listen, do I always get to the gym at 6:00 AM? The truth is I don't. And so sometimes I have to flex my schedule, and it's like, well, I didn't go at 6:00 AM. I'm not beating myself up. I'm like, "That's fine." But this workout is a non-negotiable for me, so I'm gonna have to put it in another place in my day. So I guess I'll be going after work today. Is that ideal? No. Parking's kinda shit. It's busier. I don't have the energy that I typically have for working out. But is it a problem? No. I can work with myself.

Okay, give yourself plenty of time to park. A B-minus workout or even a D-plus workout is still better than no workout. We're just gonna get in there, we're gonna get this workout done, we're gonna complete it, we're gonna tick the box, we're gonna let ourselves know, "I'm so proud of you for doing this," and tomorrow, what am I gonna do differently just to ensure that I can get myself out of bed, and how do I want to approach myself?

Tell yourself the truth, but be kind, be loving. Think of your motivation as being something that allows you to flow. That can be coming from a place of deep love for yourself, not from a, "Oh, well, the best way to love yourself is to be hard on yourself." Please don't do that. That is not effective. What is effective is gentle, kind redirection to the things that you wanna do, understanding why you wanna do them, not using shame as your fuel, not using guilt as your fuel, using love as your fuel, using radical self-acceptance as your fuel. This is the way that we move this forward.

So my friend, I hope that in hearing this, you can understand the difference between accountability and motivation, using it in a shaming, mean way versus using self-love, but still having the accountability and motivation. It's not that I'm anti-accountability or I'm anti-motivation. I just want the accountability and the motivation to come from a different place because it will create a wildly different result for you. It will create more confidence in you. It will create a place inside of you where there is neuroplasticity, where you are able to function when life throws you curve balls, and be able to flex and move and find your way through it. This is really the work.

If you would like some help with this, because this can be a very challenging thing to learn on your own, I have a couple of things that I can do for you this week. Number one, I am doing Junetube inside of the Love Yourself No Matter What community. So what is that community? Well, you're in it because you're listening to this podcast. But if you wanna be more in it, you can actually go to joinamanda.ca and you can get the End Overthinking five-minute reset ritual. This is a free resource. Now, what this does is you get an audio training that you can use to reset your mind, number one, plus you will be on my email list, which means you will be part of the Love Yourself No Matter What email community.

And what that does is it gets you access to all of the things that I'm doing in Junetube. So you are going to have the opportunity to have weekly trainings, weekly lives. You are going to have me dropping in, giving you everything you need to know about having a really amazing summer, and using these tools to create that summer experience that you probably can't even quite wrap your head around right now because they feel like they might be so far away. They are not that far away.

So this is an opportunity for you to really engage in the month of June and be able to create some new results for yourself using a whole new form of motivation and accountability. So if you go to joinamanda.ca, you become part of the email community. You get that end overthinking five-minute reset ritual, and you get invited to all of these trainings. So I hope to see you there. This is what I have for you today. I hope you have the most incredible day today, and I will see you here next week. Bye for now.