



Motivation Exercise: From Dreaming to Doing

Objective: To create a mental white space where you are totally clear about why you want to work on a creative project and where it fits into your life.

This is a six-step process which should take about an hour at most.

Step #1. Download Your Brain onto Paper

Get comfy with a pad of paper and a pen, take a deep breath and brain dump onto paper every single thing that you have always dreamt of accomplishing in your life and work.

Then add in the challenges which are causing you concern and feeding your anxiety, plus all of the items on your to do list.

And I mean *everything*.

From what is happening in your home life, your work and your writing, to bank interest rates and world peace if that is keeping you awake at night.

Write fast and hold nothing back.

Keep going and let all of your dreams and hopes and fears and struggles flow down your pen and onto the paper.

Remember - the only person who will see this list is you.

Step #2. What You Can Personally Control

Get up and find your favourite refreshment, then sit back down and go through that list and put a line through everything that you cannot personally control and have the power to drive to completion at this moment in your life.

I am really sorry to have to tell you, but the manned space flight programme is probably not going to accept your application, so if astronaut training is on the list, it may have to go in the standby plan. You cannot personally control and drive that project to completion at this moment.

Be strong.

You cannot control the state of publishing and reader tastes.

You cannot personally control the current job market in your town and the world economy or political landscape.

You cannot control other people's attitudes and feelings which are feeding your negative attitudes and doubts. So what if your sister in law thinks your paranormal erotic romance is smut and refuses to call you a writer?

Let it go.

You are not going to change her mind.

In fact from now on you are going to say that it is not just smut but the finest trashiest smut which your readers are going to adore. Then imagine offering her a lift to the supermarket in your new Bentley convertible which you bought with your big pile of money your romance books are bringing in every month. And if this has not happened yet cut out a picture of some aspirational object or dream location and stick it on your monitor.

You cannot control how people feel and think.

You cannot allow your life and dreams to be crushed or held hostage by other people's expectations.

Refuse to allow that to happen. You have the right to those life dreams.

Why do you have to limit this list to things inside your control?

You have to feel confident at this point that you are capable of achieving your chosen dream or end result, even if that means overcoming the challenges in your life at this time.

If you can control the outcome then your dream stays on the list.

Step #3. How does Each Item on the List Make you Feel?

Next, read what you have left on your list and think about how each idea makes you feel.

Don't think about cost or how you could make it happen, just focus on your emotional response to the idea.

Does that thing excite you and inspire you or is it a bit, well.... meh?

It could be a good thing or even a great and noble thing, but if it does not inspire you and make your heart leap just at the thought of being able to achieve it, cross it out.

Step #4. Challenge your Power List

You should now have a few things left on your wrecked and scribbled sheets of paper, which have not been crossed through.

Take a new sheet of paper and copy over what is left, adding just a line or two about each project or end result.

Then sit and stare at your new list.

It might have one item on it or twenty.

How many does not matter because this is your personal power list.

Now ask yourself these questions for every single one of the items on the new list:

- Can you visualise inside your head how your life would be different if you completed the project and achieved that end result? Yes or no.
- Does even thinking about that project and the end result make you grin in delight, so that you feel excited and heart-thumpingly invigorated? Yes or no.
- Would that project make you jump out of bed in the morning at 5am so you can work on it for 2 hrs before your family get up? Or keep you working until 2am on a school day? Yes or no.

If you answer no to any of these questions – you know what to do. Cross it out.

Step #5. Digging Deeper

You should now have a small list of ideas and dream projects and ambitions, or maybe just one, which mean a lot to you and which you feel you have the power to control and drive forwards. They have to be powerful and real and honest.

Now it is time to take a hard look at what is left and ask yourself the reasons why these items truly matter to you so very much.

I suspect you already know the answers, but try to think through each question with the first reply that comes into your head.

Don't overthink it or try and come up with a clever answer. This is for you, nobody else.

Why do you want to achieve this end result?

Example. I want to write a crime novel because I would love to see a book that I had written in the bookshop.

Why do you **really** want to achieve this ambition?

Example. I want to earn enough money working from home so that I can stay at home with my family instead of leaving them to go out to work each day.

What do you **really, really**, want to achieve this ambition?

Example. I have wanted to write fiction since I was a teenager when I made up stories for my little brother but I went down another path at college and then a full time job. I feel if I don't do this now, I will never have another chance to prove to myself that I can be a writer and published author. This is who I was meant to be and until now I feel that I have never been allowed to express myself and show what I am capable of.

Keep asking why, even if it becomes emotional along the way.

Drill down and keep on drilling down, until you reach the real answer.

There is no wrong or right answer. Only the truth. *Your truth.*

You don't have to tell anyone – this is totally yours. Unique and special.

Step #6. Decide on Who You Want to Become

What you now have is your master power list.

What I call my "*Fire in the Belly*" list.

This is what will fly you across that valley of fear.

It could be anything, including health, home, family and where you want to go in your writing.

But there is one final stage which is critically important.

Do you truly believe that you can reach that final destination and create a new identity for yourself?

You have to decide to start moving towards the person who you want to become. Because there is no doubt about it. You will be different in so many ways.

Are you ready to be the person who will have reached the final destination, or destinations, on your list?

Yes? Then let's get moving.



I love to hear from my readers, so if you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to get in touch at: Nina@ninaharrington.com and visit my website for the latest posts and news: <http://ninaharrington.com/>