

HOW TO FORCE YOUR BRAIN TO CRAVE DOING HARD THINGS

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THE HIDDEN TRUTH ABOUT PROCRASTINATION

If you've ever ended the day with your best work untouched and a pit in your stomach, you're not lazy—and procrastination isn't the core problem.

You're running on the wrong **fuel**. Science shows there's a hidden motivation system in the brain that, when dialled correctly, makes hard work feel irresistible.

The key is switching from **extrinsic** to **intrinsic** motivation and optimising the five intrinsic drivers until flow becomes your default.

EXTRINSIC VS. INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

EXTRINSIC FUEL

Extrinsic fuel (money, status, praise) can start the engine, but it fades quickly—dopamine spikes in anticipation and drops after attainment. It's like fossil fuel: short bursts, then emptiness.

INTRINSIC FUEL

Intrinsic fuel (curiosity, mastery, purpose, autonomy, autotelic enjoyment) sustains effort for its own sake. Think nuclear fusion energy: self-generating, long-lasting, and compounding—especially by amplifying **flow**, the state where work feels like play.

OPTIMISING MY PERSONAL PATH TO MAX OUT INTRINSIC DRIVERS

On my academic path, curiosity and purpose were high, but **mastery, autotelicity** (loving the activity itself), and **autonomy** were low—so motivation collapsed.

When I switched towards entrepreneurship— I kept curiosity and purpose, but massively increased mastery, autotelicity, and autonomy. My motivation surged—and so did my flow.

WHY INTRINSIC MOTIVATION COMPOUNDS FLOW

- Elevates performance neurochemistry (dopamine, norepinephrine, acetylcholine).
- Lowers cognitive load, sharpening focus.
- Flow then *feeds back* feel good nuerochemicals: releasing endorphins, serotonin, anandamide (and oxytocin in group flow), further increasing intrinsic motivation.

Result: a **virtuous cycle**—intrinsic motivation → flow → deeper intrinsic motivation → more flow.

THE FIVE INTRINSIC MOTIVATORS (AND HOW TO MAX THEM)

1) CURIOSITY – *WHAT YOU EXPLORE*

- **Signal:** You chase new ideas about the work outside work hours.
- **Boost:** Systemise **learning** (new knowledge produces visible wins fast) + **immediate feedback** loops so applied learning pays off *today*.

2) MASTERY – *WHAT YOU IMPROVE*

- **Signal:** You crave getting better at core skills of the work.
- **Boost:** Map the skills and sub-skills required to gain mastery; and always practice at the edge of your skillset. If your work has capped your skill mastery, pivot to new a skill within your work with an **uncapped skill ceiling**.

3) AUTOTELICITY – *WHAT YOU LOVE DOING*

- **Signal:** You do the activity for its own sake, not an external outcome.
- **Boost:** Build a career around what you're *uniquely good at*. Starting with your **strengths** triggers flow → flow grows your love for the craft.

4) PURPOSE – *WHAT YOU IMPACT*

- **Signal:** Your work ladders to a mission.
- **Boost:** Write a 1-sentence life purpose; link **each work task** to that purpose daily. If no alignment is possible, plan a values-aligned transition.

5) AUTONOMY – *WHAT YOU CHOOSE*

- **Signal:** You control the what/when/how of your work.
- **Boost (perceptual):** Place low-autonomy tasks inside a self-directed multi-year plan that leads you towards your goal. Yes, you have to do these tasks, but you're aware of how they lead you to your ultimate self-chosen goal.
- **Boost (literal):** Build **FU autonomy**—skills, network, options— that make you so valuable you *can* choose how/what/when you work. Carve a small area of complete control now; then expand it into the FU undeniability.

HOW TO USE THIS TODAY

1. Score each intrinsic motivator **1-10** for your current role.
2. Pick the lowest rated motivator; raise it **~5 points this month** (the lift in one makes lifting the others easier).
3. Recheck weekly; keep the intrinsic → flow flywheel spinning.

As intrinsic motivation rises, the grip of external rewards loosens. You get the **detachment of a monk** with the **engagement of a warrior**—obsessed with the work itself, unfazed by praise or status. Hard problems become games you're eager to play.