

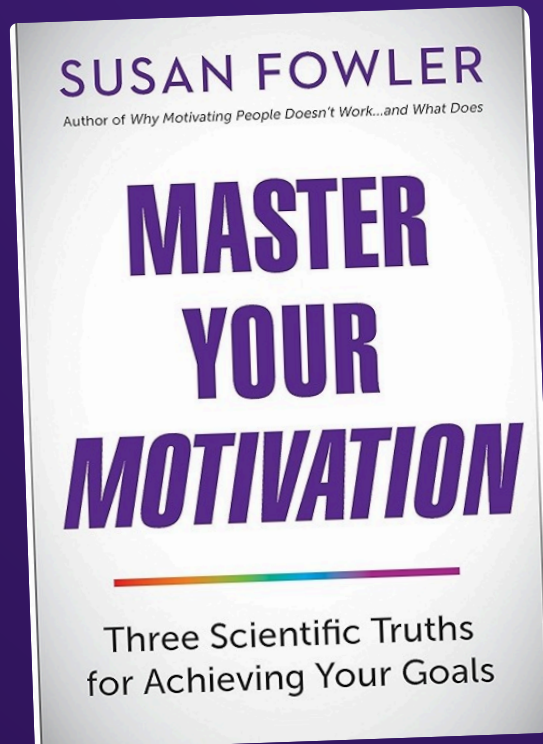
MASTER YOUR MOTIVATION

Study & Discussion Guide

A companion to
Master Your Motivation
Three Scientific Truths for Achieving Your Goals, by Susan Fowler.

MOJO MOMENTS®

Because we don't have to choose
between thriving and achieving.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

These questions aren't meant to test comprehension. They're invitations to explore your own experience with motivation. For each section, choose the questions that spark something in you. You don't need to answer them all. The goal is insight, not completion. Let curiosity lead the way.



On your own

Use it as a reflective journal, a way to notice what you're learning and capture what's meaningful.



With a reading buddy

Trade answers chapter by chapter and compare how each truth shows up in your lives.



In a book club

Run a lively 60-90 minute conversation around the book's key ideas.



Page references point to the paperback / hardcover edition.



Book club tip: questions marked with ♦ tend to generate the richest conversations.



Free resources: videos, surveys, and articles at **MojoMoments.com**

SETTING THE STAGE

FOREWORD & INTRODUCTION

Jean-Paul Richard coached two Olympic ski teams, with very different results. His story opens the book with a powerful question: what actually makes the difference between thriving and just surviving?

Why motivation science matters

Foreword • Introduction

- 1 JPR coached the Swedish Olympic team in 2010 and the Canadian Olympic team in 2014. What was noticeably different about his two experiences? What do you think made the difference? ♦
- 2 Susan challenges two widely accepted theories of motivation right from the start. Does that surprise you? What have you believed about motivation that this book is beginning to question?
- 3 Why isn't it enough to simply divide motivation into "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" types? Have you ever used those terms? How did you think about it?

★ SCIENCE SAYS

Self-Determination Theory, one of the most tested frameworks in psychology, tells us that motivation quality matters more than motivation quantity. Joy and meaning produce fundamentally different outcomes than ego and rewards.

“

You are always motivated. It's the *quality* of your motivation that matters.



THE TRUTH ABOUT MOTIVATION

Part 1 introduces the three scientific truths at the heart of the book, and the surprising idea that human beings are naturally wired to thrive. [Chapters 1-5.](#)

Chapter 1 · Three Scientific Truths

pp. 7-16

- 1 Susan opens with a provocative question: *Are you lazy?* Do you think most people are lazy? How did you answer, and why does it matter? ♦
- 2 The book says thriving is your human nature, but something gets in the way. What tends to get in the way of your own thriving?
- 3 Recall when you experienced high-quality energy for a goal, and a time when you had low-quality energy, even though the goal hadn't changed.
- 4 The three truths required to thrive are Choice, Connection, and Competence. Can you relate to a goal where one of them is missing right now?

★ SCIENCE SAYS

Your brain needs “psychological vitamins”: autonomy (choice), relatedness (connection), and competence. It needs them the way a plant needs sun, soil, and water. Deprive yourself of these, and energy for your goals starts to wither.

Chapter 2 · Motivation Isn't What You Think

pp. 17-23

- 1 Discipline and willpower are often celebrated as keys to success. But the book calls them “red flags.” What do you think that means? Can you relate?

- 2 Susan describes a “seismic shift” in how we understand motivation. In your own words, what is that shift? ♦
- 3 What’s the difference between optimal and suboptimal motivation, not in definition, but in how each actually *feels*?

CHAPTERS 3-5 • PP. 24-46

CREATE CHOICE, CONNECTION & COMPETENCE

For each of the three truths, try applying the prompts to a real goal or situation in your life right now.



CHOICE

To thrive, you need to experience volition, a sense of control, and agency.

When have you felt self-directed pursuing a goal, and how did that affect your energy?

When have you felt like a goal was imposed on you, and how did that affect your energy?



CONNECTION

To thrive, you need to feel cared about and genuinely care about others.

Think of a goal where you felt you were fulfilling your values and sense of purpose, or contributing to something greater than yourself. How did that connection affect the quality of your energy?



COMPETENCE

To thrive, you need to experience continual learning and growth.

Recall a time when your skills enabled you to make progress on your goal, yet you were still learning along the way. How did having and building competence affect your motivation?

What happens to your energy when you feel stuck?

Bringing the three together

- 1 Susan says we often inadvertently erode choice, connection, and competence, for ourselves and for others. Can you spot a pattern in how you do this?
- 2 Which of the three truths do you most often neglect in your own life? What might you do differently? ♦

“

*When forcing
yourself fails, what's
wrong isn't you. It's
the approach.*



MOTIVATION IS A SKILL

Part 2 reveals the three actions for practicing the skill of motivation: Shift. Identify. Reflect. Applying what you've learned about motivation is where ideas turn into a practical and powerful tool. [Chapters 6-8.](#)

Chapter 6 · Identify Your Outlook

pp. 47-67

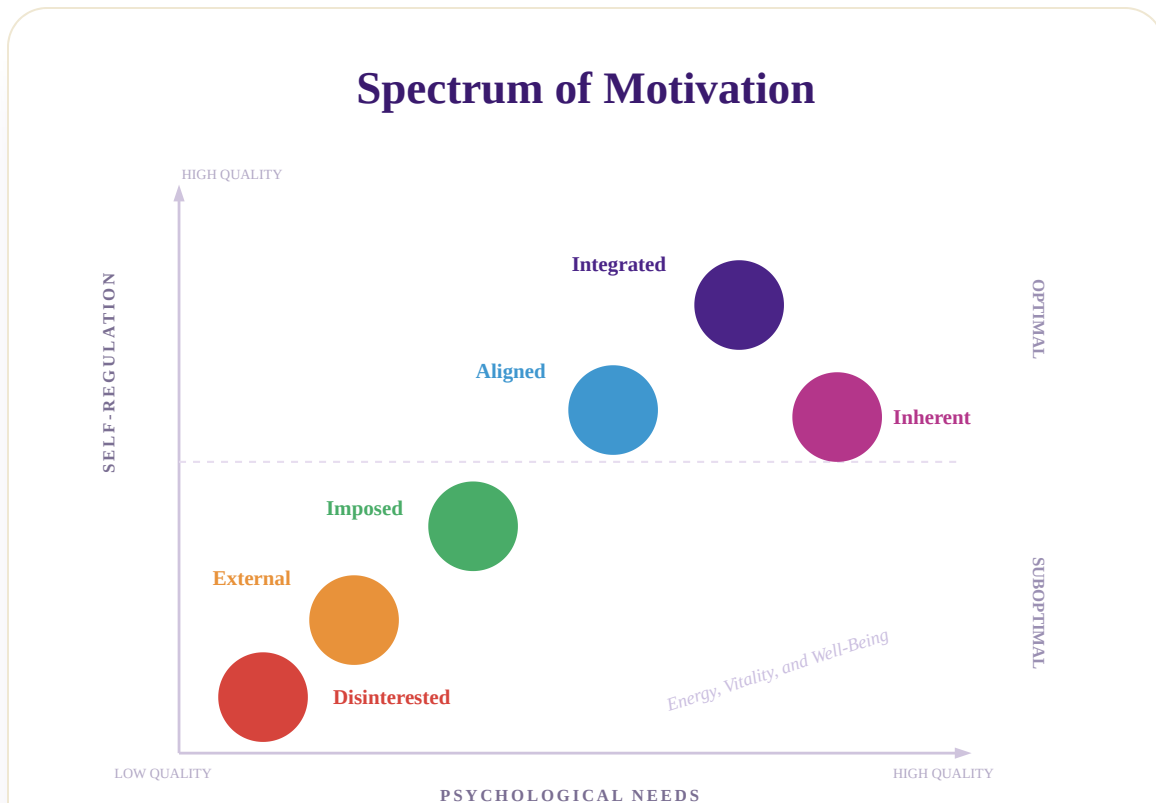
Motivation science identifies six motivational outlooks: three suboptimal and three optimal. Your outlook can shift from one to another depending on the situation.

SUBOPTIMAL

● **Disinterested** ● **External** ● **Imposed**

OPTIMAL

● **Aligned** ● **Integrated** ● **Inherent**



A different motivational outlook can pop up at any time, that's why they're represented as bubbles in the Spectrum of Motivation model.

- 1 Think of a goal you're working on right now. Which outlook or outlooks describe your current motivation? Be honest, sometimes you can be bouncing back and forth between outlooks. ♦
- 2 Consider the student Anya, who pursued her MBA for entirely suboptimal reasons. Have you ever worked hard toward a goal while feeling the wrong kind of motivated? What was that like?
- 3 The science says motivation is not additive: you can't compensate for low-quality motivation with more of it. What does that mean to you?
- 4 Is there a downside to the inherent outlook (pure, intrinsic enjoyment)? When might even that become suboptimal motivation?

★ **SCIENCE SAYS**

The quality of your motivation predicts not just performance, but your wellbeing along the way.

Chapter 7 · Shift Your Outlook

pp. 68-87

Shifting doesn't happen by trying harder. It happens when you proactively create choice, connection, and competence for your goal, often by asking better questions.



CHOICE

What choices have I already made, and what choices can I still make?



CONNECTION

How can this goal contribute to others in a meaningful way, while fulfilling my values and sense of purpose?



COMPETENCE

What skills or insights am I gaining, or could I gain, through this?

1

Roland found a reason to quit that was more meaningful than smoking. Can you relate?

2

If you were to write a personal credo, a statement of the values you want your life to reflect, what would it say? ♦

3

Thinking of a current goal, which of the three truths do you need to focus on before it begins to affect the other two?

Chapter 8 · Reflect on Your Outlook

pp. 88-108

1

Why is reflection, not just action, essential to mastering your motivation?

2

What is mindfulness, and how is it different from simply thinking about your situation?

3

Susan distinguishes between two types of feelings. How might recognizing the difference help you make better choices under pressure?

4

Calla found a way to reframe a routine task she found tedious. Is there a task in your life that could benefit from a fresh perspective? ♦

★ SCIENCE SAYS

Research shows a strong link between mindfulness and optimal motivation. When we become aware of the reasons behind our motivation, without judgment, we naturally begin to shift.

“

Motivation isn't
something that
happens to you. *It's a
skill.*

WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?

Part 3 explores the most common obstacles to mastering motivation: the belief that shifting is impossible, the seduction of distractions, and the unique challenges of motivation at work. [Chapters 9-12](#).

Chapter 9 · I Can't Shift

pp. 113-125

- 1 Have you ever thought, "I know I should feel differently about this, but I just can't"? What was going on for you?

- 2 Neal and Marty both thought they couldn't shift, until they realized something. What does their story suggest about why we're often the greatest obstacle to shifting to an optimal motivational outlook? ♦

- 3 Gina had a "good excuse" for not shifting. Susan references Byron Katie's practice of asking "Is it true?" Try applying that question to a belief that's been limiting your own motivation.

- 4 Patricia's motivation shifted through sustained attention to her values. Is there a goal where re-examining your values could help you reconnect?

Chapter 10 · Beware Fatal Distractions

pp. 126-138

- 1 What is a "fatal distraction"? What makes it hard to see one when we're in the middle of it?

- 2 The book makes a nuanced point about money: you can be motivated to earn money and still be optimally motivated. What would that look like?

- 3 What's the difference between happiness (often circumstantial) and optimal motivation (which can be cultivated)? Does Stephanie's story resonate? ♦

- 4 Do you suffer from “busyness”? How do you tell genuine productivity from filling time to avoid something deeper?

Chapter 11 · Work Hazards

pp. 139-149

- 1 Why is it so easy to slip into suboptimal motivation at work, even when we started out loving what we do?
- 2 “Flipping the feedback” means proactively asking for input rather than waiting to receive it. How might it help you create choice, connection, or competence?
- 3 Susan suggests that advocating for justice, speaking up about what feels unfair, is a powerful way to create connection. Where might this apply for you? ♦

Chapter 12 · Can People Change?

pp. 150-158

- 1 After reading this chapter, how do you answer the question in the title? What does the book’s approach suggest about our capacity to grow? ♦
- 2 What’s your motivational outlook right now for applying what you’ve learned? Be honest, are you disinterested, aligned, inherent, or somewhere in between?

AFTERWORD

BY KEN BLANCHARD

Ken Blanchard reflects on a career spent studying leadership and motivation, and what he’s learned about the difference between managing people’s behavior and genuinely helping them thrive.

Closing reflections

pp. 159-162

- 1 Ken Blanchard says mastering motivation helps people move from dependence to independence. What does that journey look like to you?

- 2 What's one of the best reasons to master your own motivation, and to help others do the same? ♦

- 3 What's one thing you learned from this book that you want to practice, not just understand?

YOUR PERSONAL PRACTICE

The skill of motivation isn't something you master once and set aside. It's a practice. You return again and again to ask: *What is my motivational outlook right now? How can I shift it? What am I learning?*

- 1 Answer the questions to help you experience choice, connection, and competence. Can you shift your motivational outlook right now?
- 2 Notice your motivational outlook throughout the week. Just noticing, without judgment, is the first step toward shifting.
- 3 Share the skill with someone else. Teaching is one of the most powerful ways to deepen your own understanding.

For book clubs · parting questions

- 1 What is the single most important insight you're taking away from this book?
- 2 How might understanding the Spectrum of Motivation change the way you relate to people you care about: family, friends, colleagues?

RESOURCES & WAYS TO GO DEEPER

Free supplemental resources, all at **MojoMoments.com**

Articles

Blogs

Podcasts

Sample book chapters

Videos

Webinars

White papers

Book a virtual book club

Invite Susan Fowler to join your group for a lively, science-backed conversation on the skill of motivation.

Info@MojoMoments.com

Book a keynote or workshop

Bring MojoThriving™ to your team: from a 60-minute keynote to a two-day workshop.

Info@MojoMoments.com



ABOUT

Susan Fowler

Founder & CEO of Mojo Moments, a global company dedicated to teaching the skill of motivation to leaders at every level, and creator of the MojoThriving™ methodology.

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“Understanding motivation is the beginning. Mastering your motivation, goal by goal, moment by moment, is where thriving and achieving become inseparable.”

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