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# 46 Entrepreneurs Share Their Tips for Staying Motivated in Business



Apr 30, 2013 By [Lisa Parmley](#) [6 Comments](#)



All businesses hit rough patches. You may run out of ideas, run out of steam, or things may just not be working out the way you want them to.

So what can you do to pick yourself up and get back on track?

No matter what decisions you make, motivation plays a huge role in turning things around.

## **Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners Share Tips on How to Stay Motivated**

There's definitely something on the list below that will motivate you when your business hits a rough patch. To re-charge yourself and gain new inspiration, check-out the following list of tips on staying motivated in business:

1. “Instead of doing things the same way as everyone else, have fun and find ways to be disruptive in your industry. Say things differently. Do things differently. Turn left when everyone else turns right. Besides standing out, you might also hit the one thing that turns a rough patch into a launching pad.”

- *Gregg Murset, CEO and Founder of [My Job Chart](#)*

2. “Work like you only have a dollar and you never have to worry about anything.”

- *Jeffrey Milano, CEO of [The People's Chemist](#)*

3. “You can't wait for outside inspiration. You've got to see motivating yourself as an essential part of the process, maybe the most essential part. Because when it comes right down to it, nobody else can motivate you. All anyone else can ever do is talk you into motivating yourself, is sell you on the idea of motivating yourself. You motivate you. There's nobody else who can be with you every hour of the day or the night when all those thousands of little decisions that lead toward your goals or away from your goals have to be made. You've got to be your own guru, your own favorite motivational speaker.”

*Maier, Author/Speaker/Founder of [BarryMaier.com](#)*

Remember it is not about you, whenever you feel frustrated or stuck it is because you are concentrating on you instead of the outcome your clients/customers will receive by working with you.”

- *Catherine E. Storing, Chief Style Coach of [The Confidence Building Coach](#)*

5. “We stay motivated through rough times by reading a lot about founders of successful companies. When you read things like how Richard Branson was almost turned upside down by a 3 million euro overdraft, you realize your rough times are minuscule. “

- *Mark Aleks, Co-Founder of [Zaca Recovery Patch](#)*

6. “I stay motivated by referring back to old goals I set before launching my business. Looking back on my goals allows me to see how much I have accomplished and that everything I have done and will continue to do for my business is not in vain.”

- *Jennifer Frye, Founder and President of [Clever Marketing & Events](#)*

7. “To stay motivated, you have to keep reminding yourself that a good business with a strong, reliable source of revenue can stay afloat even in the roughest of times. That's why – while you have to chance – you need to work to build a strong business by testing different revenue models, simulate your business in various economic environments, and brainstorm what new methods your business can use to bring in more profits. If or when the economy falls into rough times, because you've done the work to build a good foundation for your business, you'll be more optimistic and maintain the motivation that's necessary to keep pushing forward.”

- *Ian Aronovich, Co-Founder and CEO of [GovernmentAuctions.org](#)*

8. “We business owners all have experienced the tire kickers who waste our time. Our goal is to reach the clients and customers who really need our services and will pay for them. During those times when it's kind of slow and you start reconsidering if you're doing the right thing, a client will come along who is grateful for your help. Receiving feedback from the clients who let you know you have truly enhanced their life is what keeps me motivated and going.”

- *JeFreda R. Brown, CEO of [Brown Accounting Solutions, LLC](#)*

9. “The best way to stay motivated when the going gets rough is to remember why you're doing what you do. I became a

small business owner because I loved the thought of being my own boss – setting my own schedule and getting the flexibility I wanted so I could spend more time with my family. Ultimately, I'm doing this for them. I love my business and everything it does for the small business community, but whenever things get tough, I just think of why I sought out this venture in the first place and I feel grounded once again.”

- *Deborah Sweeney, CEO of [MyCorporation.com](#)*

10. “FAITH. One simple word that has the power to change your perspective on any situation. As a small business owner, it can be very difficult to stay motivated. When the finances don't quite add up, business is more than what you have staff for, or personal issues begin to weigh on you, you will need faith! You will need that voice inside your head telling you that everything is happening the way that it is supposed to and that all the things that are happening will all work together for your good. Faith tells you to keep going, that this will all work out, that the stress and sleepless nights will all pay off. Faith helps you to encourage yourself when no one else can quite understand what you're going through. You need faith.”

- *Tiffany Gillespie, Owner/Lead Event Coordinator of [To The "T" Events](#)*

11. “I have my dream goal written down on paper and taped to the wall where I can always see it. Each day, I start off by 5 minutes, closing my eyes, and visualizing and daydreaming about making it to that goal; how I would feel once I reach it, what I would do to celebrate reaching the goal, etc.

It gives me the motivation each day to work towards that goal. If I ever hit a really big bump in the road and things get really tough, I just take 5 minutes to again visualize reaching that goal and continue to move forward.”

- *Bill Simpson, President & CEO of [Life Document Storage, LLC](#)*

12. “This may seem like a simple tip, but as an entrepreneur I stay motivated by exercising. Since most of my work is computer-based, it's very important for me to push my body physically and enjoy fresh air and sunshine on a somewhat regular basis. Exercise refreshes my brain, inspires creativity and encourages a positive outlook.”

- *Josh Waldron, Founder of [Studio JWAL, LLC](#)*

13. “As an entrepreneur I have two tips that I personally use to stay motivated. The first tip is to focus on the big picture. You must know exactly what it is that you want. Your vision of the future of your company/product/organization must be crystal clear. When you can see with great clarity what it is that you want you have no problem doing the work necessary. Which brings me to my second tip, you must adopt consistent daily disciplines which are actions that grow your business on a daily basis. Stay consistent when motivation is high due to the daily actions... when motivation is low do the daily actions knowing that deep down you will ultimately reach the vision you have created as long as you remain consistent and never quit.”

- *Ryan Celestain, Founder of [RyanCelestain.com](#)*

14. “Often, if I find myself lacking in motivation, I talk to the users of our systems. This allows me to both see how much of an impact we have had to date and what other things we can do to make their lives easier. Working with the customers, and knowing that we can still improve our product for them really inspires me to keep working, even if circumstances are challenging.”

- *Adam Kirsch, Chief Operating Officer of [Yorango, Inc.](#)*

15. “When you're overwhelmed pick the biggest/hardest task that will have the most impact, crank the tunes and dive in for an uninterrupted evening session — I love the 10 – 2am session for minimal interruptions personally – odds are with total concentration you'll make huge progress and then the rest will fall into place and seem much easier.”

- *Kelly Fallis, CEO of [Remote Stylist](#)*

16. "Have a purpose behind your work. Tie it to something bigger than yourself and remind yourself of this purpose constantly! I also repeat one of these to myself: "I can do hard things", "Your competitor is probably working right now," or "Go all in." If those don't work, I jam on the banjo for an hour then get back to work."

- *Konrad Billetz, Founder and CEO of [Frameri Eyewear](#)*

17. "Don't dwell on the past. You made choices based on the information presented at the time and as such, they were the choices that you have to live with. There is never anything gained by beating yourself up over past decisions. Rather, you need to embrace them and keep telling yourself that you never know how this will all play out."

- *Greg Edson, Founder of the [Brolly rain umbrella](#)*

18. "Stay connected and COMMUNICATE with other people, whether they are friends, colleagues or your team of employees. Get out of your own head. Share your work, your passion, and yourself with other people. Remember that we work to live, we don't live to work. It's cliché, but it's true."

- *Kricket Harrison, Speaker/Author/Coach at [Bright Outside the Box](#)*

an entrepreneur, it's tempting to try to fix a problem or get through a rough time in your business by giving more work to do. We think that if we hunker down, work 12+ hour days and pile up our work load, that this will fix the problem. But, in fact, the opposite is true. When you're feeling unmotivated or burnt out, try creating a "NOT-TO-DO" List. Write down everything on this list that is zapping your energy or wasting your time-business-related or not. Even though this might seem counterintuitive, it will actually free up your energy and spark your motivation so that you can start moving forward on your business again."

- *Laurel Staples, Founder of [Go Fire Yourself](#)*

20. "Successful business owners don't sit around and wait for motivation. Who has time for that? Instead, they choose to work on their business, everyday.

Why? Because over time they formed habits that help them stay disciplined. That is what keeps them going when times get tough – discipline, not motivation – and it's in those times when they are pushing and grinding that they will later find their motivation. It comes in the sweat and tears."

- *Shanna Kurpe, Founding Partner of [Grasp](#)*

21. "Plan for the Day, Week, Month, and Year: Keep the planning process as a large part of your day. Rate your goals and objectives as A for high priority, B for priority, and C for low priority. Attempt to get to all your A goals, then your B goals, and if you have time, attempt to get to the C goals. The night before the next day, plan your day. On Sunday night, plan your week. At the end of the month, plan for the next month. On New Year's Eve, plan your year. Do this adding plenty of time for spontaneity. Depending on your projects, attempt to complete the big projects within a month's time. Use each week and each day to complete a portion of the projects so that you keep the momentum going. Doing this will ensure that you reach your goals and reap the success of your effort."

- *Michael Provitera, President of [Motivational Leadership Training](#)*

22. "Create a schedule. Set aside time for work tasks and time for family and leisure time. Don't let them mix or interfere with one another. This prevents burn-out and keeps you motivated to complete tasks because you can visually see that once you get your tasks done you have time to enjoy yourself."

- *K.L. Graham, Author of "[E-Business Success: Using Technology to Take Your Business to the Next Level](#)" and Founder of Sirius Web Solutions*

23. “Staying motivated as an entrepreneur was a very tough thing for me, especially considering that all my other friends had different goals in life such as scoring chicks and attending the greatest parties. However, I found a really great way of keeping myself motivated.

I have a white board in my room and I have listed out the reason why I’m an entrepreneur. Every morning I wake up and I have a reminder of why I do what I do every single day. My board says “Build a startup or die trying. Get financial freedom at all costs!” Keep something close to home that you can look at every day to remind you of your goals.”

- *Jeet Banerjee, Serial Entrepreneur at [JeetBanerjee.com](http://JeetBanerjee.com)*

24. “Education is our motivator! Continuing to learn about our particular industry, and reading the success stories of those that have come before us, always leads to new ideas for improving upon our current practices. “

- *Linda Gomez, Owner of [Fullips](http://Fullips)*

25. “You stay motivated by simply staying in touch with your reasons for having your business. Whether it is to create a lifestyle for you and your family, help your customers/clients with some problem, or effect major change in the world, stay with that. Know what it is and remind yourself of it HOURLY. (HINT: Money isn’t a good enough reason.)”

*inmann, Author of “[How to Quit Working](http://How to Quit Working)“*

26. “When we have had challenging times, I remember that most small businesses hit rock bottom before their big break came. If you still believe in your idea, you will make it succeed. Just keep being persistent. Remember, if it were easy, everyone would be doing it.”

- *Kelly Daugherty, Managing Partner of [Smashing Golf & Tennis](http://Smashing Golf & Tennis)*

27. “The long view is the strong view. Business mirrors life: you’ve got to keep at it to make it work. A long view helps, rather than looking just at this month’s (or even this year’s) stats, earnings, accomplishments. For instance, in the publishing industry (our industry), the bulk of sales comes from titles more than a year old.”

- *Laura L. Barkat, CEO of [T. S. Poetry Press](http://T.S. Poetry Press)*

28. “Make a Game of It: When there’s an arduous task that I don’t want to do, I apply a little bit of game theory: I create a small competition between me and my employees, try and set or break records, or even have a simple countdown to my goal. Competition is a great way to motivate ourselves into going the extra mile. When I do reach my goal, I make sure to reward myself as well as the employees involved.”

- *Simon Tam, Author of “[How to Get Sponsorships and Endorsements](http://How to Get Sponsorships and Endorsements)”*

29. “The best motivation is finding a Groove that works and keeps you moving forward. The groove can be anywhere. So listen... try and know that each step is a success.”

- *Carrie Devorah, Founder of [The Center for Copyright Integrity](http://The Center for Copyright Integrity)*

30. “Associate with other start-ups! Go to MeetUp.com and find groups of entrepreneurs that meet in your area. Entrepreneurs love to help other entrepreneurs because we’ve all been there at one time or another, and they will give you frank, honest and compassionate feedback on potential solutions and choices.

You can also join the Chamber of Commerce or Economic Development and get involved in your community. Know that what you are doing is bigger than just you. It’s about creating jobs, improving the economy and making a difference.”

- *Stacy Stephens, Co-founder and VP Marketing & Sales for [Knightscope, Inc.](http://Knightscope, Inc.)*

31. “The life of an entrepreneur can be a lonely one. The best thing they can do is get out of their home office and small office space and interact with others. I work with over 350 women to help them to stay motivated and focused. The most effective way is to join a paid Mastermind/Accountability Group that is made up of like-minded people. These groups are designed to keep entrepreneurs on track and to support each other. It’s a magical way to stay motivated.”

- *Kathy McShane, Managing Director of [Ladies Who Launch Connecticut](#)*

32. “One word: Movement. As business owners we tend to think “big picture”. Because of this, we can get overwhelmed with the slow movement of progress. The fact is, businesses don’t just blow up overnight. They grow or die slowly, especially when you’re in the trenches every day.

So, to stay motivated you need to constantly be making moves. Movement, whether it’s forward or even backwards, is still good for learning. The movement doesn’t have to change the world, it just need to be big enough to make you feel progress. It could be as simple as meeting a great contact at a networking event or coming up with a new marketing strategy to try.

These unknown possibilities are what keep us up late, but also keep us occupied. Boredom and worry is the ultimate in motion.”

- *njeow, Creator and Co-Founder of [LoveBookOnline.com](#)*

33. “The two most powerful words in the English Language are “I AM” The best way to stay motivated is to do daily affirmations that start with “I AM” and add the words: “World’s Greatest”, and then act the part throughout the day.

The most successful sales professionals in the world know this. As the saying goes, “unmotivated sales people have skinny kids”. But even if you do not consider yourself to be a “salesman” you can still benefit from doing daily affirmations that begin with “I AM the World’s Greatest”.

- *Sherman Ragland, Founder of [Realinvestors®](#)*

34. “When you’re off, be off. My personal favorite is to go find inspiration in something other than marketing. For me, it includes playing musical instruments, learning to make beer, developing a new Worcestershire sauce recipe or just hanging out with my family. Stepping away is important, but you never want to shut down. By staying active with new things, you’re able to clear your mind and stay inspired.”

- *Patrick King, Founder and CEO of [Imagine, Inc](#)*

35. “When I lose focus and/or motivation I take a break and do something else. For example, I go and take my dogs for a quick 10 minute walk and think about what I need to do, re-organize in my head what the most important task is and when I need to accomplish it by. It’s what I call a re-group break. This usually gets me excited because I then start thinking about the opportunities that will arise when I complete that goal. It clears my head for a brief moment, just enough to prioritize my projects and tasks.”

- *Mandy McEwen, Founder of [Mod Girl Marketing](#)*

36. “When your small business hits a rough patch, it’s critical to remind yourself of the business’s core mission. At HourlyNerd, our goal is simple: democratize access to top quality advice for small businesses. When we’re having trouble with our web site, or dealing with the hundredth rejection that week on a sales pitch, we recall how central that core goal is to what we’re doing, and it gives us the motivation to carry on. If your company’s main goal is to make money, you will tire quickly. Thinking about why you’re doing what you’re doing can be a critical source of fire in the belly, particularly when times get tough.”

- *Robert D. Biederman, Co-Founder of [HourlyNerd](#)*

37. “Regular, vigorous exercise is absolutely essential to my motivation and productivity. There’s a direct correlation between daily exercise and my ability to function as an entrepreneur and small business owner. Plainly put, if I don’t exercise, I don’t work, at least not as well and as efficiently as I need to work. The half-hour to an hour devoted each day to exercise is without a doubt worth its weight in gold or, in my case as a consultant, billable hours.”

- *Nick Barron, Founder of [NickBarron.co](http://NickBarron.co)*

38. “I divide my day into four, two hour sections. For each section, I write down three tasks. I only complete those three tasks. Checking off each item helps me stay on task and motivated to get to the next two hour section of my day..”

- *Caroline Fielding, President of [Dryven, Inc.](http://Dryven, Inc.)*

39. “The best advice I can give is: Do things you enjoy that are separate from your business. Mixed Martial Arts is a great release that keeps me healthy and prepared for whatever challenges I may face, while shutting my mind off to the noise happening all around me. Stress and work will always be there. The key is how to deal with it.”

- *Kristina Villarini, Founder and CEO of [Villarini Maclean](http://Villarini Maclean)*

ing rough times I think it’s important to remember that all circumstances are temporary; both favorable and not ble circumstances. I remember the times where business was booming and I was rolling in it. I also remember gh times and realize that I got through them.

I give thanks for the small non-monetary blessings of being a entrepreneur. For me, no matter if I have \$10 or \$10,000 what I value most is my time freedom. I can always earn more money, but I’m most thankful to not be slaving away my hours to someone else. I love that I can work from anywhere. I’m there when my son gets off the bus, I’m there for his honor roll assembly, I can attend events others can’t because they have to work. I can travel anytime I want to, several times a month if I want to... my desire to keep my time freedom is what keeps me motivated.”

- *Unique D’Vine, the [Texas Work From Home Mom](http://Texas Work From Home Mom)*

41. “I’ve found that the best thing to keep in the back of your mind, especially during rough times, is that complacency is extremely dangerous. If there is a dip in sales, a high turnover on staff, or a lack of sales team motivation, it is important reevaluate your plan. Look into a new CRM, set up a new sales process, or redesign your website and then launch an extensive set of A/B tests.”

- *Zachary Rose, CEO of [Green Education Services](http://Green Education Services)*

42. “Feed your brain by reading and attending seminars. They almost always inspire new thoughts that you can take back to your business.”

- *Jamar Cobb-Dennard, Sales Recruiter at [Hire Sales](http://Hire Sales)*

43. “Simple: Turn off your phone and walk away from the computer. Watch a good comedy on TV, take a walk, get a massage, see a movie... do ANYTHING to relax and take your mind off of business. And, after a while, your anxiety will pass (like all emotions do) and you’ll either be reminded of why what you’re doing is worth your hard work and time, or you’ll be reminded of the horrible alternative (like getting a J O B). Either one should get you back on track... until the next time you have an overwhelming dose of reality (this building a business thing is HARD) 😊”

- *Steven Sashen, CEO of [Xero Shoes](http://Xero Shoes)*

44. “A key thing for small business owners and entrepreneurs is to separate their happiness and self-confidence from the success of their business, learning to be happy and self-confident innately, regardless of how the business performs. This can be tough because I think our society sends a lot of messages that equate a person’s self-worth with their financial or

business success.”

- Alex Zorach, Founder and Editor of [RateTea.com](http://RateTea.com)

45. “Keep a “Good Stuff” Inbox Folder – It’s easy when things are going wrong to focus on the negative. Therefore sometimes the best way to “turn that frown upside down” is to look at the positive. I keep a folder called “Good Stuff” that contains emails from colleagues, friends and family that remind me that I have a group of people who are supporting me. In addition, I save emails that also recognize hard work or accomplishments.”

- Lauren McCabe Herpich, Founder and Chief of [Why Not Girl!](http://WhyNotGirl!)

46. “Use Fear to Your Advantage: Rudolph Giuliani once said, “If you don’t have a fear, you’d better go get one.” In other words, try new things, get out of your comfort zone, and make your palms sweat ... on purpose!”

- Bill Treasurer, Founder and Chief Encouragement Officer at [Giant Leap Consulting](http://Giant Leap Consulting)

any tips here you’ve used to motivate yourself during rough times in your business? Do you have any additional strategies? Please share them with us in the comments below.

Also, be sure to sign-up to [Business Bolts Free](http://Business Bolts Free) and gain access to a detailed Staying Motivated Checklist.

## Comments



1. [Ryan Celestain](#) says:  
[October 1, 2013 at 11:17 pm](#)

I enjoyed reading what the others had to say about staying motivated as well! A good section of advice here!

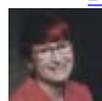
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- o [Lisa Parmley](#) says:  
[October 3, 2013 at 3:52 am](#)

Thanks for sharing your tip in the article Ryan, we really appreciate it.

[Reply](#)



2. [Wendy Owen](#) says:  
[October 1, 2013 at 11:21 pm](#)

Great collection of motivational quotes! I have taken three of them and will start implementing them in my (very small) business.

My tip is when you are becoming frustrated because you can’t get something to work, or the computer is misbehaving, get up and walk away. Do something else for 30 minutes to get rid of the stress before tackling the problem again. Chances are the problem will solve itself.

[Reply](#)



- o *Lisa Parmley* says:  
[October 3, 2013 at 3:52 am](#)

Hi Wendy, nice tip. I know I've had to walk away from work several times due to a misbehaving computer ... sometimes it stops acting up when I come back, but not always!

[Reply](#)



3. *Jan Paul* says:  
[October 3, 2013 at 2:49 am](#)

My tip is to do something that makes you happy, no matter what...  
My way is by picking up the brush and start painting with oils.  
During the painting proces I clean myself of all doubt and fear...  
d afterwards I am ready again for working hard and long hours like a monk.  
e look at my art inspires me again in case something goes wrong to what I want.

[Reply](#)



- o *Lisa Parmley* says:  
[October 3, 2013 at 3:49 am](#)

Hi Jan ... great tip!

[Reply](#)

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