

A Listless Life

Category: Getting Motivated

written by Ronna L. Edelstein | October 1, 2024

The older I get, the less motivated I become. I imagine the dust gathering on my carpet, and I see it covering my walnut-colored end tables with a light gray film. Yet, I cannot push myself to vacuum or clean. The laundry gets done, but not as often as it did when I was younger than springtime. My listless days consist of reading, watching dismal news on CNN, and taking adult education classes via zoom—while often still dressed in my pajamas.

This lack of motivation has a negative effect on my health. A more sedentary life gives me more time to focus on all the aches and pains that now define my aging body. Downtime lets my mind wander to dark places that include thoughts about my mortality and concerns about my adult children and their wellbeing. I know that staying busy is the healthy choice, but—again—I cannot motivate myself to engage in activities that will distract me and enrich my physical, emotional and mental state.

The problem is that my current couch-potato status does not depress me. I look forward to days of laziness. After all, swiping a page in my Kindle or tuning in to an online class does not require much energy but does offer some mental stimulation. I do not compare myself to my mother, a woman who loved to “push and shove” the furniture so she could vacuum every corner and dust every hidden spot. I am content to allow today to melt into tomorrow with little change in my routine.

A part of me—the rational part—understands that I need to get my “oomph” back. I need to make the effort to take a walk when the weather permits me to do so. I need to meet friends for dinner so that I exercise my social muscle. I need to start returning to the nearby college campus for in-person classes and stop enrolling in only zoom ones. I need to get motivated.

Unfortunately, there is no causal relationship between needing and doing. In fact, with each passing day, the gap between the two widens. Until I become totally dissatisfied with my listless life, I guess I will maintain the status quo, despite that inner voice that shouts at me to get motivated and get going.

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