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# If only I wanted to do things as much as I don't

I think each of us has struggled with a lack of determination to act at least once in our lives. And we have dreamt of finding energy and enthusiasm within ourselves. Can this be done at all? Certainly! But it's a process, not magic, and motivation has to be earned as well.

German psychologist Julius Kuhl formulated the concept of action control, which is still used in psychology today. According to the scientist's idea, each of us has a specific level of energy resources in relation to a given time. We deplete this energy by using these resources, i.e. by performing motivated actions. Every day, we operate in one of two modes. The first one is the self-regulation mode, called state orientation by Kuhl. Here, motivation is not particularly necessary because we take care of our general well-being, i.e. our comfort. Instead of learning words, we take a nap. Instead of taking yoga classes, we watch a TV show. Acting in this mode gives us pleasure, but it doesn't bring us any closer to our goal. On the other hand, in the second mode, i.e. action orientation, we make an effort to achieve a certain goal, despite fatigue or attractive counterproposals. The action orientation means that we have an idea in front of our inner eye that we want to achieve, so we push in this direction.

And here we come to the first important point for motivation. When we think about motivation to act, we make a fundamental mistake – we assume that motivation is a force that makes us WANT to do something and IT will result in a determination that will give us wings. However, this is not always the case... Sometimes the motivation is negative in nature – in fact, we don't want to act, but we do it because we know it's necessary. Who likes to memorise vocabulary? No one. Who would like to feel comfortable abroad? Everyone. And here lies the first secret of motivation: we have to be aware of why we put effort into action, we have to remind ourselves of it. When working on long-distance goals, it's easy to lose sight of the main goal, which is separated from us by many months of efforts (because that's how much time it takes to learn a language or lose 10 kilograms). Meanwhile,



it's this goal that is the source of energy that pushes us forward.

American psychologist Roy F. Baumeister developed the concept of the energy model of willpower. According to this scientist's concept, each of us has – at the level of biological predisposition – a different level of energy resources associated with willpower. Some have more of this energy, and these people are more effective in reaching their goals. Others have less of it. But this doesn't mean that the latter are doomed to failure, because we can increase these resources. According to Baumeister, willpower is like a muscle that we can train, gaining weight and power as we train it. Persistent action in one area of life makes us more persistent in other areas. This is evidenced by an experiment conducted by Mark Muraven, professor of psychology at the University at Albany. The scientist asked people who wanted to quit smoking to refrain from eating sweets a few weeks before parting with cigarettes. It turned out that the group that had taken this test was much more persistent in quitting smoking than the group that immediately started fighting their addiction. Conclusion? First, we should make a small and light resolution, so that the next, much more difficult ones, come easier to us.

The professor also believes that perseverance works best if we direct it and distribute it wisely. And this means an action plan. The plan should be divided into stages and sub-stages, together with an indication of how much time we give ourselves for each step. Advantages? We know how to distribute our energy and we can more easily overcome the desire to give up.

And – this is very important! Let's implement "crop rotation" in our lives. Willpower and motivation to act require a subsoil, made of rest, adequate amount of sleep and activities that give us pure satisfaction. •