

# How to Motivate Creative People (Including Yourself)



An e-book for leaders, managers, directors — and other creative people

by Mark McGuinness

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# 1. What's in this E-book for You?



Photo by [lisegagne](#)

## **If you are a leader, manager, director or coach...**

This e-book will help you:

- Understand how motivation affects creativity
- Get better work out of creative people
- Avoid (inadvertently) crushing people's motivation
- Use rewards effectively
- Understand and influence many different types of people.
- Facilitate creative collaboration

## **If you are a creative person (however you define that)...**

It will help you:

- Understand your creative process

- Develop your creative talent
- Find more satisfaction in your work
- Influence other people
- Develop your collaboration skills

### **Topics covered include ...**

- What makes creative people tick
- Why motivation is crucial to creative success
- Why you can't motivate anybody — but what you can do instead
- What Iggy Pop can teach you about management
- Why offering rewards can harm creative performance
- How to write 47 novels before breakfast
- Why some people seem so weird — and how to deal with them
- The positive side of peer pressure

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I'd love to hear what you make of it — please [e-mail me](#) with your feedback. I'd be particularly interested to hear how you get on using the ideas in practice.

And if you'd like me to help you with any of the issues raised in the e-book, have a look at chapter 11 'If You Want Help Taking Action...!'.

**Mark McGuinness**

January 2009

## 2. Why Motivation Is Crucial to Creative Performance



*Photo by [skodonnell](#)*

If you are a leader or manager your job is to get the best work out of the people on your team. Traditional approaches to corporate management often rely on 'the carrot and the stick' — offering rewards for good performance, using managerial authority to command people, and penalising failure to comply.

But creative work is different.

You're probably aware that creative people have a reputation for being free spirits who hate being told what to do. So it won't surprise you to hear that wielding the big stick will have a negative impact on their work.

But did you know that you can do just as much harm with the carrot?

### **What Makes Creative People Different?**

We all recognise the stereotype of the creative person — brilliant, temperamental, introverted, alternately consumed with pride then racked with self-doubt. Difficult. Eccentric. Possibly mad. Psychologists have devoted enormous efforts to trying to analyse, define and measure the 'creative personality' — but it may interest you to know that they have not had much success.

Where they have succeeded however, is in demonstrating the impact of different types of motivation on the creative process.

Harvard Business School professor Teresa Amabile has conducted extensive research into the effect of motivation on creative performance, particularly in organisational settings. In an article titled 'How to Kill Creativity', she lays out the basic problem:

In today's knowledge economy, creativity is more important than ever. But many companies unwittingly employ managerial practices that kill it. How? By crushing their employees' intrinsic motivation — the strong internal desire to do something based on interests and passions.

Managers don't kill creativity on purpose. Yet in the pursuit of productivity, efficiency, and control — all worthy business imperatives — they undermine creativity. It doesn't have to be that way ... business imperatives can comfortably coexist with creativity. But managers will have to change their thinking first.

(Theresa Amabile, 'How to Kill Creativity', *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1998)

Amabile's research has demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is strongly linked to creative performance. In one experiment she worked with two groups of children. The first group were given paper and paint and told to paint a picture. The second group were told that if they painted a really good picture they would be rewarded with a sweet. When the resulting pictures were evaluated, the first group was judged to have produced consistently better pictures than the second group. Amabile's explanation is that the first group was focused on painting for its own sake (**intrinsic motivation**) whereas the second group was distracted by the thought of the reward (**extrinsic motivation**) and so failed to give the painting sufficient attention to produce something really good.

In another study, described by former advertising creative director Gordon Torr in his book [Managing Creative People](#), Amabile and her colleagues invited some art experts to assess the work of 29 professional artists. Unknown to the experts was the fact that each artist had been asked to submit 10 commissioned works and 10 non-commissioned works. Overall, the experts rated the commissioned works as less creative than the others — the only exception being commissions that "enable the artist to do something interesting or exciting", i.e. in which there was a strong component of intrinsic motivation in addition to the extrinsic motivation that came from the commission.

Amabile's research has led her to formulate "the intrinsic motivation principle of creativity":

People will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself — not by external pressures.  
(Amabile, 'How to Kill Creativity')

These external pressures — i.e. extrinsic motivations — even include 'positive' incentives such as money, since as Amabile points out, "a cash reward can't magically prompt people to find their work interesting if in their hearts they feel it is dull".

So to get the best out of creative workers, managers need to help them discover meaning and interest in their work — over and above their professional obligations and the company's commercial interests.

### **Bad News for Managers**

You can't improve creative performance by giving people orders, showering them with praise or paying them more money. Expecting people to do outstanding creative work 'because they are paid to do it' may sound perfectly reasonable — but it doesn't work.

That isn't to say that creative types are not interested in money and other rewards — sadly, it's not that simple. As we'll see in chapter 6, rewards are very important to creative people.

Like the creative process itself, creative motivations are complex. To get the best out of creative people you need to understand something of the nature of creativity, the effect of rewards on creative performance, the individual personalities you're dealing with, and the way they interact as a group.

If your job involves getting top performance out of workers engaged on creative projects, you're in a paradoxical position: on the one hand, your success depends on getting them fired up to do their best; but on the other, the traditional management 'levers' — money, status and privilege — may actually do more harm than good.

The goal of this e-book is to help you resolve this paradox.

### **Good News for Managers**

Because creative people are not motivated primarily by money, it's possible to get outstanding performance from them without a limitless budget.

And because there are no simple solutions to motivating creative people, it presents you with a very interesting challenge.

If you like the idea of an interesting challenge, it suggests that *you too are a creative person*. So the idea of finding creative ways to inspire and engage your team will probably appeal to you.

The rest of this e-book aims to stimulate your managerial creativity.



### 3. What Gets You out of Bed in the Morning?



*Photo by [BALLISTIK!](#)*

It is five o'clock in the morning, in the middle of January, in the heart of the Victorian age. An old man is climbing the stairs, lit by a candle on the tray in his hands. The tray also holds a pot of coffee and a china cup. When he reaches the top of the stairs, he pauses for breath and rests the tray on a small table. Straightening, he knocks three times on the bedroom door, picks up the tray and enters.

As he approaches the bed, he can make out a head with an enormous beard spilling over the blanket. The master blinks owlishly as his servant approaches, places the candle on the bedside table and proceeds to pour the coffee.

The beard belongs to Anthony Trollope, the acclaimed Victorian novelist, who will author 47 novels in his lifetime, as well as a handful of travel books and numerous short stories. This would be an impressive output for any writer — yet most of these works were written while Trollope was engaged on a distinguished full-time career in the Post Office. Hence the early mornings, as described in his Autobiography:

It was my practice to be at my table every morning at 5.30a.m.; and it was also my practice to allow myself no mercy. An old groom, whose business it was to call me, and to whom I paid £5 a year extra for the duty, allowed himself no mercy. During all those years at Waltham Cross he was never once late with the coffee which it was his duty to bring me. I

do not know that I ought not to feel that I owe more to him than to any one else for the success I have had. By beginning at that hour I could complete my literary work before I dressed for breakfast.

(Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography*, 1883)

What went through Trollope's mind as he lay there in bed, hearing the knock at the door and watching his manservant pour the coffee each morning? How did he feel? What made him get out of bed instead of turning over for another forty winks?

Was he thinking of the joy of creation, of his characters and the next chapter in their story? Did he bound out of bed, eager to put pen to paper and lose himself in his imagination? Maybe. It's hard to imagine anyone writing 47 novels without taking some pleasure in the process, and this must have been factored into his plans. I would guess that once seated at his desk, he was soon absorbed in the pleasure of writing for its own sake — otherwise known as **intrinsic motivation**. But as he was lying there, acutely aware of the contrast between the warm bed and the cold January air? I'm not so sure.

Was he thinking of the money he would make from his books? When the *Autobiography* was published after his death, Trollope's readers were shocked at his frank admission that he wrote for cash. His reputation suffered when critics condemned him for such base **extrinsic motivation**. Again, I'm sure that financial reward was a large factor in Trollope's resolve to get up so early each morning. But as he lay there in bed, poised between sleeping and waking? Did gold coins dance before his eyes and lure him to the table? Maybe, maybe not.

Was he simply a very disciplined man, focused on his desire for achievement and made of sterner stuff than ordinary mortals? In this case, allowing himself "no mercy" would simply be down to his character, his **personal motivation**. But in that case, why would he need someone else to bring his coffee and get him out of bed? Surely he'd trust himself to get up on his own?

Imagine for a moment that you are the great man, lying in that bed. It's nice and warm. You're sleepy. As you poke your hand out from the covers, you can feel the frost in the air. You'd like nothing more than to roll over and go back to sleep. But what would you tell the servant? "Sorry, it's too cold today"? "I'm tired"? "Can I just have five more minutes?" Or even worse — wake up later to find you nodded off in front of him... Imagine the loss of face!

You're awake now, sitting bolt upright, assuming the mantle of head of the household. In a moment you're out of bed and into character, slipping into the dressing gown he holds for you, thanking him for the coffee, making small talk about the weather and the fireplace. A few short steps and you're ensconced at your writing table, haloed by candlelight. As the manservant leaves the room, you feel a twinge of gratitude, even of solidarity. And appreciation of the effectiveness of this kind of **interpersonal motivation**.

Or maybe it was just the coffee.

Trollope's motivation for writing was clearly complex, with different types of motivation playing different roles. Yes he wanted to make money, but his chosen path must have been influenced by a love of reading and telling stories. He must have been disciplined and ambitious to plan such a punishing schedule for himself — yet he clearly did not trust himself to stick to it alone. So he set

a motivational trap for himself, baiting it with his vanity — at the crucial moment, he knew that he could not stay in bed without humiliating himself in front of his social inferior. No wonder he was so ready to acknowledge the old man's contribution to his success.

Compared to life in a modern creative agency or studio, the creative process in Trollope's bedroom was pretty straightforward. The production work only involved two people, although publishers and the rest of the literary world came into play further down the line. The Victorian Post Office was very advanced for its day, but didn't have to deal with anything approaching the complexity or speed of today's global communications networks. Yet even in such a simple creative system we can trace several different types of motivation.

How much more complex then, are the motivations, drives and influences at play in the 21st century creative economy? Trollope's example shows us that managing yourself is hard enough, but what if you are a manager responsible for the work of many different creative professionals? How can you balance the desires of these famously independent-minded workers with the competing pressures of your organisation, your clients and the marketplace?

You know people do their best work when they are most committed to it — but how do you keep their motivation high when things get tough? What can you do if you don't have pots of money to throw at the problem? Or when somebody is being paid a small fortune and still doesn't seem interested?

If you're a manager, this e-book will offer you practical options for approaching these challenges. Whether or not you manage other people, if creativity is central to your work then it should also help you fine-tune your own motivations, for maximum creative satisfaction and professional success.

## 4. You Can't Motivate Anybody



Photo by [Ken@Okinawa](#)

'Motivation' is often spoken about as if it were some kind of magic potion that you inject into people, or get them to imbibe before setting to work, like [Asterix](#) taking a tot from his hip flask before laying into the Roman legions. According to this view, it's the manager's job to motivate employees, like the stereotypical football coach bellowing at his charges through a microphone. Sometimes that can be a great idea, but as Arsene Wenger says, you can only really shout at people a couple of times a season if you want it to be effective — if you do it every week they just get used to it and ignore you. And if you have to shout, encourage and cajole your people to put the effort in every week, then something's wrong.

I once went to a seminar with psychotherapy guru [Bill O'Hanlon](#) where he talked about motivation in therapy. He drew an analogy with curling, the winter sport in which players take turns to throw a stone across the ice towards a target, while their teammates sweep the ice in front of it with brushes, to reduce friction and help the stone slide further. According to Bill, it's not the therapist's job to throw the stone — the impetus for change has to come from the client. The therapist's role is to sweep the ice and help the client keep going, facilitating rather than pushing. I think the same applies to management — if you've got people who put plenty of force and direction into their throw, you can do a fantastic job scrubbing away the ice in front of them. But if there's no energy coming from them, you can sweep all you like but the stone won't move.

So you can't 'motivate' anybody else. You can show them the target, smooth the way and cheer them along. But motivation is something you draw out rather than put in.

## **Unfortunately, You CAN Demotivate People**

‘Low motivation’ is sometimes offered as pseudo-diagnosis of an employee who is not performing as desired. But just about every time I’ve had the pleasure of working with such a designated ‘problem employee’ I find them to be incredibly motivated — just not about the things their manager wants them to do. Sometimes they are motivated about stuff that has nothing to do with their work — their allotment, their band, their sports team, their recipe for sweet-and-sour pork or their upcoming ascent of Kangchenjunga. These are often people in the wrong job, or people who see their job simply as a way to pay the bills.

I’ve encountered fewer of these cases in the creative industries than in other sectors, probably because the competition for doing sexy creative jobs is usually so fierce that you have to be pretty driven to get in the door in the first place. But sadly I have encountered the other kind of ‘low motivation’ — where someone’s enthusiasm and commitment have been worn down or destroyed altogether by experiences at work, often involving their manager. Rightly or wrongly, these people have got the impression that their manager doesn’t care about (a) them as a person, (b) their contribution to the team, or both. They’re asking themselves ‘Why should I bother if it doesn’t make any difference?’. And the thing is, the manager often doesn’t realise how little it could take to turn things round.

Once upon a time I was managing a software project. At five o’clock the day before our first big demonstration to the client, I received the delivery from the programmers, several days late. To my horror I discovered a major problem that would involve at least a day’s work to fix. Eager to impress, I stayed up all night to do it, painstakingly cutting and pasting hundreds of photos and captions into place. This wasn’t the first time I had worked late into the night. The next morning, the managing director swept into the office and asked for a preview of the presentation. Halfway through, he stopped me and pointed out a missing caption — “Who added these captions?” he asked. “Well I did, but —” I started, before he interrupted: “So that’s your fault then, isn’t it?”

At that moment, he lost me.

I never worked past 5.30 again, let alone weekends or all nighters. It wasn’t long before I started looking for a new job. I was always professional, but I realised it wasn’t worth going the extra mile for him. Looking back on it now, I guess he probably thought he was setting high standards, pushing me to do better next time. He probably never realised he’d shot himself in the foot — and how little it would have taken to maintain my enthusiasm.

Going back to the curling analogy: as a manager you can’t throw the stone yourself, but you can easily block it if you’re not careful.

## **So How Do I Make Sure My People Are Motivated?**

You can’t. Not 100% sure. As [Mark Earls](#) would put it, managers are accelerators and influencers — but ultimately not controllers. People always have a choice.

But although you can’t guarantee motivation, there are several things you can do to make it more likely.

It may sound banal, but the most important thing is to hire motivated people. Remember, you can't put motivation into people, only draw out and amplify what's there already. Whenever you make a decision to hire or work with someone else, you obviously need to consider their talent, experience and qualifications — but don't forget to ask: How committed is this person to our shared goal? If you can't answer 'very' then you could be in for trouble, no matter how good they look on paper.

Once people are on your team, I suggest you ask yourself two basic questions:

1. How do I tap into their core motivations and amplify them?
2. How do I avoid blocking these motivations?

These questions are really two sides of the same coin, but as my example shows, it can be frighteningly easy to fall into the trap of 2 when you think you're doing 1.

### **Four Kinds of Motivation**

To answer the two questions above, in my next four chapters, I'll consider four different kinds of motivation — the basic levers of influence available to you as a leader or manager:

1. **Intrinsic motivation** – the attraction of the work itself
2. **Extrinsic motivation** – rewards for doing the work
3. **Personal motivation** – individual values
4. **Interpersonal motivation** – social influences

All four motivations apply to most kinds of work, but I'll explain why I think it's particularly important to get the right balance between them when you're dealing with creative work and workers who see themselves as creative.

As well as describing the four types of motivation, I'll suggest some ways that you can use them to facilitate top creative performance.

## 5. The Joy of Work — Intrinsic Motivation



*Photo by [aleksey.const](#)*

In Seth Godin's new book [Tribes](#), he tells the story of being on holiday in Jamaica, unable to sleep and getting up at 4 AM to check his e-mail in the hotel lobby. As he's sitting there quietly minding his own business, a couple of partygoers roll in from a nightclub. One of them gives him a withering look and hisses 'in a harsh whisper a little quieter than a yell':

isn't it sad? That guy comes here on vacation and he's stuck checking his e-mail. He can't even enjoy his two weeks off.

And the funny thing is, says Seth, 'Other than sleeping, there was nothing I'd rather have been doing at that moment — because I'm lucky enough to have a job where I get to make change happen'. Seth is a classic case of a worker driven by **intrinsic motivation** — i.e. the work is rewarding in itself, something he does for the sheer pleasure of it. Many creative workers say 'I love my work so much I do it for free', but Seth take this further — according to one of his recent blog posts, he goes out of his way to avoid making money from most of his work.

I'm not as hardcore as Seth about the money part, but I know how he feels about work. I love my work. I love reading, writing, researching and thinking of ideas. I love spending time with interesting, challenging, talented creative people. I love making new connections, between people, ideas, skills and resources. I love making things — my [Wishful Thinking blog](#), [my poems](#), my e-books, [Lateral Action](#), my courses, [animated videos](#) — and who knows what next?



And the chances are, if you use your creativity at work, you feel the same way. You chose your job or your line of business not just because of the money or status but because it's something you passionately want to do. You started off with a lot of enthusiasm and unless it's been crushed or blocked, you probably still have it in spades.

Maybe you take this for granted but in a lot of places the idea of enjoying your work would be seen as pretty weird. You'd be regarded as mad or sucking up to the boss. When I worked in a factory it was pretty well universally assumed among the workforce that we all hated being there. No one started work until the buzzer rang. Machines were switched off a minute or two before it rang for breaks, so that you didn't find yourself shutting it down in a few precious seconds of your own time. At the end of the day, some people literally ran out the door. Whenever we talked about work it was with a kind of gallows humour. The only possible reason you could have for wanting to work late was that you were a 'grabber' — i.e. you wanted the extra money from overtime.

But workplaces that foster creativity tend to be different. People want to work there — not just to be there, enjoying the trappings and rewards, but to *work* there. You might hear complaints about people — colleagues, clients, bosses etc — or about systems and processes. But you are less likely to hear complaints about the work itself — unless it's not challenging, difficult, interesting or plain good enough. In fact, a large proportion of the complaints about people and systems tend to focus on the negative impact on the work — the client wasn't brave enough, so the ad is going to be too tame, or the deadline was too tight so you didn't have time to render the detail properly.

In [\*The Rise of the Creative Class\*](#), Richard Florida analyses a survey of IT workers' motivations, conducted by *Information Week* in 2001. Over 20,000 workers were asked the question 'What matters most to you about your job?', and given a choice of 38 different factors. Florida points out that not only did money (an extrinsic motivation) rank only fourth, behind three different types of intrinsic motivation, but that 'nine of the ten highly valued job factors are intrinsic'. Here they are, as ranked in order of importance by the survey respondents:

1. Challenge and responsibility
2. Flexibility
3. A stable work environment
4. Compensation
5. Professional development
6. Peer recognition
7. Stimulating colleagues and managers
8. Exciting job content
9. Organisational culture
10. Location and community



I might quibble over details — does peer recognition count as intrinsic motivation or an extrinsic reward? — but Florida's analysis makes it overwhelmingly clear that these IT workers were far more motivated by intrinsic motivations (qualities inherent in the work itself) than by extrinsic motivations (rewards given for doing the work). And as he points out, IT workers are a fairly conservative sample of creative professionals:

they have been said to be a fairly conventional sector of the Creative Class. They are certainly a good deal more mainstream than artists, musicians or advertising copywriters. On the other, IT workers are set to care a great deal about money.

If you are responsible for managing a creative team, the exciting implication of all this is that your workers start from a baseline of enthusiasm. If you can act as a catalyst for this enthusiasm, and ensure that it's directed towards the business goals of the organisation, you and your team have the potential to achieve spectacular results. Thousands of managers out there would love to be in your shoes.

And the frightening implication is, as we saw in the previous chapter, you have a power to crush that enthusiasm that may well be greater than you realise. Handle with care!

### **Intrinsic Motivation Leads to Creative Excellence**

If you're a manager then you might be forgiven for thinking 'That's all very well for creative types who like to have fun at work, but this is a business, not a poetry class. I get paid to deliver results, not to keep everyone happy. What difference does it make to me whether they're enjoying themselves?'

Remember Theresa Amabile's intrinsic motivation principle of creativity:

People will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself — not by external pressures.

Amabile's research findings are echoed by these words from Chris Jones, Chief Executive of J Walter Thompson worldwide:

People who are really good aren't motivated by more money. They set themselves extraordinarily high standards. You won't get their standards to go any higher by saying 'here's some more money'.

(Quoted in [Tantrums & Talent: How to Get the Best from Creative People](#), by Winston Fletcher, 2000)

So if you're a hard-nosed manager focused on results, facilitate excellence by making sure your team are *focused on the task itself*, rather than dangling external rewards in front of them.

## **Types of Intrinsic Motivation**

### **Challenge**

One day in the late 1970s, Sony co-founder Akio Morita called a meeting of his chief engineers. On the table in front of him he placed a very small block of wood. He told them that their task was to make a hi-fi no bigger than the block. At the time this was an outrageous challenge — but one that fired the imagination of his engineers and led to the release of the Walkman in 1979. Creative people like nothing more than a challenge — the more difficult, the better.

### **Interest**

Creatives have a very low boredom threshold. One of the most common complaints among junior creatives is that the senior people take all the interesting work and leave them with the routine stuff. And they're usually right. In some companies, the opportunity to work on complex, interesting briefs is seen as a right that has to be earned. Inevitably, a certain amount of fairly routine work needs to be done in any company; a common way of persuading people to do it is to promise them something more interesting 'next time'.

### **Learning**

Challenge and interest fuel the learning process. A large part of the satisfaction of creative work comes from discovering something you didn't know before and developing new skills in the process. This is what Honda mean when they say that problems are a joy.

### **Meaning**

When the partygoers looked at Seth Godin in the hotel lobby, they only saw a geek checking his e-mail. They didn't realise that those e-mails connect Seth with a global audience of hundreds of thousands. They had no idea that for Seth, writing e-mails, blog posts, books and presentations means he is helping to change the world. They only saw the superficial activity, not the meaning, and missed the attraction.

### **Purpose**

Work becomes more attractive when we feel it is achieving something important. There's a world of difference between photocopying an expenses claim and photocopying inspiring source material for your novel. It can be fun to design a website, but it's the website of your favourite band or a charity in the business of saving people's lives, the task goes beyond fun and becomes compelling. Because it involves external results, you might be tempted to consider purpose as an extensive reward — but I'm not talking about a personal reward you receive for having done the work, but an effect that is integral to the work itself, usually affecting people or situations beyond your usual sphere of influence. So does purpose = completely selfless action? Absolutely not. This sense of purpose *is* the reward.

## **Creative flow**

I've written before about psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of [creative flow](#) — the state of intense absorption and pleasure that for many of us is the main motivation for doing creative work. The cause of creative flow is usually a combination of the intrinsic motivations I've just listed, particularly a balance between the challenge in front of you and your levels of skill. The result is what happens when all the different elements resolve themselves into a highly focused state, experienced as sheer joy.

## **Managing Intrinsic Motivation**

I could easily have called this section 'nailing jelly to a post'. By definition, intrinsic motivation works through spontaneity, pleasure and fascination — none of which can be served up to order. No wonder managing creative people is often described as 'herding cats', notoriously wilful and independent creatures. But if you can't control it, you can coax it to some extent. Here are a few suggestions:

### **Do something inspiring**

Look at the photo of Iggy Pop at the start of this chapter. Does your work make you feel like that? If not, why not?

*Iggy is inspiring because he is inspired.* It's an understatement to say that he loves what he does — looking at his face, you can see he *has* to do it. He's fulfilling his purpose on earth. Are you? If so, you won't need to worry about motivating yourself — and you'll find it easy to inspire others. If not, things are more difficult. Creative people are hardwired to sniff out a fake. You can't inspire them with company goals, but show them *your* passion for the work you do together, and you're in with a chance.

If you came to this e-book looking for quick fixes and management techniques that will work regardless of whether you care about the work itself, you may be disappointed at this point. Sorry. That's just the way it is, where creativity is concerned. If you don't believe me, have another look at Iggy's face.

### **Set them a challenge**

Remember, creatives love a challenge. How can you make the brief more difficult? More inspiring? More extreme? On the flipside, there are few things more demotivating than a clearly impossible goal. Why bother if you can't succeed?

Challenging but not impossible — it's a delicate balance.

### **Define the goal clearly**

If there's one thing worse than a boring or easy brief, it's a vague one. 'Write a story' is terrible. 'Write a superhero story' isn't much better. 'Write a Batman story' at least gives me something to work with. 'Write a Batman story in which his identity is exposed', or 'where he lets himself and

the city down', or 'where he loses all his gadgets and has to rely on his wits' — now I've got something to get my teeth into. Never underestimate the value of [creative constraints](#).

### **Eliminate distractions and interruptions**

Help them concentrate. Don't interrupt them — or let others interrupt them — unless it's important AND urgent. As far as possible, help them 'batch' meetings, conversations, and day-to-day tasks so that they don't keep interfering with focused work. Whatever distractions arise, remind them that the work itself is their primary responsibility.

### **Match the work to the worker**

Make it your business to know everyone on the team, including the kind of work they love to do. Whenever possible, give them tasks that suit their talents. Their reward will be more job satisfaction. Yours will be better results.

### **Let them get on with it**

This is a tricky one. Creatives hate being micromanaged and told what to do every step of the way. But ultimately you're accountable for the work, so you need to make sure they are delivering on brief. If you're a creative yourself, you'll have to deal with the added temptation to show them how you would do it, and the fact that they may approach it in a very different way. There are no easy answers, but it helps if you're very clear about **what** you are asking them to make, and your criteria for success, and then leave **how** to do it up to them.

### **Reward behaviours, not results**

At the US software developer SAS, managers are trained to reward those responsible for new initiatives before it becomes obvious whether the initiative has succeeded or failed. Why? Because their aim is to foster a culture of innovation. If they only rewarded successful projects, employees would be much more careful about proposing and acting on new ideas. This way, the company benefits from many more ideas and people who are more prepared to take a risk and try things out.

### **Coach creative flow**

Coaching is a great way of coaxing creative flow out of people — have a look at my blog post on [How coaching creates creative flow](#) for some tips.

## **Over to You**

*How important to you are intrinsic motivations such as challenge, learning and creative flow — relative to external rewards like money or status?*

*Can you think of any other intrinsic motivations to add to my list?*

*Can you think of any other ways to facilitate intrinsic motivation?*

[Join the discussion by leaving a comment on the original blog post.](#)

## 6. Rewards for Work — Extrinsic Motivation



Photo by [adventtr](#)

“I went into the business for money and the art grew out of it. If people are disillusioned by that remark, I can’t help it. It’s the truth.”

(Charlie Chaplin, Academy Award acceptance speech, 1972)

Show me a professional artist or creative with no ambition and I’ll show you a liar. No matter how much we may love our art for its own sake, very few of us will turn our noses up at the rewards on offer, such as money, fame, status and privilege. Such rewards are known as **extrinsic motivations**, because they are external to the work itself. In many creative fields, the extrinsic rewards on offer are so spectacular that competition is cutthroat and hordes of young (and not so young) hopefuls are prepared to invest huge amounts of time, effort and energy for a shot at the big time.

‘But hang on a minute — didn’t you say in the last chapter that intrinsic motivation is critical for creative success? And that most creative professionals are more motivated by the joy of work than by money?’

Absolutely. If you want to produce outstanding creative work, then while you’re working you need to be 100% focused on the task in hand. In fact, you probably need to be obsessed by your work. But that doesn’t mean you don’t care about the rewards. Have another look at the list of IT workers’ motivations in the last chapter — ‘compensation’ is not the highest ranked motivation, but it still comes in fourth place, above professional development, peer recognition and ‘exciting job content’. Money may be relatively less important than things like challenge and flexibility, but

it's still important. IT is a reasonably well-paid profession, so it could be argued that these workers are sufficiently well off that they have the luxury of not having to worry about money. Unlike the young Charlie Chaplin, who ended up in a south London workhouse after his father had abandoned him, and his mother was committed to an asylum.

Have another look at Chaplin's words. He didn't say that his art was *driven* by money, but that he '*went into the business for money*', implying that this was a hard-headed career choice. He also said that 'the art *grew out*' of the business, suggesting something separate but related, as if the business and his professional ambition were the soil, and his art a beautiful flower that emerged from it.

As we have seen, Theresa Amabile is a strong advocate of the intrinsic motivation principle in creativity — but some of her studies suggest that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can be mutually reinforcing, provided extrinsic factors are kept in perspective. This is her description of the most effective attitude for a creative person to have towards the two kinds of motivation:

I am well aware of my strong intrinsic interest in my work, and that can't be easily shaken; I certainly enjoy the benefits of wealth, fame, and critical acclaim, but I place all that secondary to my own passion for what I do.  
(*'Within You, Without You: the Social Psychology of Creativity, and Beyond'*, in Runco & Albert (Eds) *Theories of Creativity*, 1990)

It is as though art and business are parallel rails in any creative career. Both are essential for success and leaning on one at the expense of the other can be disastrous. Lean too far towards the rewards and you become a hack, churning out mediocre work to pay the bills; neglect the money side of things and life becomes too stressful to focus on your work properly.

Managers of creative professionals are faced with the same dilemma. On the one hand, it's in their interest to spend company money wisely. But if they fail to reward people according to their expectations, this can become a point of contention and a distraction, affecting the team's performance. Think of the premiership footballer whose form dips during protracted contract negotiations. Before we look at options for striking the right balance, it's worth reviewing the different kinds of extrinsic reward on offer for creative work.

## **Types of Extrinsic Motivation**

### **Money**

In the last chapter we saw that money isn't necessarily the most powerful motivation for creative work. Great creators set themselves very high standards anyway. But money can be a huge motivation for a creative career, especially if you're as poverty stricken as the young Chaplin. Like Chaplin, money could well motivate you to put in the hours necessary for success. Which is fine, as long as the work itself is your focus within those hours.

Money is also a clearly defined way of 'keeping score', measuring how highly regarded you are by your employer or your audience. You may be very happy with your salary, until you learn that the guy at the next desk is earning twice as much as you — especially if you fancy yourself as better

than him. (We'll be saying more about this when we look at interpersonal motivation in chapter 8.) And violinist Nigel Kennedy writes in his autobiography 'I think if you're playing music or doing art you can in some way measure the amount of communication you are achieving by how much money it is bringing in for you and for those around you'.

## **Fame and recognition**

There's a bit of a showoff in most creators. Even if you don't yearn to see your name in lights, you're probably not averse to a bit of public recognition for your efforts. Your 'public' may be your team, a select group of your peers, the industry critics, a subculture of devoted fans, or the public itself.

Fame and recognition can serve as a kind of currency even in fields devoid of monetary rewards. The term 'egoboo' is used within the open source programming community, referring to the 'ego boost' you receive from being publicly credited for good work. So even though there's no money involved, it's not strictly true to say that open source programmers work 'for nothing'. Poetry is another creative medium with very little cash on offer, but which operates on a kind of 'reputation economy' — the higher your reputation, the more prestigious your publisher will be, the more magazines will want to take your work, the higher up the bill you will be on readings, etc. I once asked a famous poet whether he thought the spirit of 'egoboo' was alive and well in the poetry world: he immediately sat up very straight and looked me in the eye. 'Oh yes!' he said with feeling.

## **Awards**

Creators love a good awards ceremony — as long as they or their favourites are on the shortlist. Every year, there are plenty of commentators ready to deride awards ceremonies as tacky, elitist or simply irrelevant to 'hard' measures of business success. And every year, they are ignored in the feverish speculations, celebrations and recriminations before during and after the ceremonies. In some organisations a mere rumour that a certain project 'might be up for an award' can prompt outsiders to flock to the project and insiders to redouble their efforts. Where the rumours begin, and how hard management works to quell them, is often hard to establish.

## **Praise and appreciation**

What fame and awards are to the public sphere, praise and appreciation are to the private. You may be perfectly happy to shun the limelight, while treasuring praise from people you respect — such as your peers, your boss or your mentor. And while a difficult task may be worth your while, a thankless task is not. [Katie Konrath](#) left a heartfelt comment to this effect when I published the chapter on intrinsic motivation on my blog:

When I started, I threw my heart into that job. I really wanted to help the company succeed, and I was willing to work as much as it took. But I became really discouraged working for a manager who never took the time to acknowledge my efforts (or even notice them!)

Had my manager even bothered to say "thank you so much for helping us get through this crisis successfully" on a regular basis, I would probably still be there working my fingers to the bone for them. But she didn't and it drove me away.



## **Status and privilege**

In [Confessions of an Advertising Man](#), David Ogilvy has nothing but admiration for his former boss's habit of rubbing his nose in it:

We cooks were badly paid, but M. Pitard made so much from the commissions which supplies paid him that he could afford to live in a chateau. Far from concealing his wealth from the rest of us, he drove to work in a taxi, carried it came with a gold head, and dressed, when off duty, like an international banker. This flaunting of privilege stimulated or ambition to follow in his footsteps.

It's not always so blatant, but look around any office or studio and you'll see signs of status and privilege in people's behaviour. At meetings, the intern is unlikely to sit at the head of the table. The creative director probably doesn't do the morning 'bun run'. As long as status is clearly linked to achievement, and achievement is seen to be fairly assessed, striving for seniority can be a powerful ingredient in the motivational mix.

## **Opportunities**

Why are so many people prepared to work for little or nothing, making tea, running errands, ordering taxis and doing the photocopying, on film sets, in ad agencies, in TV and fashion studios? Because it gives them a foot in the door, an opportunity to be in the right place when more exciting positions become available. Ogilvy didn't choose the life of a brigade chef for its own sake — he had his eye on M. Pitard's gold cane.

## **Obligations and deadlines**

As soon as you sign a contract or make a promise to someone else, you have an obligation to fulfil. Sometimes this can be just the push you need to get you through the wall of resistance that would otherwise lead to procrastination. I occasionally have coaching clients who say to me 'I know exactly what I need to do, but I'm more likely to do it if I've promised you I'll do it by a certain date'. The funny thing is, the work is usually quite enjoyable when you get going and intrinsic motivation takes over. But to get you going in the first place, you sometimes need the extrinsic motivation of 'deadline magic'.

## **Bribes**

According to legend, Dylan Thomas was so unreliable at fulfilling contracts to write radio plays for the BBC that his producer used to literally lock him in a room with nothing but a typewriter and telephone. When Thomas had finished an act, he was allowed to use the telephone to ring the producer — who would then reward him with a tot of whisky, and the promise of another when he'd written the next act. This kind of thing probably isn't a viable long-term strategy, but if you know your team's foibles and desires, then dangling the carrot of an (ethical) bribe could get you out of the occasional tight spot.

## Threats

As with bribes, we need to watch our ethical footing here. We also need to be mindful of effectiveness — it won't be news to you that managing by threats and coercion leads to pretty poor performance. But you can't let people get away with murder either. Sometimes you need to challenge people's behaviour, and make it very clear that Bad Things Will Happen if they don't change their ways. Some of us are more comfortable than others at doing this. If you're not a confrontational type, then you can often get a surprising amount of leverage by highlighting consequences in a chain of events, rather than making personal threats. For example:

I know you think it doesn't matter what time you come in as long as you get the job done. But the MD disagrees and it's his company. He's asked me why the rule should be different for you than for everyone else in the office, and I'm struggling to come up with a good reason. Can you help me with that?

Sometimes that works. Other times people respond better to a good kick up the backside. (Metaphorical, of course.)

## Managing Extrinsic Motivation

### Don't rely on extrinsic motivations

If you try to motivate people using nothing but money, praise, flattery, opportunities, privileges, deadlines, bribes and threats you end up with a crew of mercenaries, egomaniacs, toadies, opportunists and cowards. It worked pretty well for Blackbeard, but it may not be such a good fit for you. Remember, if you want top quality work, focus on intrinsic motivations to get people excited about the work first and rewards second.

### Get the balance right

Extrinsic factors may have limited value as motivators but you can't afford to ignore them — because they make excellent demotivators. If someone feels they are not sufficiently appreciated or rewarded, this will prey on their mind and distract them from their work. Their griping and sniping could also undermine the rest of the team. It can take a fair amount of negotiation and mutual adjustment before all parties are happy with the working arrangements. In fact, a bit of uncomfortable negotiation can even be a reassuring thing — if everyone agrees to your terms too quickly, you may be offering too much.

### Calibrate

Satisfaction is usually relative. 60K feels a great salary if everyone else is on 45K. But if a new person is brought in at 80K, it suddenly feels inadequate. If you're responsible for deciding on financial rewards, calibrating average remuneration within your industry or company gives you a good starting point. You don't have to follow the market but you'll have some idea of how well your offer matches people's expectations.

Calibration, or benchmarking norms, also applies to other extrinsic rewards: I've noticed that software developers tend to be pretty robust in giving and receiving feedback, whereas performing artists are often more fulsome in their mutual praise, and more tactful when delivering criticism.

### **Notice what has the biggest impact**

Some people are squarely focused on financial remuneration. Others are more interested in recognition and reputation. Others have plenty of enthusiasm but need a looming deadline before they really knuckle down. The better you know your team, the more obvious it will become to you which forms of motivation they respond to — positively and negatively. And their motivations may be very different from your own — as we'll see in the next chapter, when we look at personal motivation.

### **What Do You Find Most Rewarding?**

*What kind of extrinsic rewards are most important to you?*

*Which are the most prominent in your industry or creative field?*

*If you're a manager, which extrinsic rewards have the biggest impact on your team?*

[Join the discussion by leaving a comment on the original blog post.](#)

## 7. Core Values — Personal Motivation

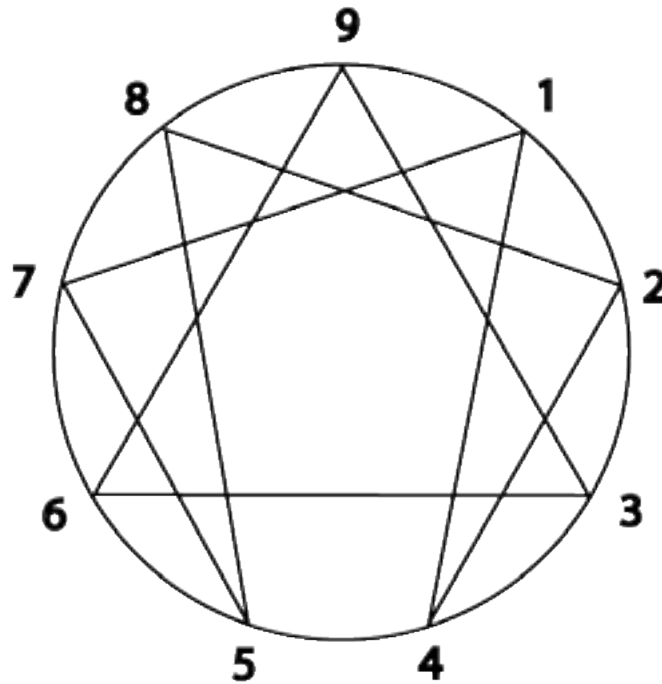


Image by [Sandra Renshaw](#)

**Manager:** I just don't understand it. I've tried everything, but he still doesn't get it. He just carries on doing the opposite of what he's supposed to do.

**Me:** Well I've heard a lot about why **you** want him to do it, and a lot of reasons why he 'should' do it. But the question I haven't heard the answer to is 'What's in it for him?'

(Long silence.)

**Manager:** That's a very good question.

I'm in no danger of breaking confidentiality by telling you this conversation — I've had it countless times, with managers at all levels, in many different companies. And I hope it doesn't suggest that I'm a particularly brilliant coach — it *is* a good question, but I didn't invent it. And the main reason it occurs to me when it doesn't occur to a manager is that he or she is immersed in the situation, while I'm in the position of a privileged outsider. To the manager, it's obvious why a particular outcome is important — for the company, for the team, even for the individual concerned. He or she can't understand why the team member in question doesn't take it as seriously.

Sometimes the situation can be resolved by explaining exactly what, why and how things should be done differently. But at other times the employee carries on regardless, apparently oblivious to

the manager's threats and entreaties. Words like 'difficult', 'lazy' and 'unmotivated' start to be bandied about.

It's time to look at things differently.

The basic problem is one of empathy. It is partly down to the situation — because the manager sees the big picture clearly and is under so much pressure to deliver results, it's easy to forget that others may not have the same understanding or urgency. But it's also down to a fundamental blindspot of human beings — it's so easy for each of us to assume that everyone has the same values and priorities that we do.

Why do some people spend all their time slaving away in an office to amass money and status, while others renounce all worldly possessions and live in a monastery on one meal a day? Why do some people travel the world as serial vagabonds while others live in the same place all their lives? What drives some people to seek out danger and adventure while others plump for a quiet life at all costs? What makes someone spend their whole life in the library, in pursuit of arcane knowledge, while others dedicate their lives to relieving poverty and suffering? How come some people get up early to work, even at weekends, while others are content to take it easy?

Because we all have different **personal motivations** — otherwise known as **values**. Or rather, we may well share many of the same values, but may not rank them in quite the same way. Most of us value fun and enjoyment, but some of us may think they should be saved for the evenings and weekends, whereas others expect to enjoy themselves every day, even at work. Most of us value knowledge, but not all of us want to do a Ph.D. And so on.

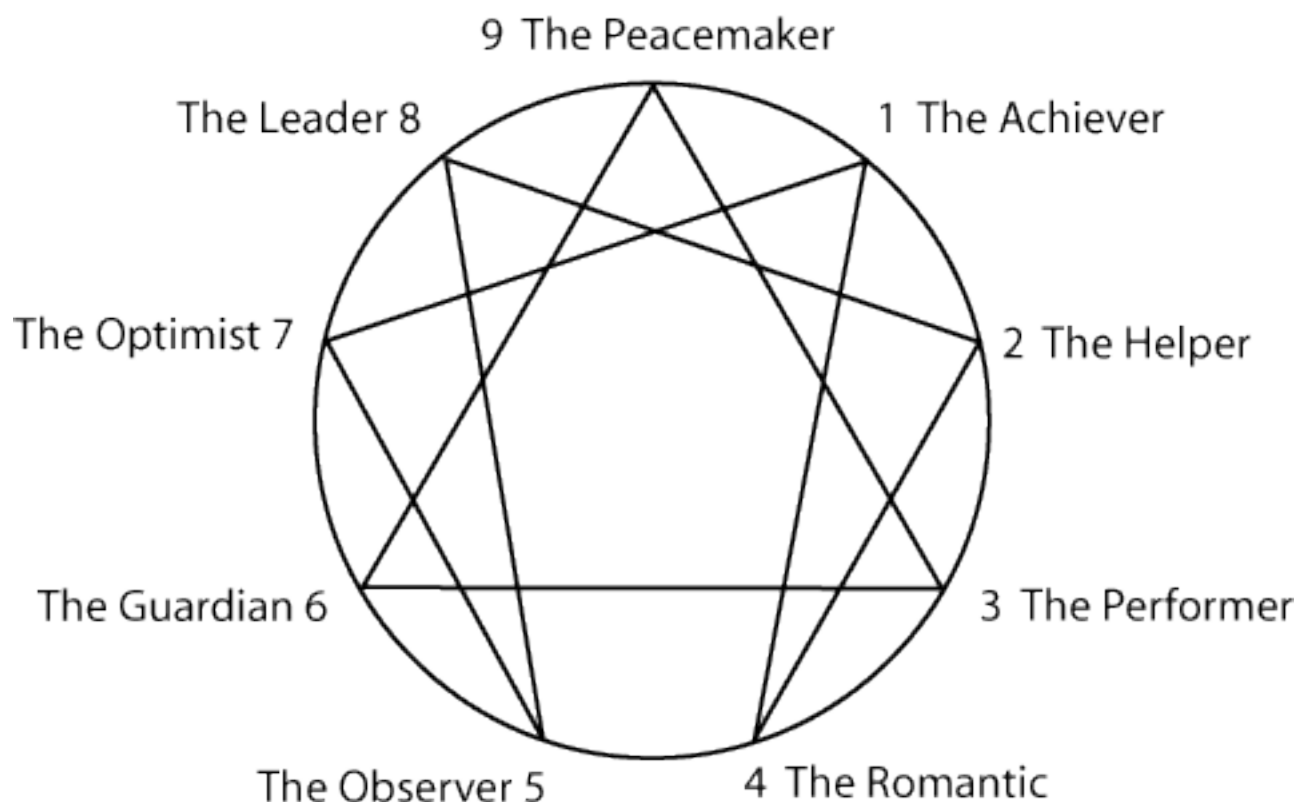
Recognising and respecting other people's values is often the key to happiness in relationships. And it's critical to success if your job involves managing or influencing people. 'Treat others as you would like to be treated' works a treat — as long as the others in question are exactly like you. For example, a manager or creative director may be a self-confident individual who has little need for praise from other people. All well and good, until he starts managing people who do value praise and recognition. There is a danger that the manager will fail to get the best performance out of them. They may learn to live without praise, or become resigned to it — but it's unlikely that they'll get really fired up without it. By contrast, a really skilful and creative manager recognises that different people have different values — and will be prepared to dish out praise if he thinks it will raise performance.

So should you mollycoddle people and treat them with kid gloves? Of course not. Nobody gets everything all their own way, especially at work. But if you're serious about getting top performance out of everyone on your team, surely it makes sense to look for the 'hot buttons' that will get them fired up to give you 100% commitment?

It may make sense, but how can you do this without a degree in psychology?

## The Enneagram — A Tool for Understanding Others' Motivations

The Enneagram is the one personality typing system that I find practically useful on a day-to-day basis. Not only is it very accurate and powerful, but the Enneagram diagram makes the system easy to remember and apply. Each of the points on the diagram represents one of the nine basic Enneagram personality types.



*Image by [Sandra Renshaw](#)*

What makes the Enneagram so powerful? For me, it's the fact that each of the personality types is not just a list of traits, but is based on core values and motivations. For example, point Eight, known as the Boss or Leader, values power and control. This leads the typical Eight to seek leadership roles, shouldering responsibility and challenging others to be 'top dog'. When lacking self-awareness they can also abuse their power, becoming an overbearing bully. The character traits — such as responsibility, bravery and aggression — are really side-effects of the motivation to seek out power.

In 2007 I wrote a [series about the Enneagram](#) for Liz Strauss's [Successful Blog](#), which you can [download as a free e-book](#). I won't describe the types in detail here — I'll just highlight the core values at the heart of each of the nine Enneagram types, before suggesting ways that you can use these to influence people around you. If that whets your appetite then you can read the e-book for a fuller explanation.

## The Heart Types – Emotional Values

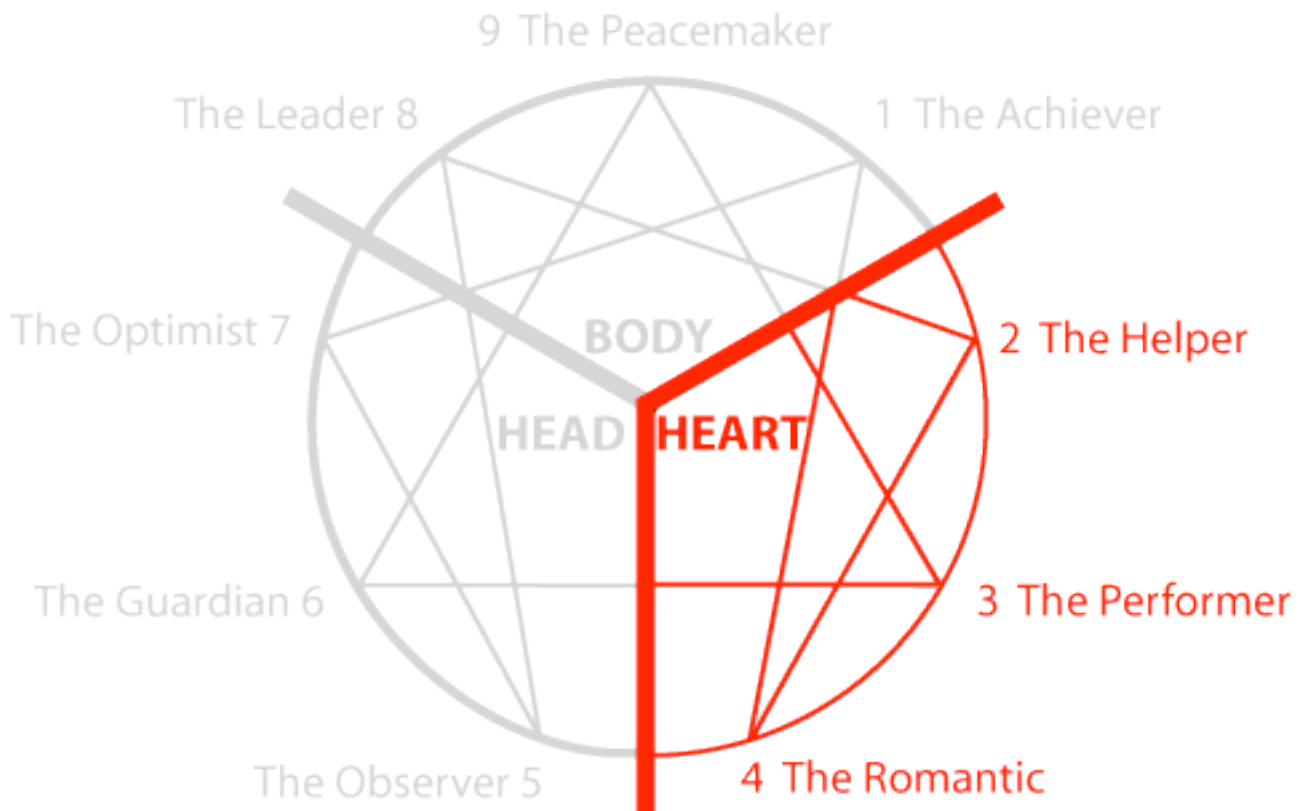


Image by [Sandra Renshaw](#)

### Two – The Helper

Twos value **generosity**, in themselves and others. They believe we should all help each other as much as possible. They are happy to provide help and support – but they are only human, so they also value appreciation. If you really want to motivate a Two, remember to say ‘**thank you**’ and show how much you **appreciate** their **kindness**.

### Three – The Performer

Threes value **success**, the more public and prominent the better. They believe life is a competition, with winners and losers. They are very focused on achieving their goals, and don’t mind cutting a few corners along the way – in their world, **image** is reality. To motivate a Three, make sure you provide public **recognition** of their achievements.

### Four – The Romantic

Fours value **authenticity**. They believe the most important thing in life is to be true to yourself. They have a highly original style and don’t mind being perceived as outsiders. To motivate a Four, give them the opportunity to express themselves in an **original** way. Make them feel **unique** and **special**.

## The Head Types – Intellectual Values

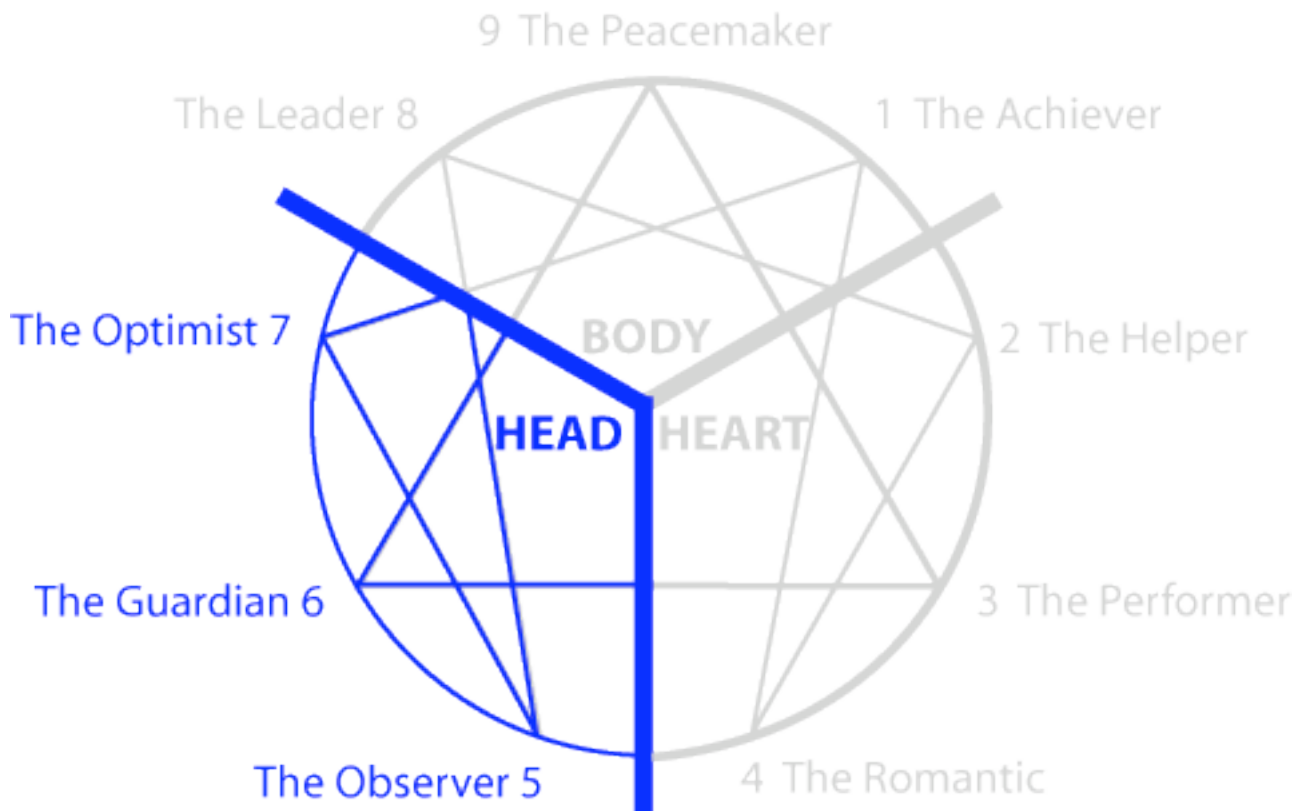


Image by [Sandra Renshaw](#)

### Five – The Observer

Fives value **knowledge**. They believe knowledge is power. They are avid readers and lifelong learners. To motivate a Five, give them opportunities to **learn** and investigate topics in depth. Treat them as **respected authorities**.

### Six – The Guardian

Sixes value **security**. They believe there is safety in numbers. They are excellent team players and fiercely loyal to the group. To motivate a Six, give them opportunities to **bond** with the team and reassure themselves that dangers have been blocked off. Let them know you appreciate their **loyalty** and take every chance to show **solidarity** with them.

### Seven – The Optimist

Sevens value **pleasure** and **possibilities**. They believe life is for living to the full, enjoying every moment. They can be relied on to look on the bright side, suggest new options and jolly everyone along. To motivate a Seven, give them plenty of **variety** and emphasise the **fun** to be had in a task. Allow them to put their **ideas** into action.



## The Body Types — Instinctive Values

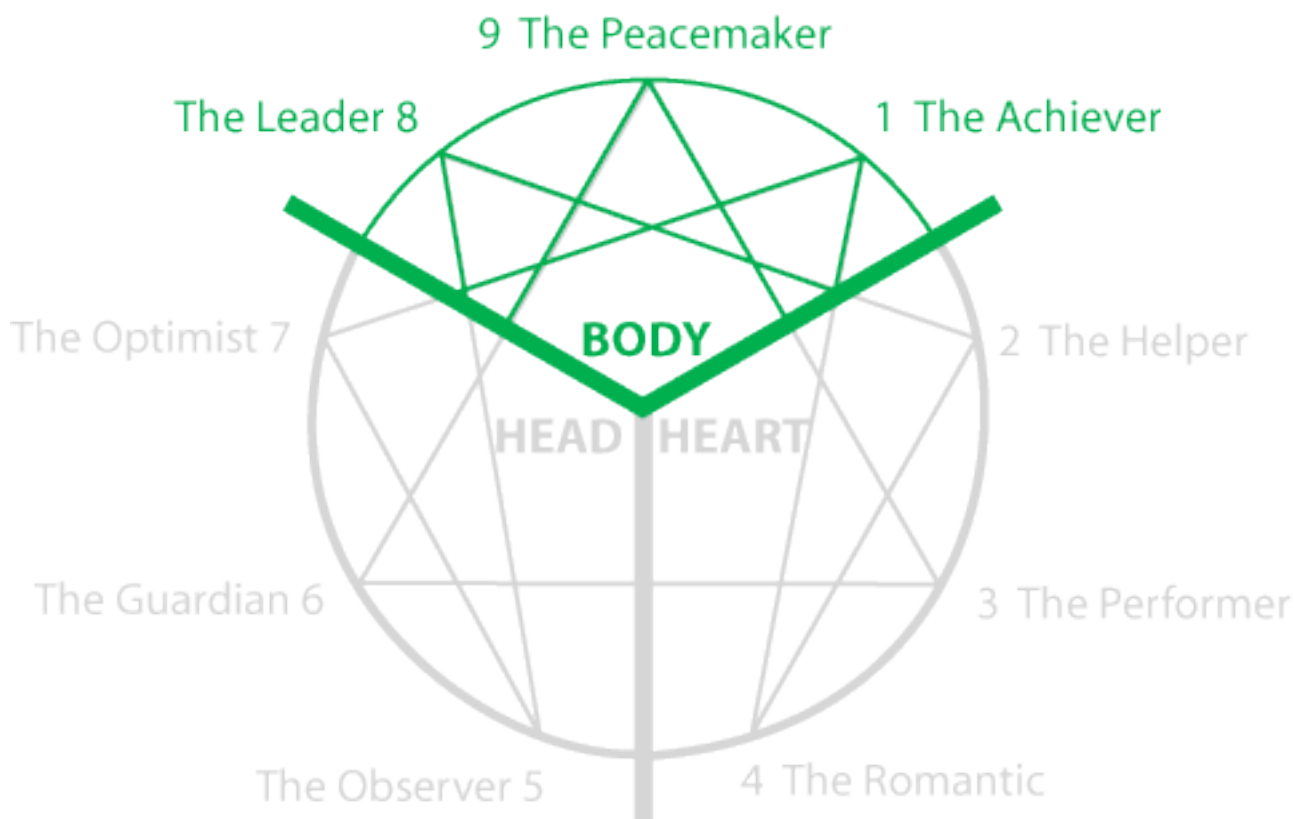


Image by [Sandra Renshaw](#)

### Eight — The Leader

Eights value **power**. They believe you have to fight for what you want in life. They make excellent leaders or formidable opponents, depending on how they perceive you. To motivate an Eight, give them opportunities to **take charge** and demonstrate their effectiveness. You must also earn their **respect** by showing you can **stand up to them**.

### Nine — The Peacemaker

Nines value **peace** and **harmony**. They believe life would be much easier if we could all learn to get on better together. They are self-effacing, but skilful diplomats, intervening where needed to restore harmony within a group. To motivate a Nine, show how a course of action will promote **balance** and **mutual understanding**. Don't force them to step into the limelight.

### One — The Achiever

Ones value **achievement**, as defined by their own high standards. They believe hard work and discipline are necessary for success. They are perfectionists, which is great sometimes but a pain in the behind at others. To motivate a One, show them you value their **diligence** and that you hold everyone to **high standards**. Be scrupulously **fair**.

## Using Personal Motivations to Influence People

Looking at the Enneagram types, it's as if each person has made a fundamental decision about what is most important in life, and acts accordingly. And the weird thing is, other people have made different decisions to you. This is why they don't always 'get it', no matter how many times you tell them. Once you realise this, a lot of the apparent weirdness about other people disappears. It becomes a lot easier to get on with them. If you are a manager and you spot someone's Enneagram type, then it gives you a lot more options for helping them and getting the best out of them:

### Get to know people

Look at them (without staring). Listen to them (without interrupting). Notice what brings them alive — when they become enthusiastic, animated, productive. What does this tell you about their personal values? And what about the times when they shut down, withdraw, give you lip service or start complaining? What does that tell you about their motivation?

Assume that everything they do and say makes complete sense. This frees you to look at them as they are, instead of as you think they should be. And once you do that, you can start to notice all kinds of things you didn't see before.

### Don't stick labels on them

We've all been there. You wouldn't be human if you didn't find yourself labelling people, especially when problems arise. It's easy to see others as 'difficult', 'lazy', 'obstructive' and so on. The trouble is, this makes life more difficult for you. If someone is just plain 'difficult' then there's nothing you can do to influence them, short of rebuilding their personality. But if you take the label off and ask yourself 'what are they motivated by?' Then you have an opportunity to use their personal motivations to influence them.

### Trade in their currency

It doesn't matter how many dollars you have in your pocket if you're in a London restaurant. Unless you can pay in sterling you'll be doing the washing-up. And have you ever tried to give Yen to a New York cab driver? Think of personal values the same way. Why bother praising somebody who just wants to work on an interesting challenge? A pay rise won't compensate someone for having their ideas blocked at every turn.

Try 'trading in their currency' by speaking to their personal values. Supposing you were looking for someone to take on a difficult or boring task. Talking to an Eight, you might say 'I need someone to take a lead here'. To a Two, you might emphasise 'how helpful it would be' if someone were to take it on. To a Three, you would make it clear that if they did a good job 'it wouldn't go unrecognised'. To a One, you could say 'I'm asking you because I need someone I can rely on to do it properly'. And so on.

When I published the first version of this chapter on my blog, creative director [Tim Siedell](#) left the following comment that illustrates this principle perfectly:

Knowing what makes a person tick is vital. In a review, I once asked an employee what he did as a creative outlet (since he was facing some creative frustration at work). I forget his answer, but he mentioned that he always wished he knew how to play the guitar. So I bought him a guitar and lessons.

You would have thought it was a five figure bonus.

## **Experiment**

Treat people the way you've always treated them and they will respond the way they've always responded. If you get stuck, ask yourself 'What does this person least expect me to do?'. Try doing something new — and notice the results. Be creative.

## **You and Your Values**

*Do you recognise your personal values in any of the Enneagram types?*

*Can you see how others around you are motivated by different values?*

*Have you ever had to manage or work with somebody who had very different personal values to you? What was the most constructive thing you did in that situation?*

[Join the discussion by leaving a comment on the original blog post.](#)

## 8. Peer Pressures - Interpersonal Motivation



Photo by [My Buffo](#)

“The basic thing in my mind was that for all our success The Beatles were always a great little band. Nothing more, nothing less.”  
(Paul McCartney)

Creativity happens between people, not just between the ears. Whatever drives us as individuals, something magical and unpredictable happens when talented creative people get together. They spark off each other — and sparks come from friction.

Few people can have known the highs and lows of creative collaboration so intimately as John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. They achieved fame as a unit, sporting identical suits and haircuts, and performing, in McCartney’s words, as “a great little band”. For a few years, their friendship and the euphoria of success were enough to paper over individual differences. But as time and fame took their toll, tensions mounted and tempers flared. The inevitable breakup was evidently a relief in some respects, as the individual members were free to pursue their own interests — but they arguably never reached the same heights in their solo careers as they did in the years when they were known as The Beatles.

‘Peer pressure’ is normally a pejorative term, but I’m using the phrase ‘peer pressures’ here to signify the many different ways — positive and negative — that we influence each other. From this perspective, individual motivations are less important than interactions within a group, which I’m calling interpersonal motivations. I first came across this way of looking at human beings 10 years ago when I was working as part of a systemic family therapy team. As a psychotherapist I had been used to working with individuals and thinking in terms of their personal motivations for doing

what they did. But the family therapists encouraged me to look at the whole system of interactions between a couple or within a family, to 'stay on the surface' and notice how people are constantly influencing and responding to each other.

A more recent example of this way of looking at human beings is [Mark Earls](#)' provocative book [Herd](#):

Most of our behaviour is ... the result of the influence of other people because we are a super social species. A herd animal, if you like.

More than most, artists and other creative types love to think of ourselves as unique individuals — but here are a few examples of peer pressures that affect our behaviour when engaged in creative work:

## **Types of Interpersonal Motivation**

### **Copying**

One of the first songs John Lennon played on the guitar was Fats Domino's 'Ain't That a Shame'. Little Richard was Paul McCartney's hero. The Beatles started out as a skiffle group. Like all artists, they learned through imitation. Even at the height of their fame, they were still eager to learn from other musicians and traditions, including Western orchestral and traditional Indian music.

Mark Earls describes copying as a fundamental building block of human behaviour, a simple act that can result in complex and beautiful results. Like the Mexican wave, which is not planned or orchestrated, but simply results from standing up and waving your arms on cue from the people next to you. If you're still not convinced that creatives are a bunch of copycats, ask yourself why so many of us are found in cafes wearing black T-shirts, typing on MacBooks and/or scribbling in Moleskine notebooks. When I visited the new Saatchi Gallery recently it was no surprise to see a higher than average incidence of berets and goatees among the visitors.

### **Rebellion**

Rebels need someone to rebel against. Earls points out that even when we swim against the tide and do the opposite of what others expect/want, we are still doing it because of other people. When The Beatles started out, rock 'n' roll was still seen in some quarters as a threat to society. From the outset they aligned themselves with rock 'n' roll rebels, and after the initial wave of Beatlemania they were increasingly happy to play the role of contrarians, with outspoken comments about drugs, religion and war. But they couldn't have been so outrageous without people to outrage — and they were borne along by a wave of mass social change.

### **Competition**

Necessity may be the mother of invention but sibling rivalry plays its part. Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones and The Beach boys were just some of the highest-profile competitors to The Beatles.

And that's before you consider the competition within the group, particularly the rivalry between Lennon and McCartney, as they spurred each other on to greater feats of songwriting and performance. The relationship famously turned nasty, but before that happened the creative tension between the two resulted in masterpieces that they could never have produced in isolation.

In ancient Greece laurel wreaths were awarded to victors of poetry competitions as well as athletic games. These days, the spirit of creative competition is alive and well in countless charts, prizes, awards ceremonies and squabbles over top billing at events. Advertising creatives are regularly castigated for being more interested in winning awards than selling clients' products. And if you think that 'pure' artists are motivated by nobler impulses, then you should check out Seamus Heaney's poem 'An Afterwards', where he condemns ambitious poets (including himself) to the ninth circle of hell, frozen together in the ice, gnawing through the backs of each other's skulls in "a rabid egotistical daisy chain" as punishment for professional backbiting during their time on earth.

## **Collaboration**

Competition can be intense without being cutthroat. And it doesn't exclude collaboration. Most creative partnerships are founded on mutual respect and friendship, and a realisation that we can usually create something better together than we can manage on our own. It's easy to isolate Lennon and McCartney as towering geniuses, and Ringo Starr has been the butt of a few cruel jokes about his relative musical abilities, but The Beatles wouldn't have been The Beatles without George and Ringo. And the fact is that the supposed geniuses did their best work as part of a group.

I've written before that one of the best things about pursuing a creative career is the chance to work with other cool creative dudes. Whether you're a jazz musician or a theoretical scientist, you can recognise the same excitement at putting an idea out there with colleagues and seeing it come back bigger, better and bolder. Talent attracts talent — we all want to work with the best in our business.

## **Identity**

Beatles, Beats, Deadheads, Mods, Rockers, Romantics, New Romantics, Imagists, Surrealists, Modernists, Post-Modernists, the Rat Pack, the Brat Pack, Britpop, Young British Artists, bloggers, Wikipedians, the Twitterati. All of these names are badges of identity, of creative people associated with cultural movements and trends. Seth Godin would describe them as members of a tribe:

A tribe is a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea. For millions of years, human beings have been part of one tribe or another. A group needs only two things to be a tribe: a shared interest and a way to communicate.

(Seth Godin, *Tribes*)

Just like everyone else, creators want to belong — even if it's only to the tribe of outsiders. Look at the legions of Smiths fans. Become the leader of a tribe worth joining and you won't have to worry about 'motivating people'.

## **Commitment**

Commitments breed commitment. When you make a promise to another person, you have an investment in keeping it, otherwise you'll lose face. It's not the most ennobling form of motivation, but can be very effective. If you know that you're liable to procrastinate, making a promise to someone else to deliver a piece of work by a certain date is a great way of setting a 'motivational trap' for yourself. Anthony Trollope did this very effectively when he paid his aged manservant to wake him at 5.30 every morning with the coffee. Trollope knew himself well enough to know that he valued his public image more than his personal comfort.

## **Encouragement**

Creative work isn't easy. Apart from the 'perspiration' side of things, it's risky. Your brilliant idea might look pretty silly in the cold light of day. Your bold new design might be far too old for the client. People might laugh at your sculpture or throw tomatoes at your symphony. If you're part of a team then you have people around you to bounce ideas off. You give each other feedback and encouragement. You egg each other on.

I remember watching an interview with Paul McCartney talking about the process of writing 'A Day in the Life' with John Lennon. He said there was a moment when John first sang the line "I'd love to turn you on", when the two of them looked at each other — evidently this was an outrageous thing to sing in 1967 — as if to say "are we sure we want to do this?", before agreeing to keep it in.

## **Support**

If you're doing anything remotely interesting or worthwhile, there will be days when you wonder why you bother. You'll be misunderstood, blocked, let down or just ignored. These are the days when it makes a world of difference if there's someone there to remind you how good you are, how important the work is, why it matters to keep going. Or simply to reassure you that it's perfectly normal to feel as frustrated/angry/disappointed/bewildered as you do.

"On tour that year, it was crazy. Not within the band. In the band we were normal, and the rest of the world was crazy."

(George Harrison)

## **Contribution**

It's easy to be cynical about the idea of contribution. As we've seen, competition is rife in most creative fields and many creators have a well earned reputation for egomania. But part of the pleasure of collaboration comes from feeling that we have made a contribution to the team and help to make the whole bigger than the sum of its parts. Of course we all like to be personally

credited or rewarded, but that doesn't take away from the deep satisfaction that comes from contributing to and connecting with something larger than yourself.

It takes you back again to the times when we were this band, the Beatles band.

In that period, there was a lot of emotional turmoil going on, but, when you listen to the music, the music always surpassed any bullshit we were going through.

([Ringo Starr in 2003](#), talking about the release of Let It Be... Naked)

## Recognition

At the outset The Beatles took their share of flak for writing throwaway pop songs, but they matured into one of the most critically acclaimed bands of all time. Looking back, it seems inconceivable that they would have played it safe by churning out variations on 'Love Me Do' ad infinitum — but they had plenty of contemporaries (now forgotten) pursuing exactly that strategy.

No genuine artist panders to the critics, but most of them want to be recognised and respected by the people who matter to them — usually their fellow creators, sometimes respected critics or gatekeepers. People like John Peel, whose names are bywords for discerning judgement.

The comedy in Ricky Gervais and Steven Merchant's TV series [Extras](#) hinges on Andy Millman's excruciating embarrassment at achieving wealth and fame at the expense of his artistic integrity. After years of struggle, Andy's comedy programme is watched by millions and he's got more money than he can sensibly spend, but he's tortured by damning reviews and the jibes of fellow actors. Meeting his hero David Bowie turns into a nightmare when the Thin White Duke serenades him as a "Little fat man who sold his soul". Starving artist or self-loathing sell-out? For many creators it would be a genuinely difficult choice.

## Facilitating Interpersonal Motivation

I've said before that **you can't motivate anybody** — only facilitate and amplify their existing motivation. This is particularly true of interpersonal motivations — you can order people about all you like, but the kind of interactions I've described don't occur on command, but emerge spontaneously within a group. You can inspire and facilitate but you can't impose.

In *Tribes* Seth Godin says that the two things that turn a group of people into a tribe are:

- A shared interest
- A way to communicate

And that therefore the most important two things a leader can do are:

- Transforming the shared interests into a passionate goal and desire for change;
- Providing tools to allow members to tighten their communications;

Here are a few ideas for doing this.



## Turn common interests into common goals

Chances are your team has a lot of interests in common. Your job is to make the link between these interests and the organisation's goals crystal clear. This is relatively easy in an organisation that has a clear sense of purpose, beyond just making money — the chances are that sense of purpose attracted people to work there in the first place. As we've seen, creative performance depends on intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations — 'increasing shareholder value' won't cut it with creative types. But even if an inspirational purpose has not been explicitly spelt out, it may be possible for you to work with your team to discover or even create this sense of purpose.

You're probably familiar with the 'tell and sell' approach to goal-setting, which can work very well, especially when applied creatively. But don't forget the value of asking questions and listening — it can be much more powerful to ask someone about their own interests and passions, and point out how these relate to team goals, then to give an impassioned speech based on your reasons for committing to the goal.

## Tell a story

Stories are a great way to persuade without preaching. Independent minded creatives resist being told what to do — but we all love a good story. Stories that resonate with a tribe are often about 'us and them', revolution or changing the world. The Beatles told the story — in their songs, the concepts their interviews and their lifestyles — that resonated with the story of the sixties. A story about optimism, revolution and self-discovery. In the recent US election, Barack Obama told a story about change to an audience ready to hear it.

Creatives can be a tough crowd to please. For a story to appeal to them it needs to have:

- **Authenticity** — it needs to resonate with their felt experience, not sound like something concocted to manipulate them.
- **Originality** — they have built-in cliché detectors.
- **Passion** — you need to feel it in your gut. They can tell if you don't.
- **Space for improvisation** — remember it's a story, not a script.

## Environment

What kind of environments are available to the team? How well do they facilitate the free flow of ideas and people? Are they chained to their desks or allowed to roam where they like to get the job done? How well does the physical setup facilitate casual discussions and chance encounters? Can people and groups find privacy when they need it?

## Promote diversity

Creativity thrives on diversity, on novel combinations and intersections. This includes ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class and age — not for politically correct reasons but because they represent a

range of experience and perspectives that are fertile ground for creativity. It also includes diversity of professions, personalities, education and interests, for the same reason.

How diverse is your team? It's not necessarily a creative disaster if they're all middle-class middle-aged white males who went to Harvard Business School and play golf at weekends — but they may well benefit from interactions and dialogue with people who are none of these things. When choosing new team members, ask yourself “What will they add to the creative diversity of this team?”.

### **Think about the team beyond the team**

In the old days, the office walls drew a firm line between your team or company and the rest of the world. These days the walls are becoming transparent, even permeable. Blogs and other forms of social media are opening up the conversation with the wider world. Banning Facebook is one response. Another is to take the opportunity to engage with your customers, colleagues, competitors — and people who have nothing (obvious) in common with you and your team's work. Get your voices out there and listen to the response.

Have a look at my list of [Top 10 Social Networks For Creative People](#) and ask yourself whether you and your team could benefit from a presence on some of them. To see what leading bloggers are saying in a wide range of subjects, visit [Alltop.com](#) and browse through the different subject categories.

### **Provide communication tools**

Seth Godin suggests providing tools “to allow members to tighten their communications” — but sometimes you don't need to do the providing, just notice what they're already using and give permission or resources to amplify it. Or you could invite suggestions for bringing in new communication tools. Blogs and wikis are obvious examples, but it doesn't need to be elaborate. A [Facebook](#) group, [Delicious](#) or [Twitter](#) account, or good old-fashioned e-mail or whiteboards could give you all you need.

### **Use feedback loops**

Some sales teams promote competition by displaying public sales totals for every team member. Some creative departments have a monthly feedback session where everyone has to present their work for critique by their peers. Seth MacFarlane puts together Family Guy scripts with a team of writers around a table covered in “soft drink cans, candy wrappers, half finished bags of beef jerky”. Executive Producer David Goodman highlights the critical feedback loop:

if the writers in that room don't laugh — it's not going on ... That's a tough room. If we laugh, it's probably funny.

(Fast Company feature, November 2008)

The kind of feedback loop you use will depend on your goals, criteria for success and team culture. Whether you go for explicit and formal (public sales totals) or implicit and informal

(laughter) is not as important as knowing what you're looking for — and what the team responds to.

## **Mediate**

There's nothing wrong with a bit of creative friction, but if things get personally vindictive and conflicts threaten team goals then you'll need to intervene. Principles for effective mediation include: 1. Point out how the conflict is having a damaging effect on each party's personal goals; 2. Find out what each party wants from the other — in terms of specific, concrete actions; 3. Shift the conversation away from accusations and justifications about the past and towards requests and commitments for the future.

## **How Do Interpersonal Motivations Affect You?**

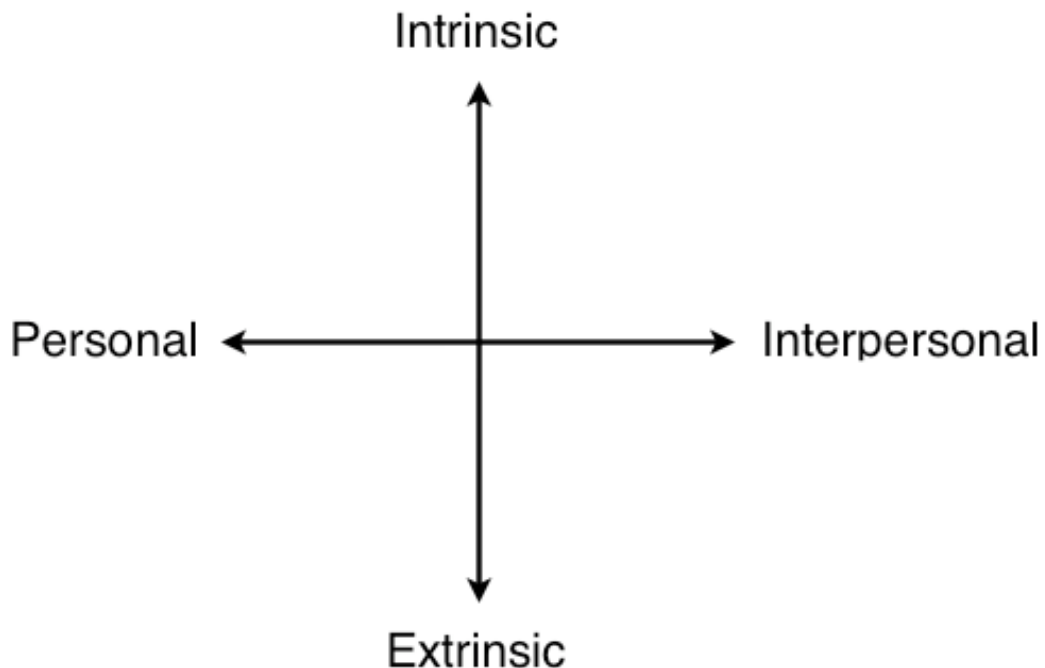
*Which forms of interpersonal motivation have affected you the most?*

*How much influence can a manager realistically have over interpersonal motivations?*

*Any other tips for facilitating interpersonal motivation?*

[Join the discussion by leaving a comment on the original blog post.](#)

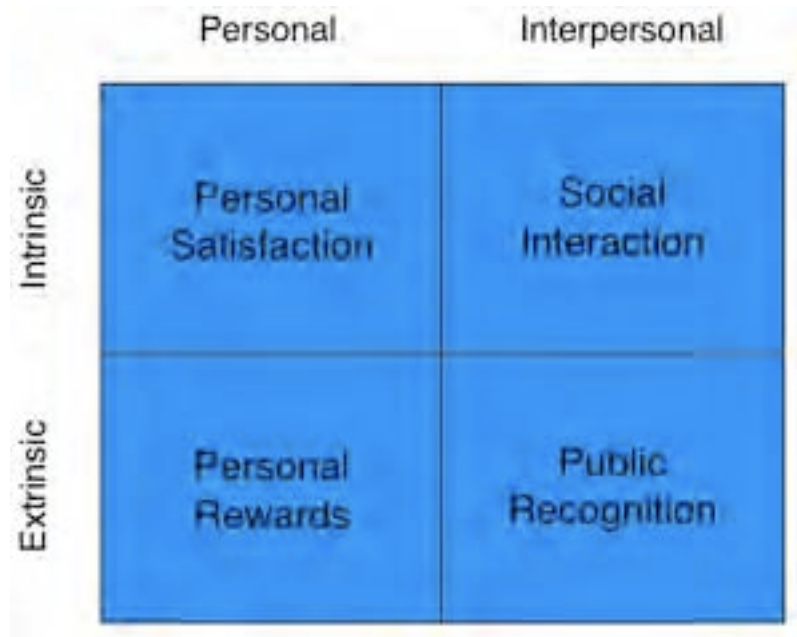
## 9. Balancing Creative Motivations



Now that we've reviewed four basic types of motivation, it's time to put them together and have a look at the big picture

Motivation is usually complex, so that any given task or project involves several different types of motivation. You may love your work for its own sake (intrinsic), but that doesn't mean you will be put out if your monthly pay cheque doesn't arrive (extrinsic). You may have a strong natural curiosity or need for self expression (personal), but that doesn't mean the presence of encouragement and all competition from colleagues won't prompt you to redouble your efforts (interpersonal). And you've probably already noticed that different types of motivation can shade into one another. For example, recognition has appeared twice, under extrinsic and interpersonal motivations, since it's a form of reward that involves the opinion of other people.

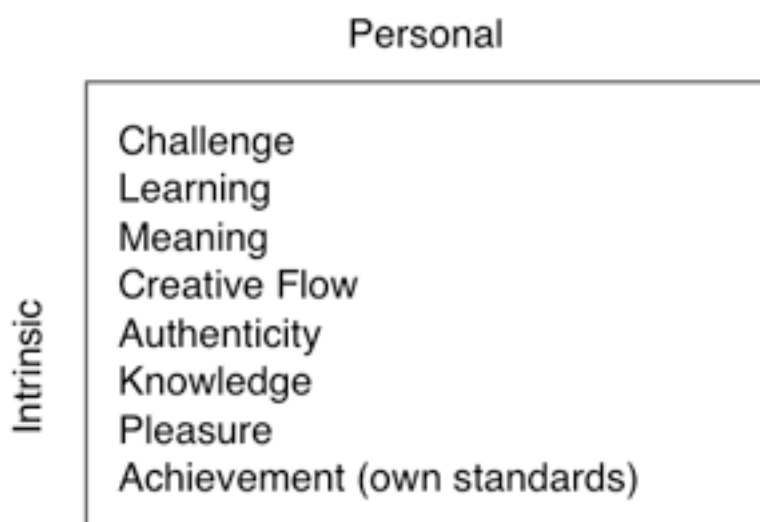
Have a look at the diagram above, which is composed of two axes: intrinsic-extrinsic; personal-interpersonal. For any given person, task, project or organisation, it's possible to assess types of motivation as well as their relative importance, for each of the four quadrants.



For example, one person may have high levels of personal intrinsic motivation, valuing challenge meeting and learning in their work. They may also be strongly motivated by interpersonal intrinsic factors, such as a sense of contributing to the field. Personal extrinsic may be relatively unimportant — as long as they have enough to pay the bills, it's not a big issue. But interpersonal extrinsic is relatively high, since they value their professional reputation and the status it brings them.

In the rest of this chapter I'll look at each of these quadrants in more detail.

### Personal satisfaction (personal intrinsic)



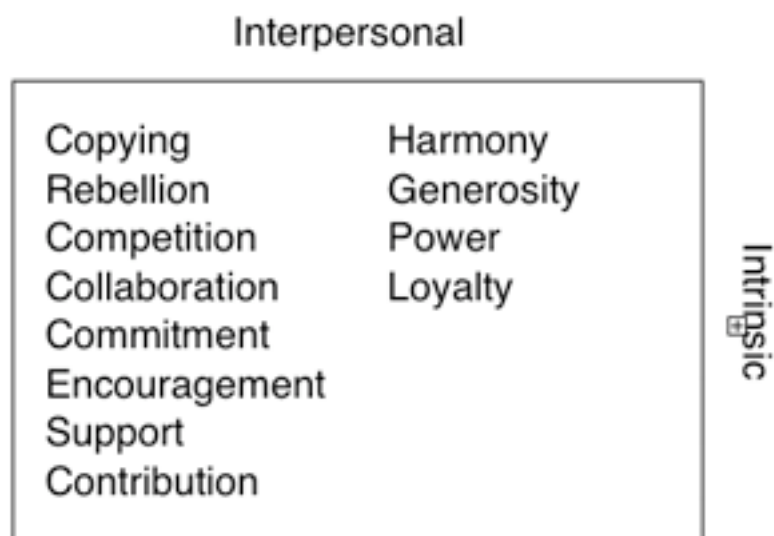
In this quadrant people are motivated by satisfaction in the work itself, as well as the alignment of the work with their own core values. Here we find the poet entranced with the magic of words and

authentic self-expression. We also find the engineer who loves learning and adding to her store of knowledge as she grapples with a difficult challenge.

**Pros** This is probably the quadrant that has the most influence on the quality of work — without personal motivation or intrinsic satisfaction in the task, people are unlikely to achieve outstanding results.

**Cons** Because of the intensely personal nature of this kind of motivation, there is a danger that the results will have little relevance to others. The self absorbed poet who doesn't trouble to read others' work is unlikely to produce great poetry. And in a business context, it's essential that people don't work on pet projects to their own criteria, losing sight of organisational goals.

### Social interaction (interpersonal intrinsic)

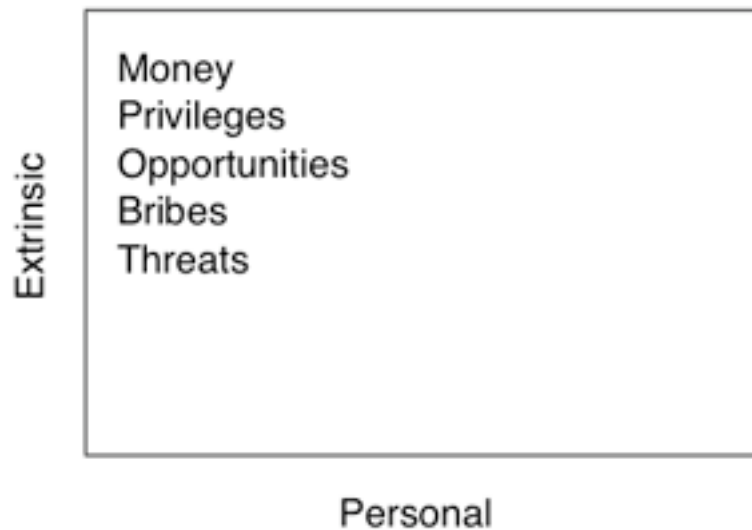


In this quadrant people are influenced by each other. 'Social interaction' can refer to the simple attraction of being with other people, as in "it's nice to get out of the house for a bit of social interaction". It also refers to the give and take social exchange, including altruistic motives, pleasure from others' company, and the attraction of wielding power and influence. Here we find the mavens who love to connect others and social entrepreneurs who want to use their skills for the benefit of the community.

**Pros** Creators who regularly interact with their peers, customers and/or audience are much more likely to produce something relevant and socially valued than the proverbial artist in the garret or ivory tower thinker.

**Cons** Generosity and influence are both double-edged swords: the former carries a risk of neglecting your own interests and gifts, the latter can lead to harming others.

### Personal rewards (personal extrinsic)

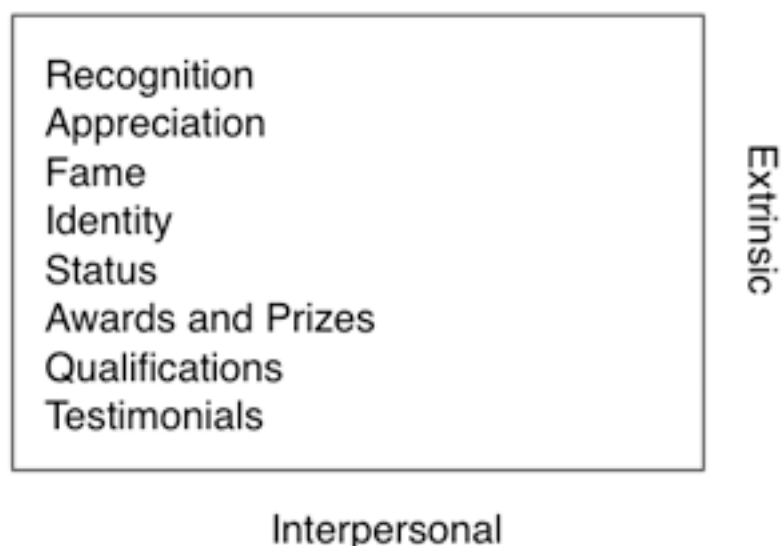


This quadrant is about 'What's in it for me?'. It's about making sure you don't come away from a project empty-handed. It's also about insuring yourself against negative consequences. This is where we have frank talks about salaries and remuneration. It's also where agents and lawyers step in to argue vigorously for individual interests.

**Pros** Strike a deal that satisfies all parties and it will enhance mutual respect and commitment. It also helps everyone avoid a world of stress and wrangling that can have devastating effects on performance.

**Cons** Personal rewards are necessary-but-not-sufficient to produce outstanding creative work. So if your motivational strategy consists of throwing money at the problem, you're in trouble. And if you're a creative, you're unlikely to produce anything remarkable if you're only in it for the money. Both leaders and team members neglect the other three quadrants at their peril.

### Public recognition (interpersonal extrinsic)



In this quadrant people are concerned about their public image and motivated to boost or protect their reputation. This is the realm of awards, prizes, blockbusters and letters after your name. It's where the critics sharpen their pencils and the crowd loads up with confetti or rotten fruit.

**Pros** Many creatives are far more motivated by public recognition than by money. So even if you have a tight budget, there are plenty of ways to get people fired up by offering recognition for their achievements.

**Cons** If you spend too long chasing the ratings then you risk losing touch with your own creative passion (personal intrinsic) and delivering real value (interpersonal intrinsic). The irony is, discerning audiences can spot a fake, and will lose respect for you if you try to anticipate and pander to their every wish.

### A Matrix of Creative Motivations

We can sharpen up the picture by looking at the various motivations purely in relation to creative work:



Note that the only quadrant with a purely negative connotation for artists is personal reward ('selling out'). Yet it's often the one that managers and leaders focus on the most when trying to motivate people. If you're a leader, manager, creative director or otherwise involved in facilitating creative work, and you take one thing from this e-book I'd ask you to focus at least as much effort and energy on each of the other three quadrants as on this one. They are where you have the biggest chance of success — and where everyone is likely to taste the greatest satisfaction.



## **Is Your Current Enterprise Sustainable?**

For any project, career or organisation to succeed, it needs to cover all four quadrants. The balance between them can be wildly different, but if any of the four motivations is completely absent, it will be hard to sustain the necessary commitment when things get tough. Hence the mid-life crisis when someone realises they can't spend the rest of their life as a wage slave in a job they hate. Or the cash crisis in a business driven by creative enthusiasm that neglects financial safeguards. (Think Factory Records.) Or the crisis of confidence in an artist who fails to receive the recognition he craves. (Think Van Gogh.)

*Which quadrants are most/least important to you personally?*

*Which quadrants are most/least important to your organisation?*

*Are you sure you can carry on doing what you're doing?*

[Join the discussion by leaving a comment on the original blog post.](#)

*With thanks to Chris Bilton and Ruth Leary of the MA in Creative and Media Enterprises at Warwick University for a stimulating discussion that was very helpful in formulating this model.*

## 10. Questions to Ask Before Beginning Any Creative Project



Photo by [Ken@Okinawa](#)

In this e-book I've focused mainly on the challenges facing leaders and managers responsible for getting the best out of creative teams. Whether you're a manager or not, I hope you found it helpful in understanding and boosting your own motivation. Now I'd like you to think about the ideas in this book in relation to the people you collaborate with on each of your creative projects.

You don't need to be managing someone to be concerned about their motivations. Whether outsourcing a task, collaborating with colleagues or partnering with people on joint ventures, you need to be very clear about the other parties' motivations and expectations. Of course, you need a sound business strategy and/or an inspiring creative brief — but one of the biggest obstacles to success is discovering halfway through that other people are not as committed to the project as you are.

Let's have another look at the curling metaphor from chapter 4. I said that the manager's role is to sweep the ice in front of the stone. But in a real curling team, the roles aren't fixed — each player takes it in turn to throw the stone and then sweep for the other team members. Many creative projects operate like this. Different people with different expertise take the lead in different areas or at different stages of the project. When it's your turn to 'sweep' for another member of your project team, you will be able to do this much more easily if you have a clear understanding of

their motivations. This will make you more effective and influential, regardless of whether you're in a position of authority. And of course, it's always nice when others reciprocate by appealing to your own motivations.

So next time you're about to start a creative project, stop and ask yourself the following questions, about everyone involved — including yourself. You may find it helpful to go through the questions as a group.

### **Personal satisfaction (personal intrinsic)**

- What's the attraction of the work itself?
- What difference will it make if we succeed?
- Does it provide each of us with a meaningful challenge?
- What are the opportunities for learning?
- Is there a good fit between the task and my/our personal values?

### **Personal rewards (personal extrinsic)**

- What's in it for me/them?
- Is everyone clear about their share of the rewards?
- Is everyone happy with their share?
- Is anyone doing this in hope of future opportunities? How definite/explicit are these?
- What will happen if anyone fails to deliver on their commitment?

### **Social interaction (interpersonal intrinsic)**

- Have we worked together before? If so, what patterns of behaviour emerged?
- What commitments are we making to each other?
- Will we be competing with each other? How?
- How can we facilitate collaboration/knowledge sharing?
- What kind of encouragement and support do we need to provide for each other?
- What feedback loops do we need?
- If I/you have concerns, what's the best way to raise them? How will we go about addressing them?

### **Public Recognition (interpersonal extrinsic)**

- How much information is confidential?
- What will we be publishing/presenting? Where? How?
- Who will be credited? Where? How?
- Does anyone want/expect a testimonial?
- Will we be entering any awards? Under whose name?

## 11. If You Want Help Taking Action...



Photo by [LeFonque](#)

I don't just write about this stuff.

If you like the ideas in this e-book and could do with some help putting them into practice, I'll be happy to help you and/or your team.

I can provide one-to-one **coaching**, group **training** or **facilitation**, and organisational **consulting**, depending on your needs. Ideally this involves face-to-face meetings — but if time and space don't permit, we can get a surprising amount done via telephone, webcam and other web-based tools.

### What You Won't Get

- chest-thumping speeches
- death by PowerPoint
- one-size-fits-all prescriptions
- corporate-speak
- all fired up with no idea what to do next

## What I'll Be Doing

- listening and asking lots of questions to understand your unique situation
- applying what I know to give you practical results
- giving you my honest opinion and feedback
- facilitating *your* best way of doing things
- throwing the model out the window if you need something else

## What You'll Be Doing

- clarifying your goals
- identifying and amplifying the most powerful motivators for you and/or your team
- identifying and removing de-motivators and other obstacles
- carrying out specific, concrete actions to achieve your goals
- developing systems for sustaining the changes

## The Bottom Line

All my work with clients is driven by one question:

***What will you be doing differently – and better – as a result of our work together?***

That's the starting point for our conversation and the benchmark of our success.

If that sounds like what you're looking for, [zip me an e-mail](#) and let's talk.

## 12. About Mark McGuinness

### Mark McGuinness

Mark provides coaching and training for professional artists and creative industries companies. He focuses on the 'people factors' in the creative process — the **imagination, collaboration** and **direction** that are essential for creative and commercial success.

Since 1996 Mark has coached creative professionals across the whole spectrum of artistic and commercial media, from fine artists to commercial agency staff. He has also delivered coaching, training and consulting for organisations including Channel 4, the BBC, Transport for London, Gist, Vodafone, BT, Servier Laboratories, the Arts Council, Arts & Business and the University of Warwick.



### Publications

Mark writes the [Wishful Thinking Blog](#) for creative professionals. In 2008 he founded [Lateral Action](#) with Brian Clark and Tony Clark, a web publication about creativity and productivity. Mark has first-hand experience of the creative process as a poet. His poetry site is [MarkMcGuinness.com](#). He is on the board of the acclaimed magazine Magma Poetry.

### Qualifications and Testimonials

In addition to Mark's practical experience, he has studied creativity and the creative economy at Masters level, for an MA in Creative & Media Enterprises (with distinction) from the University of Warwick. His BA is in English Language & Literature, from Oxford University. Mark is a qualified psychotherapist, holding two postgraduate diplomas as well as various certifications. He is registered with the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP).

*Mark's session proved to be that very rare thing: an enlightening seminar that inspires you to really question (and improve) your creative process, rather than a shopping list of trite 'how-tos' on the subject. Part history lesson, part creative road map, Mark's presentation and workshop was illuminating, entertaining and, most importantly, beneficial to my development team.*

**Sean Kirkegaard, Development Executive — BBC Children's Television**

[Click here to read more client testimonials.](#)

## 13. More Free Publications

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**Share it with a friend or colleague**

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**Subscribe to the Lateral Action blog**

[Lateral Action](#) is a web publication to help creative professionals succeed in the 21st century. As well as regular articles about creativity and productivity, it features an innovative series of animated videos, telling the story of [Jack](#), a creative guy with the world at his feet but unsure whether to follow [Lou](#)'s conventional business advice or to try and emulate his mentor, the creative entrepreneur [Marla](#).



Lateral Action is a joint venture between Brian Clark, Tony Clark and Mark McGuinness.

To follow the story and receive a regular stream of inspiring and useful articles, [sign up for free updates](#) via RSS or e-mail.

**Subscribe to the Wishful Thinking blog**

Mark McGuinness writes the [Wishful Thinking blog](#) to share tips and inspiration for creative professionals, based on his experience of coaching artists and creatives since 1996.

You can have the latest blog posts delivered to you (free, of course) via [RSS](#) or [E-mail](#). (If you're new to RSS, have a look at my [What is RSS?](#) page.)



## Download Mark's other e-books...

### Time Management for Creative People

*'Manage the mundane, create the extraordinary'*

A practical and inspirational guide to maintaining your creative focus amid all the demands and digital distractions of 21st century life. Downloaded over 50,000 times, this e-book has garnered rave reviews. [Get your copy here.](#)



*'a really well done 32-page download that provides practical time management and productivity tips tailored specifically for those performing creative work.'*

**Brian Clark, Copyblogger**

*'Even if you don't consider yourself a creative person, the ebook is chocked full of useful tips.'*

**Kyle Potts, Lifehacker**

Photo by [LDE](#)

### Creative Management for Creative Teams



*Business Coaching and Creative Business*

An introduction to coaching skills for managers in the creative industries. Explains how to use coaching skills to get the best out of creative people without turning into a 'suit'.

[Get your copy here.](#)

Photo by [urbancow](#)

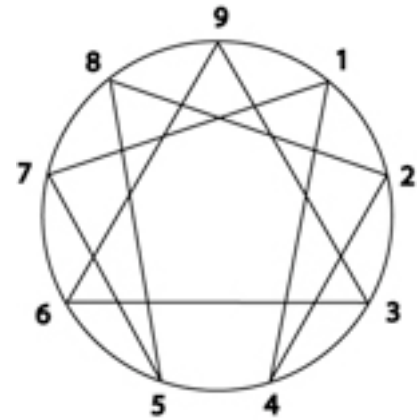
## An Introduction to the Enneagram

*Personality types for understanding and influencing people*

The Enneagram is a powerful and practical system of personality types. This e-book introduces the nine basic types and shows you how to use them for personal development and building better relationships.

This e-book was originally published as a series on Liz Strauss's [Successful Blog](#)

[Download the Enneagram e-book.](#)



### Illustrations — Sandra Renshaw

The Enneagram illustrations in **An Introduction to the Enneagram** and **How to Motivate Creative People** are by Sandra Renshaw of [Purple Wren](#).

Purple Wren provides cost-effective solutions for businesses ready to achieve greater visibility and differentiation. Armed with a variety of technologies and techniques, owner Sandy Renshaw develops custom solutions for start-ups and established organizations by creating clear, cohesive and dynamic communications. Specialties include professional

design for print and on-line use, cutting-edge Web development, content development, editing and more. [E-mail Sandy.](#)