

## WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

### Where's My Motivation?

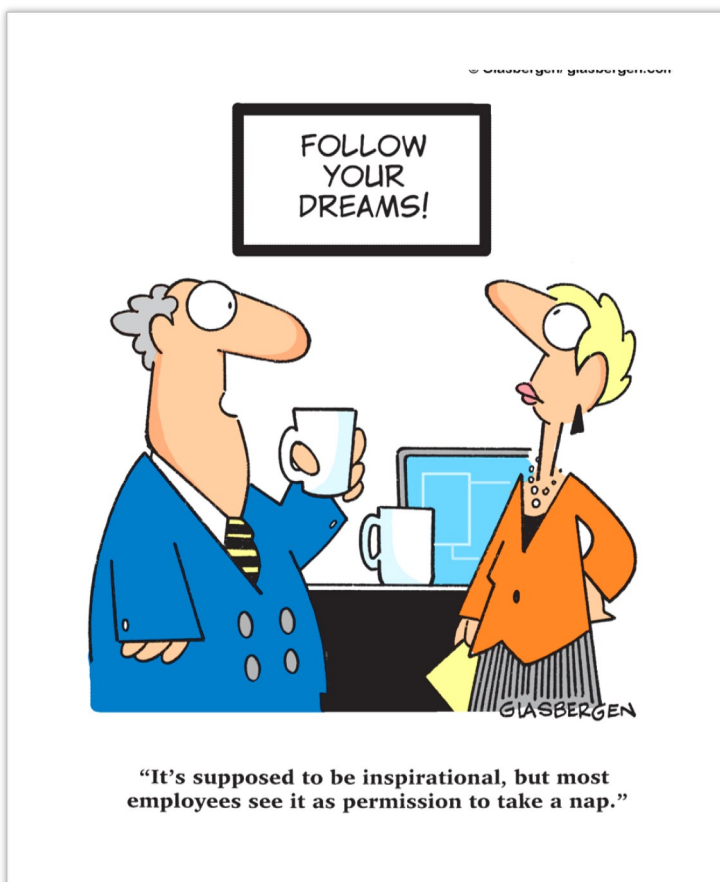
While it's generally agreed upon that healthy lifestyle choices are, overall, more preferable to ones that impair our well-being, there is often still a divide between this knowledge and our actions. The difficulty is that the kinds of rewards we get from engaging in unhealthy choices are usually more concrete and immediate when compared to their healthier counterparts—donuts make us feel better now, whereas vegetables will likely make us feel better at some undefined point in the future.

It's easy to see the issue when comparing healthy to unhealthy choices, but we can still run into challenges with long-term motivation even with our general approach to wellness. There are two basic kinds of rewards we use to motivate us: hedonia and eudaimonia. Hedonia is striving for pleasure, enjoyment, and comfort, whereas eudaimonia is focused on meaning, purpose, or living in a way we might describe as "good."

Aspects of wellness that help us feel good or are enjoyable right now can be useful for motivation, but inevitably run into problems when they aren't able to satisfy our present need for satisfaction. At that point, we can easily fall back into old, reliable habits. However, when we attach a sense of purpose and meaning to our wellness-related behaviors, we can more effectively persevere when healthy options aren't the most fun alternative available.

The key is to know why we want to be healthy, long-term, and associate that motivation with our immediate choices. It's things like putting more vegetables on the dinner plate today so we can be there for our loved ones long into the future, getting up to walk on our morning break so we don't burn out in a few years, or going to bed early tonight so we can accurately reflect upon a life well lived decades from now.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-missing-rewards-that-motivate-healthy-lifestyle-changes-201603179301>



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