



WHERE THERE'S A WILL,
THERE'S A WAY!



Inspiring Greatness in Yourself and Others

By [Desi Williamson](#)

Motivation vs. Inspiration

Everyone needs a bit of inspiration now and then. It seems with the challenges many of us are facing in today's turbulent times, feeling inspired takes more energy than it ever has. What is the difference between motivation and inspiration? They are often confused, but they are not the same disciplines. Webster defines motivation as the quality of providing incentive or motive, to impel. It defines inspiration as the stimulation of mind and emotion to a high level of feeling or activity. In short, I believe motivation comes from the outside-in and inspiration comes from the inside-out.

Many times the two are confused or used interchangeably. People often wonder what happens when they get excited about something initially and then the feeling subsides after a short period of time. It's initially because they were motivated, but because it came from outside stimulus, the feeling cannot sustain itself against the stiff test of challenges or time. When one is inspired there is a burning desire that resides within them and a commitment to persist until the challenge is overcome and the goal is reached.

Three years ago, I broke my neck in two places and landed in the hospital for three months. After fourteen hours of surgery to repair my broken spine, I was so weak I couldn't move my limbs. Intense physical therapy was needed in order to get me back to an ambulatory state. I can remember thinking I was motivated to walk again before the therapy began. I read books and magazine articles, and the doctors and nurses gave me a two week notice as to when the therapy would begin.

In my mind, I was ready to walk again, but my heart was not yet sold. I can remember the first morning when three therapists came to my room to start my rehab. They helped me out of bed and I stood on those wobbly legs and immediately fell back into bed. I told the therapist to go away and leave me alone. The task just seemed too daunting to even attempt. My initial motivation didn't seem to be working. The therapist came back the next day and I didn't even try to get up, I simply told them I wasn't interested.

It took about a week for me to notice the therapists were no longer stopping by my room. When I asked about them, the nurse informed me that if I wasn't going to try and walk, they were moving on the people who were a little more inspired to do so. For the first time, since my injury, I thought about the difference between motivation and inspiration. I was initially motivated, the thought of walking again caused me to be receptive to the challenges ahead, but when I saw what was really necessary to get my life back, it soon evaporated into despair.

Then something happened to spark the fire that is burning still to this day. I asked if one of the nurses would put me into a wheel chair and roll me around on my floor to get me out of that bed. It just so happened I was on the same floor with the children's ward. As I rolled by many of their rooms, I noticed their smiling faces, and laughter coming from inside. The softness in some of their voices and the sparkle in their eyes, even in the throes of death, was a sobering reminder to me of the contrast between my self-pity and their resilience. Many of these kids were terminally ill and would never be leaving the hospital.

When I returned to my room that morning, I made a commitment to myself I would have to take my initial motivation to a whole new level. Those kids inspired me and many never said more than good morning. It was the way they approached their situation, with a child's heart. From that moment I knew, not from a philosophical perspective, but literally that there is a distinct difference between motivation and inspiration. I would have to be inspired in order to overcome my own fears, the difficult days of working while seeing little or no progress, and continuing to push through until I could walk again.

We are now living in some very difficult times, and many people have broken dreams, spirits, and are fearful about the future. Just know that no matter what happens, your ability to overcome is greater than the obstacle in your path. This is what I realized that morning and just as I took my cues from those kids, everyone I encountered was taking their cues from me. We can become motivated from the thought of something, but the staying power beyond initial enthusiasm is where the rubber meets the road.

For the last couple of years, I've been working with the Minnesota Vikings. Each week, my task is to create a theme and use various tools to keep the players inspired. At the start of each season, every team has a goal to make it to the Super Bowl. The start of the season brings excitement and promise to each team, but by the time mid-season comes many teams are already out of the picture and by seasons end, only two of the thirty two teams will play in the big game.

Coaches know it's a six month marathon from the draft through seasons end. The team that can keep the fire burning through injuries and all of the trials and tribulations of a grueling sixteen game schedule will emerge victorious. Only two teams sustain it for the duration and only one emerges as champion. Even the outlandish amount of money that many of the players earn is often not enough incentive because, although it is a motivating factor, it's still outside stimulus. The heart of a champion is grounded in something much deeper called inspiration.

As we step through the challenges of today, let us be reminded of the dreams we all had as children, and the childlike enthusiasm that went with each day. Whenever I feel like my light is dimming, I think about the elders in my family and the hardship they went through to make a life and how they never let the challenges of life destroy their winning spirit. If you think back to the people who built this great country, every group had their obstacles and came from all backgrounds. Many of them gave their lives, so that you and I would have a better life.

Future generations are now taking their cues from us. It is up to us to leave them a legacy of hope and dreams of a better life. We also owe it to the people who came before us. Think about someone in your life who made sacrifices, so that you could have a better life. Many times, it's just the way we approach our day. It's smiling and saying good morning to someone, it's letting someone in front us in a traffic jam, a kind word in a world where people are moving too fast to even notice. It's being grateful for all that we do have, in spite of anything we may have lost.

Inspiring greatness in ourselves and others start with an attitude of gratitude. *It's how we define challenges, not the challenges themselves, that are the greatest measure of one's character.* It is my hope that we can bring back some of the outlandish dreams of childhood. Let's approach each day with an attitude of using whatever happens as a learning tool to help us be the best we can become. Let's work together to gain new insights and pursue our dreams with a new level a passion.

Remember that motivation and inspiration are both important, but different. May you be so motivated that you never stop dreaming and so inspired so that the fire inside you never stops burning. Remember that no matter what, WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY!

To learn more about Desi Williamson go to www.desiwilliamson.com or http://www.speakersoffice.com/desi_williamson.asp