



Supplementary resource for the book *The Human Side of Agile*. More at www.TheHumanSideOfAgile.com

Ten Simple Motivation Catalysts

The best motivation is intrinsic, coming from *within* the person; it's not something you can incentivize long-term. However, you *can* provide conditions and take actions that catalyze members' intrinsic motivation – and you are in the best position to do so. Here are ten free, simple ways to do so.

1. **Show them you care.** Every person wants to feel important and special, so find out what makes them feel that way. There is more to the person than what you see at work. And, your actions speak louder than words.
2. **Involve them in decisions that affect them.** Not just in sprint planning and estimation; think seating arrangements, on-boarding new team members, and overtime. What other decisions affect them?
3. **Support consensual decision-making.** Not everybody will get their way, of course. But merely participating in deliberations can be encouraging and motivating enough, regardless of the ultimate decision.
4. **Encourage them to play to their strengths.** Doing something they're good at – even if it's not part of their job description – will make them happier, and thus more motivated.
5. **Support opportunities for honing their craft.** Even with pressure and deadlines, the ability to do something for themselves will be a breath of fresh air. And while they're busily experimenting, the Law of Unintended Consequences is on your side.
6. **Address team risks forthwith.** Do not delay handling anything that jeopardizes the team's integrity and makes people feel unsafe. Examples include problems with team member fit, challenging behaviors, and nano-management.
7. **Keep playing up the vision and shared purpose as well as daily accomplishments.** This way, you'll engage both the people who are in it for the journey, and the people who care more about the destination.
8. **Explain decisions transparently and proactively.** If people provide input into decisions but don't "get their way," explain why. Nobody should be fuming, muttering, or grumbling. Transparency goes a long way toward preventing frustration.
9. **Coach them to develop and grow.** You may have limitations on educational budget and on time away from work, but your attention to them as people can have no limit.
10. **Provide constructive feedback** early and often, both positive and negative. Caring and helpful feedback – even if it hurts initially – is better than no feedback at all.