



# Meaning-Based Motivation Map

A gentle tool for finding purpose and activation (without force)

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## Important note

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

This is not a goal-setting tool.  
It's not a discipline tool.  
It's not here to make you "do more."

It's here to help your nervous system answer one quiet question:

*"What feels worth orienting toward... even a little?"*

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## How to use this (optional)

- You don't need to complete every section
- You don't need to feel motivated first
- You can revisit this monthly, weekly, or never
- Writing single words is enough

This map works even when energy is low.

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## 1. Start With What *Matters*... Not What You Should Do

Instead of asking *"What should I be doing?"*  
try asking:

*"What tends to matter to me when I feel most like myself?"*

You can answer with **words, values, moments, or examples.**

Things that sometimes matter to me:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Examples (only if helpful):

- honesty
- care
- curiosity
- fairness
- creativity
- rest
- connection
- learning
- autonomy
- stability

There are no right answers.

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## 2. Separate Meaning From Expectation

*(This part is important)*

Some things look like motivation... but are actually pressure.

Check gently:

Things that feel like **expectations or rules**:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Things that feel like **true meaning or care**:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

If something carries tension, fear, or shame...  
it may be expectation, not meaning.

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## 3. Notice Where Meaning Lives in the Body

*(No thinking harder required)*

Pick one thing that feels meaningful.

Then ask:

“When I imagine this being present in my life... what happens in my body?”

You might notice:

- softening
- warmth
- relief
- steadiness
- emotion
- resistance
- nothing at all

All responses are valid.  
This is information, not evaluation.

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## 4. Meaning at Low Energy

(This is where ND motivation actually lives)

Ask:

“If my energy stays low, how could this meaning still exist... without action?”

Examples:

- valuing care → resting
- valuing honesty → saying “I can’t today”
- valuing creativity → noticing beauty
- valuing connection → thinking of someone kindly
- valuing stability → reducing decisions

Write one sentence:

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Meaning does **not** require output.

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## 5. Micro-Orientation (Optional, No Obligation)

Only if it feels okay.

Ask:

“Is there a *tiny* way to face toward this meaning... with no pressure to continue?”

This could be:

- opening a document
- writing one sentence
- sending a low-stakes message
- doing nothing *on purpose*
- choosing the gentler option
- stopping earlier

If nothing comes up... that’s fine.

Optional note:

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## 6. What Pulls Me Away (Without Blame)

Motivation often disappears for **protective reasons**.

Things that tend to pull me away from meaning:

- exhaustion
- overwhelm
- fear of failing
- fear of being seen
- past shame
- time pressure
- sensory overload

This is context... not a flaw.

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## 7. Gentle Reframe (Read This)

- Motivation is **state-dependent**
- Meaning works better than pressure
- Avoidance often protects capacity
- Rest can be values-aligned
- Orientation comes before momentum

You don't need to push yourself into motion.  
You can **turn slightly toward what matters** and wait.

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## 8. One Thing to Remember (Optional)

Write something kind or steady for your future self:

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(e.g. *"I don't need to force this," "Care comes first," "Meaning returns when safety does."*)

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## If This Map Feels Flat or Annoying

That's okay.

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Meaning sometimes goes quiet during:

- burnout
- grief
- prolonged stress
- sensory overload

It doesn't mean it's gone.  
It means your system is conserving energy.

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## Bottom Line

You are not unmotivated.

Your nervous system just doesn't respond to pressure...  
it responds to **meaning, safety, and relevance**.

This map isn't about finding a spark.  
It's about **stopping the conditions that keep putting it out**.

