



## Episode 36: MASTER YOUR MOTIVATION

This is the *Become an Unstoppable Woman* podcast with Lindsay Preston Episode 36, Master Your Motivation.

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Welcome to the *Become an Unstoppable Woman* podcast, the show for goal-getting, fear-facing women for kicking ass by creating change. I'm your host, Lindsay Preston. I'm a wife, mom of two, and a multi-certified life coach to women all over the world. I've lived through enough in life to know that easier doesn't always equate to better. We can't fear the fire, we must learn to become it. On this show, I'll teach you how to do just that. Join me as I challenge you to become even more of the strong, resilient, and powerful woman you were meant to be. Let's do this.

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Hi there Ms. Unstoppable. Thank you for tuning in to yet another episode of the show, or if you're new here, welcome. I'm so glad to have you. I hope you're loving that this show is weekly. We've been doing this now for a couple of months. Hopefully, at this point, you are tuning in week after week and applying new things into your life, gaining new insights and changing your life along the way.

Today's episode is no different. It is going to be one that is packed full of information in a way where you can easily start to leave this episode and make changes in your life. As you could see from the title, we're talking all about how to *Master Your Motivation*.

There is so much conflicting theories and research out there in regards to how to get motivated. Even as a coach and somebody who is constantly setting the research and what everybody has to say about motivation, I get very confused.

Susan, our guest today, Susan Fowler she has researched motivation for 25 years, specifically just focusing in on the neuroscience research, which you know, I'm a neuroscience nerd. I love that stuff.



She has found that there's just three psychological needs that we have to have in order to thrive and be motivated toward changing our life and getting our goals and going after our dreams. I found this research to be fascinating.

I realized along the way too, that I give all of these needs to my clients as we're working together, but in an indirect way. Now, I'm just thinking about, "Oh my gosh, how can I incorporate this more and take it to the next level with them so they can master their motivation even more."

It's really blown my mind on this research and motivated me in a whole new way, believe it or not. Gosh, I listen to this or I conducted this interview without knowing much of anything about Susan to be honest with you. Typically, I prepare for interviews. I read the book, I listen to a lot of interviews but there was a communication issue where I thought actually Susan was going to be interviewing me and it turned out not to be that.

Anyways, this is a little bit different for my norm. I actually really enjoyed it because I knew so little about her book and what she does that I was asking questions as a newbie listener. I think I really tapped into some questions you may have had or will have naturally as you listen to this interview.

I know by the end of the interview I really wanted to go buy her book and I did. I can't wait to dig in and learn even more about this topic because again, it's fascinating, so fascinating and I think you're just going to take so many notes off of this and apply it very quickly in your life and see immediate results.

Now, just a little bit of background about Susan Fowler. She is the global speaker, consultant, trainer, and coach. She is also the author of many articles peer reviewed research and six books including her latest, *Master your Motivation*. She's a regular blogger for the Huffington Post and LeaderChat.

Tens of thousands of people worldwide have learned from her ideas through training programs, and she is a professor and a master's of science in executive leadership for the University of San Diego.

Susan, gives so much great content on this interview. It's a longer one so I'm just going to go ahead and have you listen to my interview with the incredible Susan Fowler. Susan, thank you so much for joining, all of us on the *Becoming An Unstoppable Woman* podcast today. I wanted to bring you on specifically because you have really mastered this whole motivation thing which is such a hot topic I feel like everywhere.



You've said this in another podcast interview that I've heard of yours that we have been in the Dark Ages why we are motivated. Can you start with what is out there in regards to societies, common beliefs, motivation and what the research shows that really motivates us?

Susan Fowler: Oh, thank you for that question. I love it, Lindsay because we really are in the dark ages and I have to tell you, it's taken me 25 years to really get involved and delve into the new research on motivation.

I'm still getting to the other side of complexity, but I really feel when you say, "Wow, you've really master this motivation thing." First of all, it is a life calling. It's something that we need to be able to do everyday because motivation is a skill. It's really hard to develop a skill when you're dealing with outdated beliefs and ideas about what motivation is.

When we look at the typical ways that we motivate, either as managers in a business or as parents with our children or as teachers in school. Most of our beliefs about motivation came out of behavioral research that was done in the '30s and the '40s on animals.

The whole idea was if you could condition a pigeon, for example, you could get it to do whatever you want it to do like turn a circle in 360 degrees within 60 seconds by just giving it rewards. This whole idea of carrots and sticks became really prevalent in our methodology.

Also, almost everyone's heard of Maslow and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Well, that's never been empirically proven and it doesn't deserve not only to Maslow, who never intended for it to be the most popular idea about motivation in the world, it does a real disservice to us because what it indicates, and again, another belief we have is that we can't really truly to be optimally motivated, we can't really reach our highest levels of motivation, unless we have all of these criteria checked off like security and safety and food and all those kinds of things.

We do need all of that, but psychologically what we need in order to thrive is more important than any other thing. What I want to talk to your guests about today or your listeners, are the psychological needs that we need in order to thrive.

These three psychological needs are what's missing in almost every approach to motivation that's out there from tiny habits to rewarding yourself, to all kinds of different schemes about how to get motivated.



Lindsay: Wow, Susan. Let me understand that I'm hearing you correctly. You're saying with Maslow, we don't necessarily need those basic needs like we see in the triangle in order to get motivated to reach our goals. Am I hearing that correctly?

Susan: Yes. First of all, we're always motivated. Your children are always motivated. Just not in the ways that you would like them to be motivated sometimes. We're motivated to eat that muffin. We're not motivated to not eat that muffin. Your children are motivated to act out in a certain way.

We're always motivated. The real question comes is to how we're motivated or the psychological needs that are being created or not created when we're motivated. I'll get back to that in a minute, but with Maslow, it really looks good but if you really think throughout history, one of my favorite books of all time is called, *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl.

He wrote that book when he was in dire circumstances in a World War II concentration camp, where he absolutely had none of those biological or physical needs being taken care of and yet, he thrived. He started studying other people who were thriving.

The reason they were able to thrive under the most dire of circumstances was because they had a sense of choice. Choice is one of the three psychological needs that we need in order to thrive.

His whole idea was that you might not be able to choose that you're in a concentration camp, but you can absolutely choose the way that you experience that. If you have the skill to experience it differently, like when you're being trudging off to the labor camps in the middle of the night and it's freezing and you're starving, and you happen to look through the forest as the sun is coming up, and noticing the beauty and realizing, "Nobody can't take that beauty away from me. I have a choice to see that beauty and revel in it, if for just a few moments."

He constantly started looking around for ways that he could choose to find beauty or humanity or something uplifting. We can all do that. The research shows that there's three of those psychological needs, choice being first. All three of the psychological needs, need to be experienced together.

If we're missing anyone of those three psychological needs, then we don't thrive and when we don't thrive, we try to compensate. We compensate by getting angry or we compensate



by feeling pressure and stress or guilt or we compensate by wanting to win and have power and status or we compensate by wanting the reward or the price.

It's so important for us not only for us as women to be able to create this psychological needs and satisfy them in our own life, but to understand what it means to do that in our homes, in our schools, and in our workplaces.

Lindsay: I have a question for you, Susan.

Susan: I bet you do. You're good at that. [laughs]

Lindsay: If we're going back to the people on the concentration camp and they could still see that they had a choice, is that because before the concentration camps, they had a better life versus what is the research shown of somebody who was born into pain and suffering? Do they still have enough strength to be able to see that choice?

Susan: That's a really interesting question that no one's ever asked me. Let me-- Do you mind if I think out loud?

Lindsay: Oh, yes.

Susan: Of course, I have an opinion about it as soon as you said it. I think that-- Well, actually I have had some research on this. [laughs] The conditions that you find yourself in, will either aid or support your psychological needs or it will undermine and thwart your psychological needs.

So many, for example, home, schools, organizations, the culture is so detrimental to us experiencing, and I'm just going to say the three psychological needs, which are choice, connection, and competence.

Our choice, connection, and competence are so eroded that it's more challenging to experience them. However, anybody can experience them any time and any place that they choose and that's my message.

My message is, we've got to arm ourselves and our children and our students and our workers, with this skill of motivation so no matter what's happening in the environment, that we can create choice, connection, and competence.



The ideas around this, have been used for many years by some amazing researchers within the self-determination theory academic community. There's been all kinds of research done in the clinic with anorexia and gambling addicts, alcoholics, all kinds of disorders.

What they find is that when those people start to have a sense or perception of choice, connection, and competence, they are able to overcome their addictions and their negative behaviors.

What I've done for the past 25 years is study that research. I have a really good working relationship with the key researchers in the field and actually I've done my own research and published in academic journals.

What I've really tried to do is to create a process and a model so that people can take advantage of this. You don't have to go see a skilled psychologist in a clinic to go through this, but you can actually start to do it for yourself and then through motivation and conversation, you can start to facilitate other people.

Lindsay: Wow. Okay, let me process out loud on you, Susan what I'm taking from this. What the research has shown is that as long as someone has those three basic psychological needs of choice, connection, and competence, the needs don't matter.

Even if someone is starving versus if someone is thriving in all of their needs, they're reaching that self-actualization on that Maslow's triangle, then they can still be motivated.

Susan: Let me just clarify something. We obviously need food, water. In fact, the three big biological needs in order for human beings to thrive are food, water, and sex. [laughs] Those are the three things that keep us going as a specie.

Think about this, you can have all the food in the world and still commit suicide. You can have all the money in the world and still be a drug addict. What we're saying is that to fully thrive as a human being, it's not just your biological needs that need to be satisfied, it's these psychological needs.

The fact is, you are able to thrive with the psychological needs and get by with very little as Viktor Frankl did for years in the concentration camp because his psychological needs were being satisfied.

I think it's hard to talk about the extremes, but if you really look at what we're able to do when we're not living in the extremes, when most of us have at least the basic foundation,



then, we're really able to not just survive but thrive. That's what this is all about, it's about thriving.

That's your whole thing about being a superwoman or an unstoppable woman. That's what that's about. You're going to get stopped in your tracks no matter how wealthy you are, no matter how beautiful you are, how privileged you are, you're going to get stopped in your tracks if you don't experience choice, connection, and competence.

Lindsay: I'm getting it now. It's making sense. Let's go back, let's break down those needs. You broke down choice a bit.

Susan: Let me just say another word about choice. Choice is not having freedom. What a lot of parents for example, get fearful of is, "Oh, I've got to give my kids choices." You can't just give a kid freedom. You can't give anyone freedom.

Choice and freedom are not the same things. The fact is, if we have total freedom, we would not be able to handle it because we would never have the competence necessary to handle total freedom. What we're really talking about is having choice and options within boundaries.

It's really having a perception of choice. Some people get up in the morning to go, "Oh, I have to go to work." Or if you have a child, "Oh, I have to get up and deal with my kid. I'm so tired."

No, you don't have to. You're choosing to do that because there are parents who neglect their children, there are people who don't go to work, or if they do, they go just half-heartedly. It's recognizing that you have options and you have choices. Sometimes, just the realization that you know you have a choice, helps you to make the best one.

Lindsay: Yes, I completely agree. I'm preaching that all the time on the show. You always have a choice. Like you just said, even those things you think you don't have a choice, going to work, taking care of your kids, what you're eating, you do always.

Susan: What's really funny is how often we box ourselves in, like you've probably done this. You set up an appointment, you send out the meeting invitation and then it pops up in your calendar and you go, "I can't believe I have to do this meeting today." You called it. [laughs] You're the one that put it on your calendar and yet you have this feeling of, "Oh, I don't have any choice about what I'm going to do during that hour." The fact is that it was your choice, it's still your choice.



Lindsay: Yes. My favorite is always some people say, "I can't afford X,Y,Z." I think you can, you're making the choices in life before that.

Susan: I love it.

Lindsay: Those are crazy. Choice, it doesn't equal freedom instead, it equals options with boundaries. We have to constantly remind ourselves we have the choice in everything in life, right Susan?

Susan: Exactly. You got it.

Lindsay: Got it. Can we rig down second psychological need, which is connection?

Susan: Yes, we can. I think this is the one that's missing in most workplaces. Connection is when we're feeling a genuine connection to other people, when we're feeling like we actually belong and there's an authentic relationship there. It's also about being authentic to ourselves, to our values. To really having developed our values, understanding that values are the guide post that we make our decisions by.

I'm always shocked when I'm doing like presentations in front of large groups of people. I just do a quick little thing. I say, "Just turn to your neighbor and tell them what your top three values are." How people are really struggling or they just pop three things off the top of their brain but they've never really thought about it.

Connection is being aligned with our values and with our sense of purpose. For example, let's say you want to go on a diet and I deal with people all the time on this. They want to go on a diet, my best friend just decide to go on their 10th diet.

Now, it's keto because that sounds the best one going right now. What happens is, as soon as you say, "I'm going on a diet." You say, "I can't eat that muffin because I'm on the keto diet and it's not made with almond flour."

You have just undermined your sense of choice because you're saying, "I can't. I can't eat that." It's like you're saying, "I can't afford something." No, you're making a choice and you're choosing not to eat it. Change your language. I'm choosing not to eat that muffin because I'm on a keto diet and it doesn't have almond flour.

That is a really important shift. What they also don't do is think about the connection. Why did you decide to lose weight? The reason that you decided to lose weight really matters because if the reason is to really look good at your high school reunion and impress all



your friends, that's considered what we call sub optimal motivation. It's devoid of connection.

In other words, there's nothing truly meaningful about that, it's really about the image that you have, and you have no control over how other people see you. You could look great, and they'd still think you're not a cool person. Connection means that you are aligned with values that are meaningful and are noble.

If you're saying the reason I'm losing weight is because I have a value around health and I've always said I value health and the way I eat is one of the greatest contributors along with exercise to my health, and well being, that's why I'm losing weight.

You're not committing to the diet, what you are committing to is a highly developed meaningful value around health. Then it doesn't matter which diet. All the diets could work if you stick to it. The reason you don't stick to it is because you have lost your sense of choice and connection and then we'll talk about competence in a minute.

Connection is either really feeling like you genuinely belong, and have authentic relationships with the people involved with whatever it is you're trying to do, it's when whatever you're doing, you're aligned with your values and a noble sense of purpose.

The third element of connection is when you really feel that you're making a contribution to the greater good. It's something that goes beyond yourself and your own self-interests so that you actually are caring about others.

That's where we get that deep sense of connection. What happens is, for example, in the workplace, people set goals all the time, but they fail to say, "How does this goal actually align with my values? What about this goal is meaningful to me?" That's a huge piece that's often missing. Can I just give you an example of something I just recently at a fast--

Lindsay: Yes.

Susan: I was in a Rubio's. It's a fast-food Mexican place. We have a lot of them here in San Diego. I think it started here in San Diego. Anyway, there's a woman with two young girls in line in front of us.

She says, "What do we want to get?" Then one little girl said, "I want to get the tacos, and I want a root beer." Her mom says, "Let's just think about that choice because we have a number of different choices here." She says, "You get the tacos. If you got it with water,



then you could also choose then when we get home we've got that really good pancake I made and you could have a piece of the pancake."

She just started going through all these options. She's like, "Can you think of any other choices you have?" It was fascinating. Then this little girl, she was been five years old says, "I'm going to have the water and I want the cake when we get home."

I was just like, "Whoa." What the mother was doing-- Oh, I'm sorry. I missed probably the most important part. She said, "We have our goals around eating healthy and creating more energy, so you can do what you want to do. Let's think about your choices." It wasn't just choice, it was choice that was connected to a meaningful value that they had agreed upon before they ever walked into that fast food joint.

Lindsay: Wow. I love it.

Susan: Isn't that cool?

Lindsay: Yes, and going back to the connection piece of having a bigger purpose, living it with authenticity, living in your values, this is something I'm preaching all the time, Susan and I'm teaching my clients. To me, when I hear that it goes back to what's your why? Why are you here? Why are you doing this? Then knowing who you are on a deep level, right?

Susan: Yes, and I just wrote a blog about this very thing because what happens is, we stop too soon with the why. We say, "Why are you doing this?" Somebody might say, "Well, the reason I'm really working hard on this sales thing is because I want to be number one this quarter on the sales team."

Then I say, "You're doing this because you want to really excel and be number one. That's not a good enough why." The quality of your why will determine the quality of the motivation you have to actually achieve your goal. It is also like, "Why do you want to lose weight?" "Well, because I'm going to my high school reunion this summer, and I really want to look my best."

That's not a good enough why because that's all about image and power and status. What the research says is that it's not about whether you're motivated or not, it's about the quality of the motivation that you have.

If you are motivated by external factors or things you can't control, then that's called sub-optimal motivation and you will not succeed over time or even if you do, you won't have that sense of thriving.



If the why is something that is values-based, a noble purpose, or really contributing to the greater good, helping you to be a more authentic human being, then that why is has a higher quality than a lot of your other whys.

Lindsay: Totally agree, Susan. I keep mentioning this, I don't mean to but it goes back to something I teach my clients, which is the puzzle of them. Their values, their strengths, their purpose, all these things.

Then they get this sense of this is who I am in the world. This is what lights me up and makes me feel good, so they have that deep why. I'm so glad you mentioned that because it's so true that so many people say, "I'm doing this because I love my kids." I get that a lot.

Susan: You could be really loving your kids or it could be that you feel a burden, you feel obligated and every morning, you wake up and you feel heavy because you feel like, "I have to be a good mother." "Oh, I can't let other people down." We have to really delve into you say you love your children and let's get in touch with that.

Lindsay: Why do you love them? [crosstalk] and why da-da-da-da. Yes. Keep going until you get the core of that connection or that authenticity. Great, we've got choice, we've got connection and then tell us about the third psychological need, competence.

Susan: Think about when you have like a two or three-year-old. What's the question they're always asking you. They're always asking that why question, right? Why? Why? Why? Think about why they ask you about why.

The reason is because they love to learn. They're absolutely curious about the world. They want to gain, and they need to gain competence. Think about the toddler who's just learning to walk, and they keep falling. Now, we never question why they fall. It's obvious because they don't have the skill yet to walk.

Do we ever ask why do they keep getting up? When they get up, they're not crying. They're laughing, they're so joyful. It's like a fun experience because they're learning something. They're on their way to mastering something that's vital as they can tell to get from point A to point B more quickly.

We have a natural need and love to learn. What's happened in so many of our institutions, is that we've taken that inherent love of learning and we have externalized it. We say, "Oh, wow, if you really learn well, we'll give you a good grade." Or, "If you don't learn, well, we'll give you a bad grade."



Now it's not about learning. It's about the grade. Or "Oh, wow, if you get all 10 right, we're going to give you smiley faces on your little pop quiz for every answer you get right." We thought that was a real improvement over the big red checkmarks and a minus two, the focusing on the negative. Let's focus on the positive.

No, it's all the same. It's all rewarding behavior that doesn't need to be rewarded because it's already there. What the research says is that you cannot be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated at the same time.

If you give children, for example, external rewards for doing something they already love to do and are naturally inclined to do, they become more focused on the reward than the natural thing they love doing, and as soon as they lose interest in the reward, or as soon as that reward's no longer there, then they lose interest.

You wonder why the time they get to high school, you've got to bribe them to graduate with a car. Then those people go into our workplaces and they're so used to the carrots and the sticks, that they don't know any other way of understanding what truly, authentically, optimally motivates them.

Lindsay: Wow, just sitting here taking that in.

Susan: It's a lot. I'm sorry if I just talk so much. It's so exciting, Lindsey. I'm giving you a lot of the background information and examples, but it really becomes very simple. We can just ask a few simple questions of ourselves every day, or if you're a coach like you are, or if you're a parent, a teacher, or a manager, we can just start asking three simple questions and we will start to change and shift the type of motivation that we have for anything we're doing.

Lindsay: What are those questions? I have to know?

[laughter]

Susan: Well, that's a good question. The first question is what choices do I have? It's that simple. You can extend it, you can elongate it, you can ask yourself, "Well, what choices do I have?" You can also ask yourself, "What choices have I made and how do I feel about those choices?"

Even if you don't think you have choices, if you ask yourself, "What choices have I made?" Suddenly it becomes apparent, your internal logic goes, "Oh, yes. I did make a choice there.



Oh, I do have choices." Just ask yourself, "What choices have I made? How do I feel about those choices? What choices do I wish I hadn't made?"

It's just asking yourself about choices and exploring that. Then the second one is to ask yourself, "What do I find meaningful? What did I do today that I found meaning in? How did I fulfill my values? How did I feel a connection?"

It's really just asking, "How did I create connection today? Did I reach out to someone? Was I kind? Was I generous? Was I grateful?" Just ask yourself, "How did I create connection today? How can I create connection today?" Then the third question is, how have I learned? How have I grown? What kind of competence have I built? What competence do I have?

Just to start asking ourselves at the end of every day not just what did I do, what did I get done? To ask ourselves what did I learn today? When your kids come from school, if you could just ask them, "Tell me about the choices you made at school and how did you feel about them?"

I know it sounds like a crazy questions, but kids love it. They really start thinking about it. I've been doing this with my grandchildren. It's fascinating. Then, ask them, "What did you do today that made you feel good? Then why did that make you feel good?"

If it's something external or like, I won the contest. Then, delve deeper. How did you find meaning in winning? A lot of times, what the meaning role is connected to competence because I learned something. Well, what did you learn?

At the end of the day, if we don't ask, for example, we don't ask children or for a manager, we don't ask our employees, if we're a teachers, we don't ask our students, at the end of the day, if we don't ask, "What did you learn?" There's a really good chance they're going to forget it.

The research on adult learning theory says, we need to exalt in our learning. We need to identify what we've learned or it goes into a part of the brain that is harder to access. When we connect our learning to the choices we made and the values we have, that learning sticks. It goes into that limbic part of your brain that's associated with emotion and meaning that can be retrieved more easily.

Lindsay: Wow. Susan, here's what I'm gathering from this, correct me if I'm wrong. Somebody just first realizes they have a choice in everything they do, they have the choice



to show up to life however they want to show up to life. They're always in their power, the power is that locus of control.

The second thing, then they realize they have that power, so then, they understand or they look at who am I on a deeper level? How can I show up authentically? What are my values, how can I create connection, like you said. Then, from there, knowing who they are in a deeper level, what can I go out and learn today to grow that connection with my values and my authenticity? Is that the three steps too? Would that get somebody--

Susan: Yes. I think it's more powerful when you what you've just described and that is, you're really connecting your choices with connection and with your competence. A lot of times it doesn't flow that way, but I call it the domino effect, that you could have all the choices in the world, but if you have all that choice-- For example, you have a lot of money, it gives you discretionary choice.

You have more options of choosing what you want and how you spend your time and what you buy than when you don't have a lot of money. Let's say you have a lot of money, you have a lot of choices, but if you don't have any meaning behind those choices, if you don't have any meaningful relationships, or you don't have a sense of purpose in your life, we've seen how many really rich people actually end up in very sad situations and circumstances and that's because they didn't have that sense of connection.

You could have all the meaning and the connection in the world, "Wow, I have this really purposeful life, but I don't have any choices, and I'm not learning anything." That meaning is not going to last long. It's going to be have a very surface-oriented. It's not going to be very deep.

You could know everything, you could be really, really smart but you for example, you have a manager who's constantly micromanaging you and because your manager's always micromanaging you, you're not allowed to demonstrate the competence that you have.

Then you think there's no connection there because my boss doesn't care about me, all they care about is controlling me. You've just eroded connection. Everyone of these is totally interconnected and the way you set it up shows the most natural flow.

Lindsay: Yes. My mind is just going a mile a minute. I'm just thinking of all these different things of like you mentioned, somebody has this but they don't have this, what's the point? It's this trifecta of having all three of these.



Susan: Yes. That's a really good way of saying it that trifecta. I also think of it as you've got three elixirs. Each one of these elixirs is like a magic potion. It's so powerful. When you mix these three elixirs together, they are truly magic. They work wonders. They can literally change the nature of your experience in any moment.

Lindsay: Oh my gosh. I just love this, Susan because these are things that you know when you say these, it's like, "Oh, this makes so much sense." Knowing now all the research behind this, it just makes it so easy now.

Any time you're not motivated to go back to these three things versus what is, it isn't that I don't want this or that or that. Now, it's just a quick couple of questions, and then you can get back to moving and grooving on your goals or adjusting, don't you think?

Susan: Absolutely. I love that. Moving and grooving. You got a way with words. [laughs] I love it. It seems really simple. Like I said, it's taking me 25 years to get to the other side of that complexity. I'm grateful that you can see maybe the elegance in it.

For example, Viktor Frankl's book is mostly about the concept of autonomy or choice, which is the same thing concept of autonomy and choice. There's a lot of books out there about the power of purpose and about living with intention, and about the values that you have.

Then, there's Carol Dweck's book on the *Growth Mindset*. There's research on the power of progress. There's been a lot of really great research on each one of these three psychological needs but where again, the magic of the research is when they've been able to really see that these are three foundational needs.

That almost all of the other things we talk about are by products of these three needs being created in your life. For example, trust. Trust is a vital thing in life. Yes, it is. Trust is a by product of relationships where choice, connection, and competence are all operational.

We talk about safety and security. That seems like it's really foundational, it was in Maslow's hierarchy. The fact is, we've discovered that when people are experiencing choice, connection, and competence, they feel safe.

That's why these three psychological needs are considered foundational. All these other things that we think about or hear about or that might appear in Maslow's hierarchy or



whatever, are by products of these three needs that when we create them in our lives, we absolutely thrive.

Lindsay: Wow. This is so great. My mind is spinning. Just so much greatness in this and yet so much so simplicity. It turns so many things on its head. I know you talk about this often from people that just say, "Why don't you just focus on discipline. That's all I need. That's my problem."

Susan: You know what their problem is, is that they think focus and discipline. Can I share with you that the reason I started studying all of this is almost 40 years ago. I love meat. I actually had a little pot of pork fat that I would keep on my stove because no matter what you were cooking, it just tasted better with pork fat in it. I love meat.

One night, I watched a documentary about the way we treat the animals that we eat. Something just shifted in me. Overnight, I quit eating all meat wearing leather, fish, you name it, if it's a broth and it's got stock, I will not eat the soup. I was a really strict vegetarian.

I was a straight vegan for years, but I'm a strict vegetarian. People say, "Oh, you're so disciplined. Oh my gosh, look at your willpower." The reason that was befuddling to me was that it took no willpower and I was using no discipline. It just happened. I just did it.

It's almost been 40 years ago now. People still say, "You're so disciplined." I go, "No, I'm not." I was curious, what happened? If that could happen with being a vegetarian with other things in my life that I actually want to do and that started my search. I really in earnest began this search and then like I said, 25 years ago, I found the research community that was doing the most groundbreaking research in motivation history.

It's just a phenomenal body of work. The APA monitor, which is the premier magazine publication of the American Psychology Association, are doing a big story about this research and they're talking to the founders of this theory and they said, "Well, this is a really great research, this is phenomenal, but how do you apply it? How do you use it?"

Dr. Richard Ryan had them call me because they feel that my experience within the academic community, but then literally being able to go around the world and teach these ideas and talk to organizations like one of the top three financial institutions in the world, and these different organizations that we're really learning how to apply it.



That's really exciting to me is that there's a lot that's gone into this. This isn't just my opinion about what's motivating. It came out of my own experience, but it was that experience of having a motivational shift and not understanding it, and wanting to get to what happened there?

What I would encourage your listeners to do is think about a time when you've actually done something that you really wanted to do, and it didn't require willpower and discipline. You just started doing it and deconstruct it, and discover that what happened there was in that moment, you were experiencing choice, connection, and competence and that that ongoing experience of choice, connection, and competence is what enabled you to sustain your behavior.

Deconstruct it and notice that, and then using some of the tips we've talked about today, start to embed it in your life with other things that you would like to master.

Lindsay: Wow. Susan, I can't wait to read your book now.

Susan: Well, thank you. Can I explain something, Lindsay about the book?

Lindsay: Yes, of course.

Susan: The first book was published in 2014. It's called *Why Motivating People Doesn't Work and What Does*. It was written primarily for managers and to some extent parents. Those ideas are really about how to create an environment where people are more likely to be optimally motivated.

The book that was released this past year in 2019 in June, is really geared for individual contributors or just the individual. How do you take this information and actually use it for your own motivation, so that you're not dependent on a manager, a teacher, or a parent for your motivation.

Lindsay: Wow, and what's the best place to get those books?

Susan: Amazon is probably just the easiest, but Barnes and Nobles, any online bookseller. If you go into your bookstore because they've been out for a while now. Sometimes Barnes and Nobles we'll have the new book, *Master your Motivation*. If they don't have it on hand, they'll gladly order it for you, or from my publisher Barrett Kohler or from my website at [www.susanfowler.com](http://www.susanfowler.com).



Lindsay: Perfect. Susan, thank you so much for today. I feel like I learned so much and I can't wait to dig in even more. We appreciate you sharing all your research in 25 years of wisdom. Thank you.

Susan: Well, thank you. It helps me every time I talk about it, it just reinforces how I need to keep mastering my motivation every single day. Thank you for that opportunity, Lindsay.

[music]

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In my nine-month simple success coaching system, I am going to walk you every single step of the way to ensure that you get the goals and dreams that you want. The first step is to apply for a free 60-minute consult call. Just go to [LindsayEpreston.com/apply](https://www.LindsayEPreston.com/apply) to get started. As always, my friend, remember, you're only as unstoppable as you believe you can be, so believe in yourself. You got this.