WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Make Room for Motivation

A person's own account of the work and one agreed change in conditions.

25 minutes | Autonomy / Mastery / Purpose · A shared conversation

Use it in three moves

1. Ask for the person's view before interpreting a change in energy.
2. Explore autonomy, mastery, and purpose alongside the material conditions of work.
3. Agree one change you can support and return to their experience of it.

Begin with their account

Describe a specific observation without diagnosing motivation. Invite correction and allow them to decline personal disclosure.

Autonomy · Where is there meaningful choice?

Ask about decisions they can make, constraints that are real, and places where permission is unnecessarily unclear.

Mastery · Is there room to learn and improve?

Check access, practice, feedback, and workload. Do not turn every conversation into an extra development assignment.

Make Room for Motivation

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

Purpose · Does the contribution make sense to them?

Ask what feels worthwhile or disconnected. Work need not supply someone's entire identity or purpose.

What else needs attention?

Include workload, fairness, resources, relationships, pay concerns, and personal boundaries without pressing for private details.

Choose one supported change

Agree the action, authority, time, owner, and review. Ask whether it helped rather than rating their enthusiasm.

A question for me

Am I trying to generate enthusiasm for conditions I should change?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

Begin with their account

I noticed you stepped back from the design discussion. How has that work been for you lately? I may be reading too much into one meeting.

Autonomy · Where is there meaningful choice?

They would like to choose the approach for smaller requests. Agree a boundary: choose within the existing service standard; bring exceptions for review.

Mastery · Is there room to learn and improve?

They want to improve analysis skills, but delivery work fills the week. Pair on one real case and remove one routine report to make time.

Purpose · Does the contribution make sense to them?

They value helping colleagues solve real problems but rarely see what happens after delivery. Invite a recipient to share how the analysis was used.

What else needs attention?

An unpredictable approval queue is causing rework. The lead will clarify a response window; this cannot be solved by another motivational conversation.

Choose one supported change

Trial the small-request decision boundary for two weeks. Ask what became easier, what support was missing, and whether to change the arrangement.

The thinking behind it

People do not owe a workplace constant enthusiasm. Your useful contribution may be to remove a constraint, restore fairness, or make room for a choice.

Daniel Pink's Drive describes autonomy, mastery, and purpose as important elements of motivation. The collection's Inner Drive worksheet uses these themes. This original conversation is not a motivation test, and the three lenses do not replace fair conditions or explain every person's experience.

Daniel Pink · Drive

Read Why Work Can't Be Your Church by Nic Payne