

# 3 on 13

3 things from EP  
to make life  
better.

OCTOBER 13 · 2023

Emanuelson-Podas produces the **3on13 Newsletter** on the 13th of every month in the hopes of putting in your hands three things that will help make your life better. Entries may include quotes, reminders, jokes, random recipes, book recommendations, advice, or anything else that might make you think, make you smile, or make you a better, happier human being. **Got something worth sharing? Send it to [3on13@epinc.com](mailto:3on13@epinc.com)**

## 1 | Motivation is Fleeting

It seems like every time we turn around right now, there's another conversation about the difference between discipline and motivation (most recently, Minnesota Twins pitcher [Pablo Lopez mentioned the topic](#) after twirling a gem in game two of the series against the Astros).

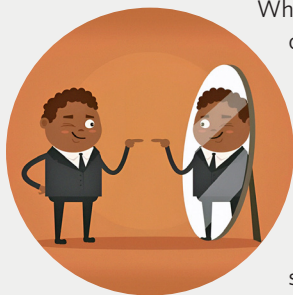
Motivation certainly has its role in any endeavor. [James Clear](#) — author of *Atomic Habits*, and someone we frequently cite in this newsletter — puts it this way: "Every choice has a price, but when we are motivated, it is easier to bear the inconvenience of action than the pain of remaining the same." (His excellent article on the topic can be [found here.](#))

But, Clear says, the reality is that motivation is inconsistent and often fleeting. Relying on it alone to push you to accomplish anything is a bad bet. Even clear-eyed stick-to-itiveness will fail you. [He says that](#) "Perseverance, grit, and willpower are essential to success, but the way to improve these qualities is... by creating a [more disciplined environment.](#)"

Here's the reality: motivation without discipline isn't a sustainable path to success. Grab that motivation. Hold on to it as long as you can. And then put real energy into your habits and discipline.



## 2 | Self Talk (Don't Laugh, You Already Do It)



Whether we want to admit it or not, we all engage in some manner of self talk. For some it's a conscious choice. For others it exists below the surface. The key to making it impactful is to make it intentional.

What if the next time you were trying hard (so hard!) to avoid a bad habit — like, say, procrastinating on a project — you gave yourself a little talk. And what if rather than telling yourself "I can't procrastinate!" you instead said to yourself, "I don't procrastinate." Would that change things?

It will. Or so says [Jonah Berger](#), author of the new book, *Magic Words*. (Go deep with Berger in [this interview.](#)) Berger cites research that shows simply changing the word from "can't" to "don't" improves the effectiveness of the self talk. Why? It comes down to choice. "Can't" suggests reliance upon some outside control, while "don't" stems from internal control. (Berger goes on to discuss the value of adding "because" and "choose to." As in, "I don't procrastinate because I choose to hit my deadline.")

Says Berger: "The right words can make a habit becomes a part of your identity. It's one thing to say that I'm the type of person who wants this. It's something very different to say I'm the type of person who IS this." (Oh, and there's a nice video overview [here.](#))

## 3 | Odds and Ends:

- This is interesting: the (surprising) [daily rituals of some famous creative minds](#). Expect substance abuse.
- [Gas stations are \(slowly\) dying](#). What comes next will be a radical new form of architecture.
- [World Mental Health Day](#) — which promotes mental health as a universal human right — was on October 10.



**emanuelson-podas**  
consulting engineers

952.930.0050 | [epinc.com](http://epinc.com)