

A REASON FOR DOING

In their book *The Gift of Honor*, Gary Smalley and John Trent tell a story about why some students in school and some adults in their careers face a losing battle.

It was in October 1944 in World War II when an officer commanding a platoon of American soldiers received a call from headquarters. Over the radio, this captain learned his unit was being ordered to recapture a small French city from the Nazis – and he learned something else from headquarters as well. For weeks, French resistance fighters had risked their lives to gather information about the German fortifications in that city, and they had smuggled this information out to the Allies.

The French Underground's efforts had provided the Americans with something worth its weight in gold – a detailed map of the city. It wasn't just a map with the names of major streets and landmarks; it showed specific details of the enemy's defensive positions. Indeed, the map even identified shops and buildings where German soldiers bunked or where a machine-gun nest or a sniper had been stationed.

Block by block, the Frenchmen gave an accounting of the German units and the gun emplacements they manned. For a captain who was already concerned about mounting casualty lists, receiving such information was an answer to prayer. Although the outcome of the war wouldn't depend on this one skirmish, to him it meant that he wouldn't have to write as many letters to his men's parents or wives telling them their loved one had been cut down in battle.



Before the soldiers moved out to take their objective, the captain gave each man a chance to study the map. And wanting to make sure his men read it carefully, he hurriedly gave them a test covering the major landmarks and enemy strongholds. Just before his platoon moved out, the officer graded the test, and with minor exceptions, every man earned a perfect score. As a direct result of having this map to follow, the men captured the city with little loss of American lives.

Nearly 30 years after this military operation took place, an army researcher heard the story and decided to base a study on it. The project began in France where, instead of a platoon of soldiers, he arranged for a group of American tourists to help him with his research. For several hours, the men and women were allowed to study the same map the soldiers had, and then they were given the same test.

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You can guess the results. Most of the tourists failed miserably. The reason for the difference between these two groups was obvious: motivation.

Knowing their lives were on the line, the soldiers were highly motivated to learn every detail of the map. For the tourists, being in a research study provided some motivation. But most of them had nothing to lose but a little ride if they failed the test.

Motivation, according to *Merriam-Webster*, is “the act or process of giving someone a reason for doing something ... the condition of being eager to act or work.”



It is literally the desire to do things. It's the difference between waking up before dawn to pound the pavement and lazing around the house all day. It's the crucial element in setting and attaining goals. And reaching our objectives in Life Care and Century Park are essential.

Psychology Today says that “research shows you can influence your own levels of motivation and self-control. So figure out what you want, power through the pain period, and start being who you want to be.”

Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord (Romans 12:11 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter