

# Motivation Formula

## 5. Hold Your Breath

**Spatial Requirements:** Regular classroom setup: little or no space required

**Activity Type:** Movement/group

**Grades:** 2-12

**Group Size:** 6 or more

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Introduction:** This activity will help students understand that when they are motivated, they can do much more than they thought possible.

**Materials:**

- Timer

**Activity:**

Divide the group in half and make two teams. If the group is larger than 15, divide the group into three teams to make groups of five to eight. Each team must contain the same number of members. If there is an odd number, fill in with one or more leaders or have a student go twice.

*Round 1:*

The two teams will be competing against each other to see which team can hold their breath the longest. When the time begins, the first person on each team holds his/her breath as long as possible. When they are finished, they touch the person next in line. This person holds his/her breath as long as possible, then touches the person next to them. This process continues until each person has a turn. When the last person on each team finishes, the time is totaled for each group. Each team's totals are recorded on the board.

*Round 2:*

Ask each team what they can do to hold their breath longer for the second round. If they do not come up with ideas to increase their lung capacity, suggest the following: Ask everyone to take a deep breath and slowly let the air out. Take another deep breath and try to gulp down two or three mouths full of air and slowly release the air. Continue this process three or four more times and start the activity again. While each person is waiting for his/her turn, they can practice increasing their lung capacity by deep breathing. Write the new times on the board under the old times. The time should increase on the second round.

**Processing the Experience:**

Relate the following story:

*There once was an eager student who wanted to gain wisdom and insight. He went to the wisest man in town to seek his counsel. Being a man of few words, Socrates chose not to speak, but to illustrate.*

*He took the young man to the beach and, with all of his clothes still on, walked straight out into the water. The pupil gingerly followed and walked into the sea, joining Socrates where the water was just below their chins.*

*Without saying a word, Socrates reached out and put his hands on the young man's shoulders. Looking deep into his student's eyes, Socrates pushed the student's head under the water with all his might.*

*A struggle ensued, and just before life was taken away, Socrates released his captive. The boy raced to the surface and, gasping for air and choking from the salt water, looked around for Socrates, 'Why did you try to kill me?'*

*The wise man calmly retorted with a question of his own: 'Boy, when you were underneath the water, not sure if you would live to see another day, what did you want more than anything in the world?'*

*The student took a few moments to reflect, then said, 'I wanted to breathe.' Socrates looked at the boy comfortingly and said, 'Ah! When you want wisdom and insight as badly as you wanted to breathe, it is then that you shall have it.'"*

- How badly did you want air after you had held your breath for as long as you could?
- Is there anything in your life that you wanted more at that point than air?
- Do you face your challenges and problems in life with the same intensity and effort you did when you wanted air? Why or why not?
- What determines how much effort you put into facing your challenges?
- What are some of the challenges you have overcome in your life?
- What would happen if you put the same amount of intensity into overcoming your life's challenges as you did in this activity?