

Motive.

Motive is a very interesting concept that eludes many, because we confuse the elements surrounding it, for motive itself.

True motive is a simple two-state, or binary concept. And the two can be captured by the terms, *ill-motive*, or *good motive*. Good motive is an altruistic desire to help another, while ill motive is a desire to take advantage of a situation, regardless of outcome, even if it benefits another.

When seen in this light, it becomes easier to judge or assess yours, or other people's motives.

However, what drives a person's motivation is another matter.

Ill-motive can be driven by any of the seven or twelve deadly sins, i.e., Pride, Greed, Lust, Sloth/laziness, Hate, Avarice or Envy. While Good-motive can be driven by virtues such as Humility, Charity, Patience, Temperance, Kindness, Diligence/Selfless Service

For example, going out of your way to help someone because of what you can, or hope to get out of it, materially or through enhancing your reputation or image, is ill-motivated. This is regardless of the help that you offered the beneficiary. It is also regardless of whether you attained the reward that you hoped to get from your ill-motivated action. In this instance, the deadly sin behind the motivation could be pride, greed or avarice. For example, people make large donations for public or community activities, including supporting religious or spiritual activities, but with the open or secret desire to be seen and admired. Even included here are donations or actions taken in hopes of securing a place in heaven.

On the opposite, good-motive is when you go out of your way to help someone only because you sincerely believe that the help you offer is for their ultimate spiritual advancement. I specify spiritual advancement, because material advancement alone invariably and inadvertently hamper the receiver in the long run. Truly **Good-motivated** deeds can be driven by Charity, Selfless service or Kindness

The reason why a strictly material focus in giving is detrimental in the long run, is because such giving does not factor the law of balance into the giving equation. For example, a person, or a nation, out of genuine concern for the suffering brought on by drought in another country, assembles resources to send and distribute to the victims of famine. True, the victims are fed, but the aid does not help them to understand how they arrived at their desperate situation, and, more important, help them to develop their own mechanisms for preventing similar occurrence in the future.

Some may wonder how teaching preventive measures against famine constitutes anything spiritual. But the answer is very simple. Famine is not something that suddenly appears. It is usually preceded by many warning signs. That the people were unable to read or ignore these warning signs that nature gave abundantly, is evidence of their negligence or sloth, one of the deadly sins. Therefore, in just offering aid, without also trying to help them overcome their spiritual laziness (indolence) that has aggravated their suffering, is in the long run detrimental to them, because they remain negligent and never develop their observational and perceptive capability, which are actually also spiritual traits that need to be developed.

When we define motivation in terms of their triggers, we increase the number of factors to consider, and depending on how honest we are with ourselves, it becomes more difficult to determine or to admit to our motivation.

For example, if we focus on looking at Hate as the motivation for an act, our focus quickly strays into what caused the hate in the first place. And before we know it, we can easily justify our action as retribution, or the need to redeem a loss that we suffered. Our actions then become readily justifiable to us, regardless of means, and its impact on others is no longer considered.

Of course, when we think of motive as the action itself, it complicates the matter exponentially, because, as we know, actions from the same trigger, like say lust, can take on different shapes in the same person, in different circumstances or times.

For example, lust can trigger acquisitiveness, injured pride (when denied), or envy of those who have what we lust after. From this we can see how focus and rationalization can now spread over so many triggers, masking altogether the underlying ill-motive

Motive also applies to how we ask or receive, because this too can help or hamper our development, mental and Spiritual. For example, if we are prone to asking or receiving, because we do not want to put the effort into trying to help ourselves, we actually hamper our own development, and this constitutes ill-motive. However, asking or receiving with a view to self-development or improvement is a good-motive

This insight and perspective, hopefully demonstrate to the objective person, the wisdom in Jesus Christ's advice to focus our attention on the "illness" or *benevolence* of our motivation. Because, this is the best yard stick to assess and judge our actions or their triggers. The same simple yard stick could be used to assess other people's motivation.

This simple definition of motive also makes it easier to foresee the consequences of actions or triggers, in which lie the true motive.