

inspiration

The process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.

When we're inspired, our work hums. We have a sense of purpose, buoyed by the feeling that our talents are being put to good use. We're doing what we should be doing. And then, just like that, inspiration evaporates. Perhaps a negative comment from your boss deflated you or you're not excited about a particular assignment. Inspiration can be frustratingly fleeting and difficult to recover when lost. Even if you're lucky enough to have a job you love, it's common to go through lengthy periods where you need to dig deep to feel excited about your work.

While we can't force ourselves to be inspired, we can create an environment that's conducive to inspiration. Here's what works for many people. Don't wait for positivity to strike. When you aren't feeling inspired, it's normal to feel stuck. But inaction is your enemy in this effort. Inspiration doesn't just happen while we're at our desks returning emails.

Don't wait for a flash of insight to strike before making any changes. The field of cognitive behavioral therapy shows that our behavior affects how we think and feel. When we do different things, we feel different feelings.

Develop an inspiration routine. When you've excelled in your field, it's natural to move out of learning mode. But researchers have found that when people believe that they're experts they become more close minded, a concept termed "earned dogmatism". We're most likely to get, and stay inspired, when we have fresh experiences and information that can trigger insights.

Find new friends. The people we spend time with affect our energy and our mood. They also tend to reinforce our beliefs. We can easily get into a situation where we speak to the same people about similar topics, week in, week out.

Narrow your choices. Sometimes we lack motivation, because we're not sure what to do – stay in a job, leave for a different one, try out a new career, move departments, ask for a promotion. Too many options are paralyzing, as psychology professor Barry Schwartz discusses in *The Paradox of Choice*. Too often, we feel overwhelmed and do nothing.

We can boost our motivation by narrowing down our options, making it easier to act on them. We like to know we have a plan and are working toward it. If you feel stuck, try writing down all of your options and selecting the three you're most excited about in order. Then allocate time to work toward your top choices.

Receive feedback. Inspiration also comes from positive feedback! Ask your colleagues, manager and seniors for their feedback on your work. Ask them about the things they think you're good at and where do they expect improvement. When you do your best and receive positive feedback for your good work it inspires you to perform even better.

So, keep yourself motivated to make the best of your talent. It's a must for an organization as well as for you! Do everything possible to create an atmosphere in which you feel happy to work.

These aren't just actions to take when you're in a slump. It's important to keep them up even when you're feeling inspired so you can stay that way.

Inspiration doesn't have to feel elusive. It's in your capacity to increase your opportunities for new insights and ideas. As Jack London said: "Don't loaf and invite inspiration; light out after it with a club, and if you don't get it you will nonetheless get something that looks remarkably like it."



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