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Perseverance

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Solutions

The Next Great Idea Is Just Around the Corner

Inspiration doesn't strike, it's achieved. While there may be that stroke of genius or a breakthrough moment, it's inevitably preceded by a lot of persistent, labored work. Writers write; photographers photograph; artists paint. Each instance of work doesn't yield a masterpiece—but perseverance through the good, bad, and ugly is what lays the groundwork for the great. In fact, researchers from Northwestern's Kellogg School found that people underestimate how many creative ideas they can come up with, and don't realize the best ideas might come toward the end of their brainstorm.

"People just give up too easily," says Loran Nordgren, an associate professor of management and organizations who co-authored the study. "They're robbing themselves of their more interesting ideas by giving up too soon."

Instead, follow these suggestions to make sure you don't quit before your best work comes to light.

Shut down the negativity

One of the biggest reasons people abandon projects is uncertainty about the outcome—it's difficult to justify applying effort to a task when you don't know if it'll pay off. However, the Kellogg researchers discovered that not only are more ideas generated after spending more time on a project, but they're better and more creative, too. You need to learn to embrace your ideas and trust that the more time you spend on them, the better they'll get.

Stay focused

Worry is an ally of fear and stress, which are big distractions; you need to cut them out and focus on your creative task. To help you stay focused you need to make sure your goal is clear—you can literally write down what you want to accomplish and place it where it's visible to you. This will plant a seed in your mind, helping you stay focused on the task at hand.

Ask for help

Encouragement is important, and so is not feeling like you're working in solitude. It's important to establish your own support network. Include people who will give you an extra push of encouragement when you need it, and who can help you crystallize and work through any kernels of ideas that you may have. In the end, with the right work ethic, and a great team of people supporting you, you'll be able to persevere through any tasks.

And hey, if it's a little inspiration you need, check out gettyimages.com/creative for images and video to take you from idea to execution.

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