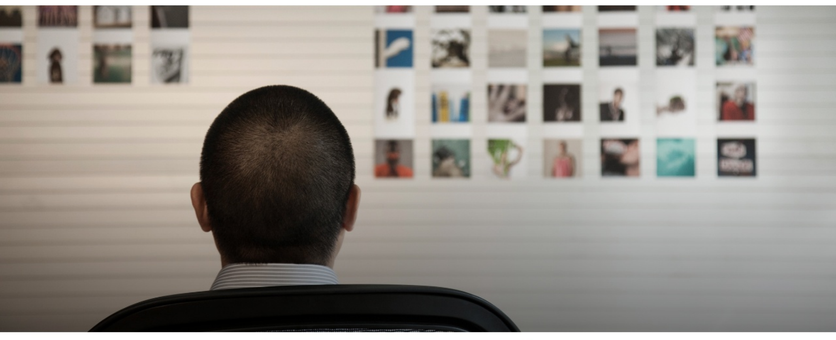

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Perseverance

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Inspiration

How Perseverance Fuels Creativity

Reaching your career goals takes commitment-and the perseverance to never stop working toward them, no matter what. Frida Kahlo, in severe pain after a bus accident, still painted. Matisse created his famous cut-out works while confined to a wheelchair. Chuck Close, despite being paralyzed, still created his iconic large-format paintings. Of course, these artists are extreme examples, but they illustrate an important point for any type of creative: perseverance pays off.

Needless to say, not all barriers to success are physical. For Getty Images' Neilson Barnard, a former Royal Air Force (RAF) photographer, it was having very little experience in professional photography. Jumpstarting his career from scratch, Barnard worked his way up to being Getty Images' Chief Entertainment Photographer for North America.

In the RAF, Barnard focused mainly on taking pictures of "anything that goes bang," helping his team figure how they could successfully remove volatile objects—not exactly a marketable skill in civilian life. After serving in the military, he moved to NYC and managed a restaurant—and didn't even pick up a camera professionally again until a friend invited him to work at an event. Knowing next to nothing about entertainment photography and the tools needed to shoot it successfully, he was woefully unprepared to deliver.

However, the job invigorated him, prompting him to pursue a photography career, and move to Los Angeles with his wife. He had no portfolio to show, but still managed to sign with an agency as a contributor. To get up to speed, he bought a second-hand camera, and every book on the subject he could find—anything to better immerse himself in his chosen profession. After years of hard work honing his craft, he snuck into Getty Images' tent at NY Fashion Week in Bryant Park, and convinced an editor to sign him up as a contributor. The rest, as they say, is history.

Neilson's story highlights the importance of perseverance for creatives. Not everyone is born a creative, but everyone has the ability to dedicate themselves to a craft and work their way up to their aspirations. While perseverance cannot guarantee success, the lack of it is a pretty good barometer for failure. Regardless, there's always the satisfaction of knowing that you never quit.

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