

‘Don’t worry,’ he said. ‘You’ll be inspired.’ But I had little faith. Here’s what helped

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Need inspiration? Don’t fret. Just expect it

I ran into a friend recently as I was walking my dog and he was pedaling up to the Foothills above my house in Boise. He had read a recent [Idaho Statesman piece I did](#) on the importance of using questions.

“Good one,” he said. That’s always nice to hear.

“Now I have to come up with another one,” I said, grimacing as he passed me.

“Don’t worry,” he said. “You’ll be inspired.”

You have more faith in me than I do, I thought.

But then I remembered a time when inspiration was expected and happened, and I thought maybe he’s right. I should trust myself.

Several years ago I was involved in the design and delivery of an incredibly innovative academic program. It was one of the few times I enjoyed being on a work group with a bunch of faculty members. We were diverse, ranging from very rational, unemotional thinkers to people like me who tended to push the boundaries a bit. Our task forced us to think about our college and what would benefit it, rather than what was best for us as individuals or even best for our disciplines (e.g, accounting, marketing).

We met for two years (*two years!*) almost weekly to thrash out what we could offer that would be appealing to the market, that would be high quality and that would meet some key goals we set.

It took us six months to get rolling, but once we did, it was fun, rewarding and productive. Surprisingly, we learned, over time, that when we entered the conference room with a question and no answers, we would have many ideas on the white board by the time we left.

We came to expect inspiration each time we needed it. Some days were more creative than others. Sometimes we focused on tweaking rather than blowing up an idea. But we always had something new at the end of a meeting.

So try to hold that idea: Trust that inspiration will come when you need it.