

UNDERSTANDING INSPIRATION

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Inspiration is a curious thing. It's been described as exalted and divine. It's also part of ordinary life. It's something that comes to you without any effort on your part. It's also something that you can influence with your actions.

Dictionaries define inspiration as a kind of sudden mental stimulation. A brilliant idea pops into your head while you're taking a shower. Something you see out a car window triggers thoughts for a new invention or a different career.

Learn more about how inspiration can brighten your life, along with strategies for enjoying more aha moments.

Benefits of Inspiration:

1. **Change your behavior.** Research shows that adults who experience higher amounts of inspiration tend to have more compelling goals and make more progress in realizing them. It's another reason to keep challenging yourself.
2. **Increase your engagement.** Inspiration transforms your to do list from things you have to do into things you want to do. **Your life has more purpose.**
3. **Enjoy greater happiness.** Imagine being excited about Mondays and doing laundry. **Inspiration wakes you up to the beauty of daily life.**

How to Feel More Inspired:

1. **Build your self-esteem.** Researchers have also examined personality traits associated with inspiration. A healthy self-image is essential. Accept and appreciate yourself for who you are.
2. **Think positive.** Optimism helps too. **Look on the bright side and focus on the things you can control.** Take a break from TV news if it's making you feel anxious.
3. **Cultivate gratitude.** Being thankful is especially powerful. Keep a journal to remind you of your blessings. Let others know that they make a difference in your life.
4. **Be spontaneous.** When was the last time you did something on the spur of the moment? Shake up your routines by packing a picnic lunch or building a fort with your kids.
5. **Honor your needs.** You're more likely to feel transported when you work at staying fit. Eat a nutritious diet, exercise regularly, and aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. Manage stress and take refreshing breaks before you feel fatigued.
6. **Observe role models. Enthusiasm is contagious.** Surround yourself with friends and colleagues who feel passionate about what they do.
7. **Continue learning.** Devote yourself to lifelong education. Read books and listen to podcasts about a wide range of subjects. Keep adding to your knowledge and skills.
8. **Try new things. Exploring unfamiliar territory helps you to overcome fears and think more flexibly.** Substitute an exercise class for your usual bike ride.

Volunteer at a local food bank or animal shelter.

9. **Make art.** Block out time each day for creative activities. Work on your hobbies or start a new craft project. Visit art supply stores and read magazines for ideas.

10. **Practice patience.** Dramatic flashes and profound insights can be few and far between. Remember that gradual developments can also pave the way to success.

11. **Take action.** On the other hand, you may sometimes speed up the process by taking a first step while you're waiting for inspiration to strike. If you're low on energy, pick up a paint brush or work in your garden for 10 minutes. You may find that you've built up enough momentum to want to continue.

12. **Limit competition. While there are many sources of inspiration in life, comparing yourself to others may backfire.** Some studies show that less competitive personalities experience more inspiration. Enjoy your work and learn from experience, instead of worrying about impressing others.

Open up more possibilities in your life. Being inspired will help you to accomplish great things and have more fun along the way.