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Inspiration -- The Writer's 'Aha' Moment

By C.S. Paquin

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It's my dad's fault I've spent more money on notebooks than I've earned from words written in them. From the age I could hold a crayon -- and comprehend I shouldn't scribble on walls -- stationery was in plentiful supply. During my formative years, a paper-mill firm employed my father.

He brought home reams of product -- quality control rejects. I eyed them with enthusiasm, itching to scrawl my hieroglyphics. As my mastery of the three R's improved, I was the only 7-year-old on the block with leather-bound notebooks (albeit defective). I admired my paper hoard, believing it meant only one thing: I was destined to be a writer. But when a new notepad appeared, I would start a new story regardless of whether I had finished the last -- I liked my tablets dog-ear free.

A quarter-century later, the paper-mill converted to a boutique mall and my dad fond of saying, "You live beyond your means," I still dreamed of being a famous writer. My vocabulary had grown age-appropriately (and my cursive). My self-discipline and output, however, remained that of a child. Perhaps less -- I was a prolific 7-year-old, after all.

Still, the dream stuck. A calfskin-bound journal with linen-finished pages shrieked, "Buy me," begging to be filled with my prose. I would reverently begin a piece, with the help of a carefully selected pen. But when coffee-cup rings stained the book and it lost its leather smell; my writing was as stale and uninteresting.

A new masterpiece began when the next journal beckoned. I would tell myself this was "it": the story that would be published (I could justify any expense for an inspiration fix).

It was last spring I had the "Aha" moment. It came in Wal-Mart. Shopping with my 7-year-old daughter -- a blossoming writer -- she insisted I buy her a brightly covered journal.

"Why do you want another one?" I asked. "You've got a ton you haven't written in."

"I know," she said, "but I need it to write a story."

"It doesn't matter what you write on," I said, sighing at the extravagance. "If you really want to be a writer, anything will do."

"Aha!" I thought, hearing my own pithy wisdom. I bought her the journal -- she'll learn her own lessons, her way -- and came home. Grabbing an ordinary legal pad, I wrote a piece with an ending, which finally made it to publication.

It didn't make me famous, but it was a start. I proudly cut out the clip -- and stuck it in my journal.

C.S. Paquin is a nationally published writer in both the business and humormarkets. Cheryl has a Master Of Arts in Journalism and has been writingfreelance for over five years. She contributes regularly to regionalpublications in Minnesota. She is the owner and editor of<http://WritersLounge.com> and the author of a new e-book: 101 Paying Marketsfor Essays, Columns & Creative Nonfiction, available at:http://writerslounge.com/101_markets.html

Regain Your Motivation

By Wendy Hearn

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Do you feel your motivation has diminished recently? Or do you feel at the moment that it's gone completely? Do you wonder how you'll ever get it back?

It often happens that many people find their motivation decreasing or disappearing altogether. When this happens you tend to feel stuck and you're not really moving forward. You may feel frustrated because you're not making any progress. Seeing yourself making progress is one way to be motivated. But if that's not there, it becomes a vicious circle, because when you're not making progress, you don't feel motivated and vice versa.

When you want to increase your motivation, it's worth remembering that there's a difference between it and inspiration. Motivation is an external source which encourages you and gives you ideas. Inspiration comes from within and the encouragement and ideas are your own. When it comes from within, you own it and will feel inspired. When you feel inspired you'll take action and taking action is the key to achieving what you want, whether it's increasing your business, making changes in your life or progressing towards your dreams.

So, we're really looking to increase your inspiration here and not necessarily just to motivate you. I've found that people's inspiration drops when they've been doing the same thing over and over again for some time. You may feel you're stuck in a rut; it's become a bit of a drag. If you're feeling this way, it's no wonder your inspiration has decided to 'wander off'.

Sometimes you just need to take a break or have a rest from what you're doing and your inspiration may well come back. This break also allows you to re-assess what you've been doing and not doing. Perhaps then you'll see there are some changes you want to make, perhaps deciding to implement a different strategy or action plan.

Taking a break will mean different things to different people and you need to determine for yourself what this

break will be. Perhaps, you'll decide take a day or a week off work, to play and have fun. Or you may decide to go for a brisk walk. I'm even inclined to suggest to you that, while taking this break, you tell yourself that you're not allowed to do or think about anything related to work or whatever it is that you're taking a break from. It's surprising how much most of us react to being told we can't do or have something. The rebellious part of us often surfaces and wants to fight it.

Taking a break from whatever it is you've been doing will probably make you feel apprehensive. All your fears about how much you have to get done, you're wasting time, what if I don't want to go back to doing this, are likely to surface. It's a natural reaction, but the fear is usually much worse than the reality. You need to trust yourself,

face up to the fears and know that you can handle any situation.

After a break, you'll feel refreshed and when you feel refreshed, your enthusiasm and inspiration will return. Then, you'll be ready to start moving forward again.

What I want for you is to take a break and allow your inspiration and desire for life and business to return to you naturally.

Wendy Hearn Personal and Professional Coach She works with business owners, professionals, executives and managers who are ready to enrich their lives. . . finding more success, fun, balance, joy and time. She coaches one-to-one with individuals and groups by telephone and email. <http://www.Business-Personal-Coaching.com>



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