

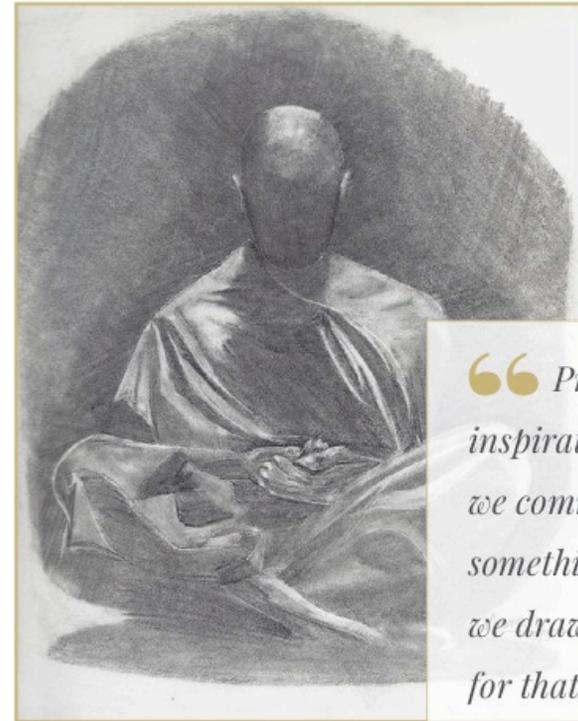
# The *Heart* of the Matter

NARENDRA KINI is an artist among other things. He shares with us his own experience of creating, and what helps him most.

**W**hat inspires minds?  
What triggers creativity?  
What persists in a creatively inspired mind?

Several folks have shared their perspectives on some or all of these questions. Among the inspiring minds are novelists, poets, playwrights, painters, philosophers, scientists and mathematicians. They describe how they subtly manoeuvre in order to overcome the obstacles and daily routines so that they can complete the work they love.

It may be by waking early or staying up late; skipping mundane distractions or attending events that motivate them; drinking vast quantities of coffee; taking long daily walks; or just sitting in meditation, like I do. When I divert my attention inward where it probably truly belongs, that which resides inside seems to manifest itself. Surprisingly the manifestation is profound.



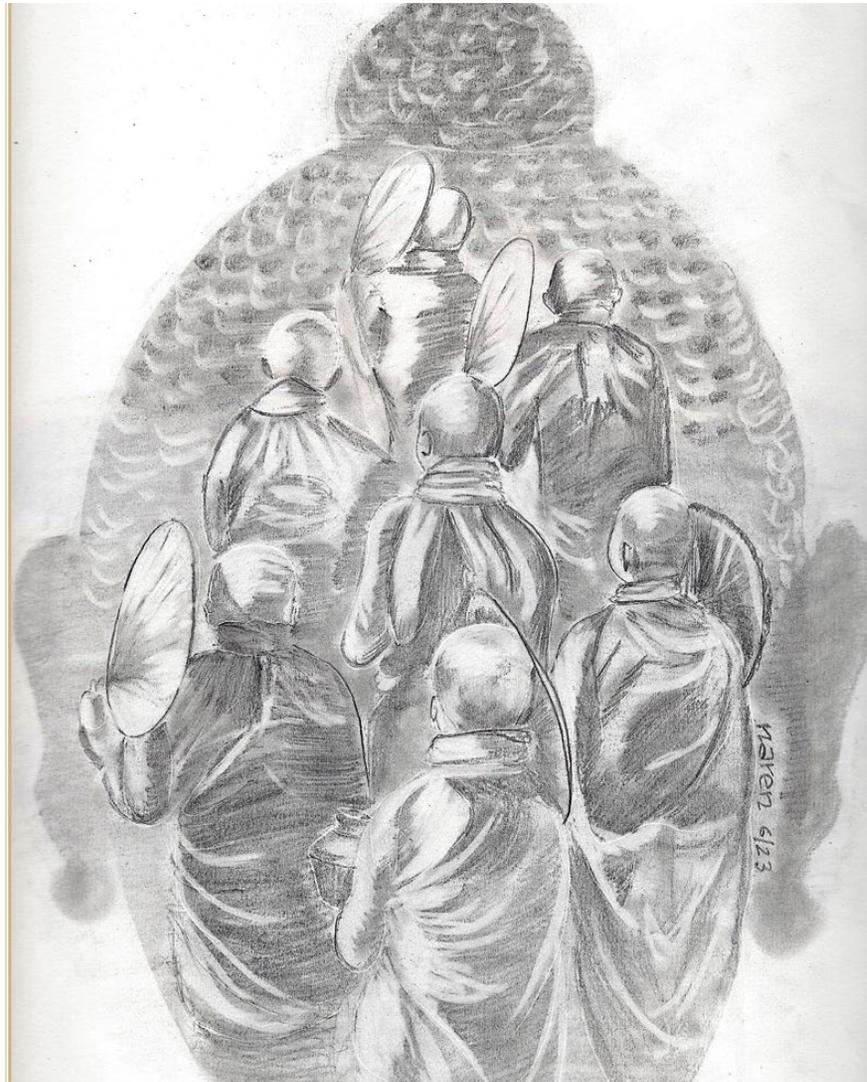
“Practice feeds inspiration. Once we commit to doing something creatively, we draw inspiration for that work from around us. We coach our minds to be aware, conscious and mindful about aspects in the moment that could feed our creativity.”

My experience gives me belief in two things: the 10,000 hours of practice that Malcolm Gladwell writes about in his book, *Outliers*, and disciplining the mind. Interestingly, when you combine both, meditation ensures that my mind is regulated and able to direct itself to perform a committed task within an allocated time, and discipline channels my creative energy to that activity I have committed to.

Unusual as it may seem, everything comes to me – ideas, inspiration, motivation, clarity in thinking – during my committed practice of meditation. I will be the first one to admit that I did not get there overnight. Over twenty years of practice has probably helped. I am yet to reach the proverbial 10,000 hours that Malcolm Gladwell writes about, yet I cannot deny the benefits that are already obvious in most walks of my life: calmness within, filtering the clutter to take a decision, resting well without nightmares or restlessness, responding to situations instead of reacting, etc. These are very natural outcomes of my meditation practice.

To some extent creative work is no different than training in the gym. You can't selectively choose your best moments and decide to only work on the days when you have great ideas. There certainly are those magic moments – which also surface during meditation – but the only way to unveil the great ideas inside is to make a commitment and show up over and over again. Set the time, set the schedule, and preferably set the place and environment.

It is easy to start judging your own work and convince yourself not to share something, not publish something, and not market something because, "it isn't good enough yet," but the alternative is even worse. If we don't have a schedule forcing us to deliver, then it is easy to avoid undertaking the work itself. The only way to be consistent enough to make a masterpiece is to give permission to create something along the way – feed that creative instinct, do not starve it.



Sincere practitioners in any field don't just work harder than everybody else. At some point they fall in love with their practice to the point where they want to do better in less time, more in the same time, and generally excel.

It is true in any profession. The elite football player is the guy who spends all day on the practice field with his teammates, and after practice he goes home to watch game films.

The elite physician listens to medical podcasts during a long commute. The elites are in love with what they do, and it does not feel like work.

This leads to the other benefit of discipline and practice. Practice feeds inspiration. Once we commit to doing something creatively, we draw inspiration for that work from around us. We coach our minds to be aware, conscious and mindful about aspects in the moment that could feed our creativity.

During my initial work, I drew inspiration from the spiritual images and personalities that influenced me greatly in my journey to 'inside-out transformation'. Gradually the canvas widened, and the themes changed. I find subjects in events, happenings, award-winning photographs, life moments and nature. I try to celebrate significant days like birthdays, anniversaries and other events through my sketches and share them. I have realised that it has become a way for me to share love – genuine love – albeit through my art.

So, what is the common denominator for me? In short it is the heart. I can commit, schedule, discipline, channel and nurture my mind, but only when my heart is in the right place does it become the origin and abode of my creativity and inspiration; hence, the source of joy, love and contentment. Once that is okay, any creativity that feeds to that sentiment draws inspiration from within and without ●

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