



# Sales Slumps

## Who or what inspires you when you are tired?

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Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, we find ourselves in a slump. We have all been there, whether it be a slump in our personal lives or in our careers. At the time, it may seem like there is no getting out of it and you are the only one who has experienced a slump. But there is a way out and I will share it with you.

My son played baseball when he was small and batting slumps were the worst. Because no matter how hard the boys tried, there was no way to predict when the magic would return. But one thing that sometimes helped was a new bat — or even to take a swing with someone else's bat. The boy and the swing were the same. The bat would sometimes provide just the inspiration needed to break through.

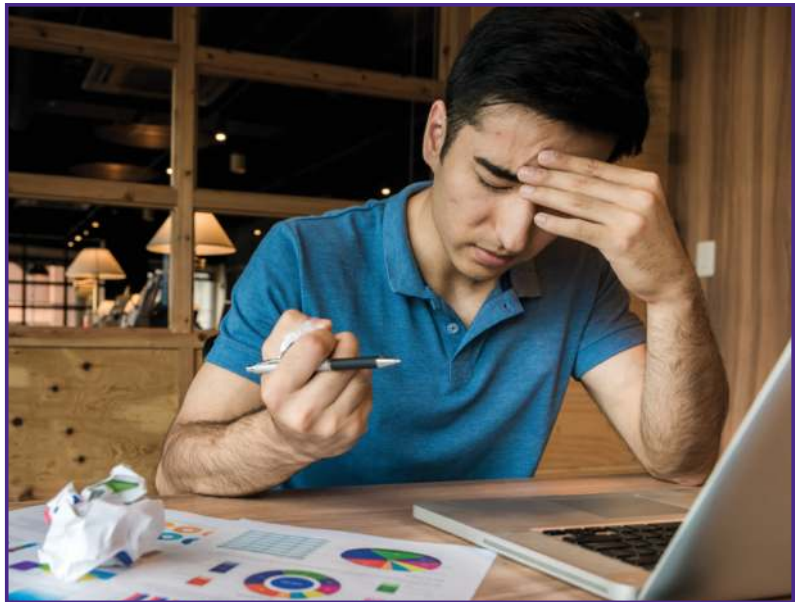
So, what inspires you? If you have not thought too much about it, I understand. But I encourage you to put some thought into it because once you know what gives you the courage to try just a little bit harder, great things can happen.

I had a terrible sales slump once. It lasted for almost two months. It began just before I found out I had won a fabulous trip to Mexico (ironically, for my sales performance just months earlier). This was the trip I had won as a result of working hard for the down payment on the first home my husband and I bought. I found inspiration in the thought of owning our own home, but once I accomplished that goal, I lost a lot of steam.

I realize now I probably needed a little rest. But, more than that, I needed fresh inspiration. At the time I did not think I needed either. I was not ready to go on the trip; I wanted to stay home. I was in the worst sales slump of my career and I felt like the last thing I needed was a week in paradise.

I should have been celebrating the opportunity to spend a week in a five-star resort and enjoying the events surrounding the trip — because they were truly amazing. There were sunset cruises and meals in an oceanside restaurant that was literally carved into a rock. I had never seen anything like the extravagance of that week. There were moments when I felt like I had a starring role in a Sandra Dee movie — the ocean waves crashed against the side of the restaurant as we enjoyed the music of a private concert. Another night when we arrived at the restaurant, long-stemmed red roses awaited every woman and there was a cigar for each of the men.

My thoughts around my slump were often overshadowing



these beautiful experiences. I was on this amazing trip as one of the top 50 salespeople in the nation for this manufacturer, but I did not see it from that point of view when I was feeling the slump. During those moments, I had a bad case of impostor syndrome. It would be years before I heard that term, but now I know what it was.

The truth is, my mind and my heart were out of sorts. My mind was like the average home-run king who cannot get a base hit. I had gone from swinging for the fences to a swing and a miss over and over.

I was relatively new to sales and success at that level. I needed inspiration. It makes no sense, but our minds can play tricks on us. The good thing is we can learn how to break through doubt.

My manager at the time had also earned the trip. I had mentioned my slump and doubts to him before the trip, but he was not concerned and shrugged it off. I felt sure he had never experienced a slump himself — he was wildly successful and confident. If he had experienced a slump, it was probably so long ago he had forgotten.

My husband, Earl, had come on the trip as my guest. He had not understood my hesitation about going on the trip; he just saw the slump as a minor blip. But he came from the service side of the business, so when the phone was not ringing,

it meant things were running well for the time being. Service technicians learned the ebbs and flows. They enjoyed the easy days, as more challenging ones always waited around the corner.

So what broke the slump? Strangely enough, it was the trip. While I was there, I listened to the others at dinner tables and on bus rides. I was there with 49 other salespeople who were at the top of their games in the same field as me. I learned as they talked and shared stories.

Most importantly, I recognized if I had done well enough to make it there once, I could do it again. Even if my success had been the luck of the draw, I still had time to learn more skills. I realized the others were not all that different from me. Also, even though I was not that excited to go on the trip in the beginning, it turned out to be wonderful and inspirational.

I came back from that trip inspired and with a whole new mindset. This new energy and mindset allowed me the opportunity to close half of my month's quota within the first week back from the trip.

I wish I could tell you it was my last slump, but, of course, it

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was not. But I learned from that first slump that it can be temporary.

So, what is the key to getting out of a slump? Look for inspiration. Ask yourself these questions: Who can you look to who can show you it is possible? Where can you go to give your mind a break? What can you read or listen to that reminds you it is possible? That is how you break a slump and become inspired when you are tired. ■

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