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Through my personal creative journey, I have learned that my creative process is not merely owned by me. It is not a 100 percent “Michal’s” process or output; instead it is a process that is reinforced by my external and internal environments. Along my academic and professional path, I was taught that creativity is a skill, a muscle that can be trained to improve its output. This muscle has indeed worked itself hard and improved its capabilities for me, yet its main improvement has been in the ability to absorb, listen and build upon my environment and everyday life to create the Big Idea out of them.

When approaching an assignment, I first tend to research as much as possible. As part of this process, I find it very helpful to talk about my results out loud. A massive part of my creative process is discussing my findings with different people and hearing what they take from my story or description of the topic and problem. Different people from different professions, points of view and personalities, remember and interpret aspects of my story differently, although most of them have heard the same story. In this process of laying out my story, it is refined. Each storytelling process captures two to three concepts that are highlighted by my listeners and reflectors. Often I repeat the main concepts in different conversations using different terms, without noticing it. Hearing others’ reflections of my story highlights these key concepts and allows them to stand out from the massive amount of information in front of me.

I tend to go through the same process internally as well. My research and thoughts go along with me and are in the back of my mind no matter what I do. When I'm in the process of creation, I see the entire world through my Big Idea glasses. Everything around me can suddenly become informative: a walk down the street, reflections in a puddle, the shoes of my fellow subway travelers. Even a visit to the bank can tie to the topic of research and alter the way I think about the story.

Eventually all experiences, thoughts and conversations come to one. They overlap in a tiny, tiny spot called the Big Idea. The Big Idea is one to three words that I have discovered in every conversa-

tion and observation, yet in different ways. These magic words will now guide every decision I make. Every creative execution or strategy must be able to be summarized within the main concept—the Big Idea. If I cannot summarize the concept easily through the Big Idea, it is not meant to be.

This process is not a matter of a few hours; it is a longer process that takes days or weeks and requires a major time investment and effort. Although I detach myself from the formal creative thinking process, I am so immersed in it that in an unconscious way I tie everything (even totally unrelated topics) back to it. This is the multidisciplinary aspect of the creation of the Big Idea.



Key Insights

1. Talk about the information you gather with as many people as possible and reflect back on what they got out of your story.
2. Immerse yourself in the topic but detach from the creative process. The best ideas come when you are not consciously thinking about the process but know it so well that everything ties back to it.
3. There are three words that should repeat themselves in all the stories you tell—those three words are the BIG IDEA!