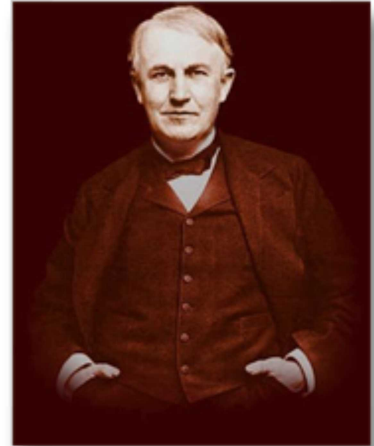


Genius is one percent inspiration - or maybe two...

THE FAMOUS EDISON QUOTE (THAT HE MAY NOT HAVE SAID):

“Genius

is one aercent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.”



*Attributed to Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931),
American inventor and businessman*

This well-known remark (often given without the word “and” after “inspiration”) is traditionally believed to have been mentioned by Thomas Edison. It's possible that he said something like that, but the facts are fuzzy. Nothing like this quote is included in his writings or in his recorded speeches or interviews. The first mention of a definition of genius by Edison is in an article about him in the April 1898 issue of the *Ladies Home Journal*. A paragraph in that article says:

“Once, when asked to give his definition of genius, Mr. Edison replied: ‘Two per cent is genius and ninety-eight per cent is hard work.’ At another time, when the argument that genius was inspiration was brought before him, he said: ‘Bah! Genius is not inspired. Inspiration is perspiration.’”

An article in a 1902 issue of *Scientific American* claimed that Edison once remarked: “Genius is 2 percent inspiration and 98 percent perspiration,” but it gave no source for the quote. That 2%/98% definition was also mentioned in a 1908 biography of Edison and a 1911 article in *Chamber's Journal* – without providing any information on when Edison supposedly said it. Then in 1932, a year after Edison died, an article *Harper's Monthly Magazine* noted that sometime around 1902 or 1903 Edison said: “Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration.” No source for the quote was given by *Harper's*. However, this version became legendary and is cited by many books and websites (often giving *Harper's Monthly Magazine* as the source).