

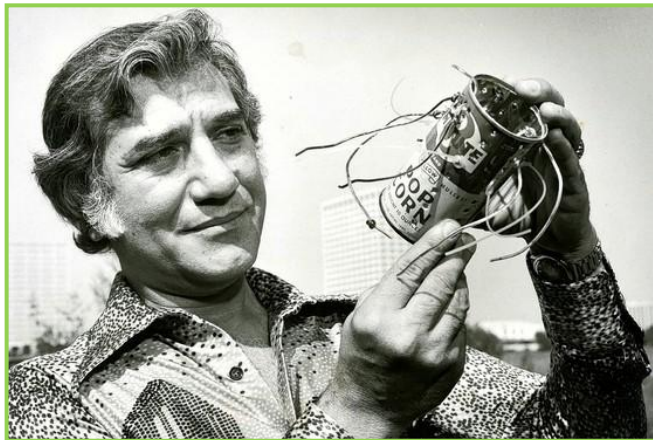
## The Birth of the Weed Eater

Serendipity, according to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, is “the faculty or phenomenon of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for.” We sometimes call it an “accident, dumb luck or fate,” but serendipity has given us new products and better ways of doing things.

Examples of serendipity include Columbus' discovery of America while searching for a route to India. Native Americans found maple syrup – yum, yum – when, in need of water, they tapped a maple tree and made the first maple syrup as they boiled off the sap. Westward-traveling pioneers looking for water stopped at a stream for a drink and found gold nuggets.

While George Ballas drove his car through an automatic car wash, he lived a moment of serendipity that made him a millionaire. As he watched the strings of the brushes cleaning his car, he turned his mind to his list of things to do, among them edging his lawn.

Suddenly, an idea “popped” into his head. He took another long look at the strings on the rotating brush. The strings straightened out when turning at high speed, but were still flexible enough to reach into every nook and cranny of his car to get it clean. He asked himself, “Why not use a nylon cord, whirling at high speed, to trim the grass and weeds around the trees and the house?”



He went home, punched holes in a tin can, threaded it with wire and fishing line, and bolted it to a rotating lawn edger. His idea – his serendipity – led to the invention of the Weed Eater in 1971. After several refinements, he shopped it around to several tool makers, who all rejected his invention. “He was laughed at by major corporations, who told him to take his idea and take a hike,” said his son, Corky.

Ballas went on to develop the garden tool himself and start his own company. The first year, sales were more than \$500,000. By 1977, sales were \$80 million, and Ballas sold his company the following year to Emerson Electric Company.

Where do we get new ideas? God is the Master behind serendipity. He may not always give you a million-dollar idea, but He can cause you to be more creative.

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Here is some advice: Capture the ideas, jot them down quickly before they are gone, and evaluate them later. Take time to daydream with the Lord. Seek new challenges. Expand your point of view. Learn and do new things.

Remember today that God is your Creator – and the Creator of everything in the universe. Ask Him to inspire you with new ideas that can enhance what He has called you to do, benefit others, and glorify Him.

After all, we are co-creators with our Lord.

*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Ephesians 2:10).*

– Beecher Hunter