

Write to Publish in 90 Days

Module 2:

Abolish Pre-Write Fear & Discover Your Unique Message



Module 2

Coming Up With Ideas

*Ok, so now that we have gotten those pesky blocks out of the way, you have prepared space in your calendar to write daily and you are excited and motivated to get going, the next step in writing your book is **to come up with ideas**.*

You already know, of course, that you want to write about your product, service or message. You've also read about different approaches you might want to take in writing it.

If you are still unsure of your approach and how to proceed with your book, there are many ways of getting ideas—any of which can help you decide. Obviously, you want to have people read your book because it is important and informative, and will serve in a huge way.

As you saw in Module 1, you can get ideas **by reading other similar books**. This doesn't mean you copy the sort of thing these books do but only that they may stimulate your thinking.

Also, you may want to talk with others on your team to come up with ideas. In other words brainstorm—in regular meetings or informally. The ideas you like, of course, you can use, and you're free to discard the others.

Watch advertising and infomercials, which also may stimulate your imagination. Or...the following are also good ways to stimulate your thinking. At first they may seem artificial. That's okay. It's the end result that's most important, not the way you arrived at it.

Don't fear being unique.

Find Your Authentic Voice

This is something that can take some time to establish and may not shine through in your first book but as you continue to write you will master your own voice and if you have a strong brand already, this may even come naturally to you! Your book and your voice will solidify your brand and so part of really establishing this is knowing who you are and what you believe in and want to write about! One of the tools that helped me the most when I started writing was what Julia Cameron calls, “morning pages” (but no need to only stick to mornings with this). This is a practice where you create a free write, without editing at all, as though you are having a conversation. Come back to it after a day and read it listening for your tone and how you express yourself!

Start to notice what is unique about you! What stands out? What do you love the most? Share below!

From a very early age we've all been taught to conform, to do as others do, to avoid standing out as different. That includes NOT being creative. For instance, there was the instance of a teacher telling the parents of a five-year-old that if they had planned to remain in the same school district the following year she'd make their son repeat kindergarten because he couldn't follow directions. She explained that she drew a picture on the board and asked the children to copy it. The boy, instead, drew his own tree, which she said was not the proper thing to do.

This sort of thing discourages “**out-of-the-box thinking.**” Fortunately, many people are able to escape this trap. *You have a product that is unique; people like painters, sculptors, writers, dancers, and actors.* You can escape too if you allow yourself to shed your inhibitions—of course, when you're alone.

You do this so you can choose a good approach to your writing, which, in turn, will call attention to the value or worth of your product.

The following methods can help. But as you're doing them, make sure you *don't* stay within the box. Instead, **give your ideas free rein.** Give yourself permission to do and say whatever comes into your head. Yes, some of it may prove later to be useless. If so, simply discard it.

But while you're “pitching” different ideas to yourself, don't censor your thoughts. Nothing you say while doing the exercises is either inappropriate or wrong.

Start with Writing Prompts

Writing prompts are a go-to exercise for anyone getting started in the process or simply warming up for a site down writing period. These little nuggets are great because they can be re-purposed into blog posts, or social media posts, can help you get rid of writers block, and help you master a unique voice for both writing and speaking gigs.

For your first prompt, please write a 45 second poem below without editing! GO!

There are many other writing prompts you can work with such as:

- What I get frustrated with? (Many have this pain point so get detailed here!)
- What I would say if I was on an island and bumped into a stranger?
- What do I hate about the western diet?
- What do I wish most for the planet?
- Things I would say if I bumped into someone on an elevator
- How to maximize your happiness each day

Pick one prompt and write for 60 seconds below- remember no thinking, just wrote! Go!

Methods to Develop Voice

1. The Character Interview

There's an old acting exercise called the "Character Interview." When used as such, the idea is to develop a new character or reinforce one already in existence, the one most often associated with the role you are going to play. But you can adapt this exercise to fit your needs. However, what you do is to interview yourself to see what truly interests you about your book and what you want to tell your reader. For instance:

Self One: What is the most important thing about my product?

Self Two: Well, it's very attractive. Customers like the way it looks.

Self One: But is that the most important aspect?

Self Two: Of course not.

Self One: Again, what is important.

Self Two: It goes back to selling the sizzle, not the steak, doesn't it.

Self One: But it's more than that.

Self Two: It still has to live up to its promise. That's what you mean, right?

Self One: Yes. So it has to be of good quality.

Self Two: Of course.

Self One: So that's the most important aspect? That's what you want to write about?

Self Two: I think so.

Self One: Why are you being hesitant?

Self Two: Because there's so much more to it than that.

Self One: You're going to have to explain.

Self Two: It's why I developed the product to begin with.

Self One: And why did you do that?

Self Two: Need.

Self One: Who's need? Yours, you mean.

Self Two: Mine, of course. But it can help others too.

Self One: So that's what you want to write about? How useful it is?

Self Two: Yes, that's part of it. But I want to talk about why I came to develop it. That I saw a need. And it might be interesting to let people know...well, its history.

Self One: So you want to write a kind of narrative about it?

Self Two: That would be more fun for me. So yeah, I think that's what I want to do.



Try the character interview with yourself. If you don't like the results, start over. It's easy to do and takes only a few minutes. You can write or record what develops, if you like. Or you can just talk it out. Start in the space below!

2. Using Random Words

You can use this exercise when trying to come up with random ideas for writing in general, or you can use it for writing a specific type of book on a specific subject... which, of course, is what you want to do.

Jot down three or four words that have to do with your product, service or message. *Again, don't censor yourself, and don't worry whether the words fit together or even if they seem to make any sense.* Suppose you want to write about a new type of dishwasher. Thinking about it, you come up with words that apply to it. For instance:

size, color, clean, shape.

What you try to do is tie the words together to help figure out a way to write your book.

These words, chosen at random, seem to describe the dishwasher. Maybe you'll want to write a chapter using each of these words. That means you would organize the book topically, which is something you'll learn about in the next module.

You may want to write a chapter about the size of the dishwasher and how it was designed to fit any number of spaces, and what this involved from idea to finished product. Or you may talk about how it comes in different sizes to fit into small to large spaces.

Or you may come up with other words: use, better, easy, and so on. This is another exercise that takes little time and which you can do over and over again. You may even find that you can combine words from several "random word" attempts to come up with an idea.

Not only do these exercises provide relatively painless ways of coming up with ideas, but they can be fun too. And, of course, if they help, you can rightly feel proud of yourself for what you've accomplished.

Record a few words that capture your message and brand below. How can you use this in your process?

3. Using Stream of Consciousness

This exercise is similar to the others in that you just allow yourself to speak or write in sentences or phrases *without trying to give the writing direction*. For instance:

I want to sell my dishwashers. How do I do that? I don't know. Maybe I can talk about how my mother worked as a dishwasher at a restaurant for years to put my sister and me through school and even send us to college. She suffered from a bad back and often had to learn over the sink to do her job because she hurt too much to stand upright. She never complained, except to say how nice it would be if the restaurant had an automatic dishwasher, one that really helped. I thought about this lot. And when I became older...

That was completely random without any censoring. If this happens and you like what you write, you have a base on which to build your book. The exercise took a minute or two to complete. So again, if you don't like the end results simply try again. Start in the space below.

Just write, and notice how it feels!!!

4. Using Unrelated Words

This is where you again let your thoughts go and write or speak the words as quickly as you can. And you do need to keep in mind the reason you're writing the book—largely to sell your product, service or message. So you wouldn't come up with something like:

zone, school, fence

It would be a big stretch to tie these words to a dishwasher.

However, keeping the dishwasher in mind you might come up with:

time-saving, dependable, history

or:

dirty, crystal, song, aunt

Okay, the words all seem to fit, except maybe song. But then again you may write about how you feel so good about how the dishwasher works that you want to burst into song.

So put a little effort into thinking about the words after you come up with them. You may be surprised at what happens.

Incidentally, you may want to combine exercises. You come up with the seemingly unrelated words, and then use them in a stream of consciousness sort of writing.

Write below using describing words and expanding your free write:

5. Choose an object and build a “scene” around it:

For instance, you might choose a box or bag of dishwasher detergent. *Now without taking more than a second or two to think about it, start a scene:*

“You know, my great-grandmother never even heard of automatic dishwashers. She had to use harsh soap to wash dishes by hand. I remember as a little kid seeing how red her hands always were. Mom told me my great grandmother was allergic to the kind of soap used to wash dishes. That’s why her hands were always red. Now, of course, no one needs to suffer from red hands brought about by washing dishes. Today we have a lot of different brands of dishwashers.”

Okay, this may lead into a history of dishwashers, improvements in them over the years, ending in your dishwasher. You might want to go into how it helps people even more than older types, etc.

The whole idea, of course, is to make it easy on yourself to come up with ideas. Start writing your scene below- don’t overthink this!

6. Seeing the World Through Someone Else's Eyes

Essentially, this is what you did with the mother and the great-grandmother from the previous exercises. *But you might try with another person—real or imagined.* Maybe you'll use the character for just one scene or one chapter, but you may want to refer to him or her throughout the book as the type of person who needs or wants to use your product. Again, give this little forethought. Simply start talking, recording, or writing. For instance:

"Mary didn't want to be a maid, but that's the only type of job she could find or that she felt she could do under the present circumstances. You see, she was the oldest of eleven kids and had to quit school to help take care of her brothers and sisters. Of course, she gained a lot of experience in being responsible and in learning how to do housework."

Then you may want to go on with her story—and ultimately about how the new dishwasher helped her or how she longed for a different sort of life and due to the fact that the dishwasher was easy to use, she was able to study and finally take the test for her high school equivalency exam.

The sky's the limit in what you can do with these sort of exercises.

In the next few days try each of these and see what happens. If any help, that's great. If you still are undecided about your approach to the book, the following module will help!

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