
Good ideas for how to flow

1

- Get into the habit of jotting down observations: things you see, read, hear - everything.
- Get into the habit of cutting out clippings from newspapers that you like, or photographs that trigger ideas, and then writing down what you liked about them, or how you may use them.
- Get into the habit of using your journal like a diary as well. Write down things that you did that day, the things that struck you as interesting.
- Get into the habit of writing about writing, and about what you've read.
- Get into the habit of writing about your own memories and thoughts: things you remember happening to you, to friends and family.
- Start looking at and listening to people, and think of them in terms of possible characters: their flaws and contradictions; their habits; their appearances. Make small character sketches.
- Try writing early in the morning just when you wake up and before you've done anything. Just get up and write. It doesn't matter what it is, just follow your stream of consciousness.
- Also look at using word association. If you come up with an idea like "I want to write a story about a ghost", then write down the word ghost. Start writing words that pop in your head with relation to that, and create a word tree with branches. If something you write down triggers an idea, write a branch from that word. (Believe me, this does work!)

You'll notice the key element through all this is: write.

2

- There are **three** main psychological reasons for writer's block: indecision, the blank page syndrome and burnout. Procrastination just looks like writer's block.
 - **Indecision** comes from having too many choices. Enumerating your choices often helps with this. In extreme cases Enumerating the impossibilities help (the pixar method).

- **The blank page syndrome** is an extreme form of indecision due to infinite choice and a large number of tools at your disposal that can not be seen.
 - **Burnout** is where you have exhausted your mental reserves. the only solutions are sleep, food, exercise and trivial conversation. It can be prevented by the same things or by increasing your mental stamina.
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3

- Crappy and hasty first draft is perfectly fine, block time every day for writing and do nothing else, use public commitment
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4

- On “familiarity” (or How to avoid “going down the Math Rabbit Hole”?)
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How to *not* overcome writer’s block: some anti-solutions

- You do not overcome writer’s block by reading articles on how to overcome writer’s block. (Kinda shot myself in the foot there, huh?)
 - You do not overcome writer’s block by watching TV.
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Opposite of writer’s block: **FLOW!**

- In the book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*, the author, Susan Cain, writes:

Flow is an optimal state in which you feel totally engaged in an activity—whether long-distance swimming or songwriting, sumo wrestling or sex. In a state of flow, you’re *neither bored nor anxious*, and you don’t question your own adequacy. *Hours pass without your noticing*. The key to flow is to **pursue an activity for its own sake**, not for the rewards it brings. . .

According to influential psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, in flow, “a person could work around the clock for days on end, for no better reason than to keep on working.”

There is also [hypergraphia](#), which is the overwhelming urge to write.

And also [graphorrhea](#): writing in excessive amounts, sometimes incoherently.