

## **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is a technique for fostering creativity and creative thinking. Creativity is the bringing into being of something that did not exist before, either as a product or as a process or as a thought. You're creative when you:

- \* invent something that didn't exist before;
- \* duplicate something that did exist, but you didn't know about it;
- \* come up with a new process or system for doing something;
- \* reapply an existing process or system in a new way or for a different purpose;
- \* develop another way of looking at something (shift perspective) so as to bring a new idea into being;
- \* change how someone else looks at something.

Hold on to this thought: we're all creative because we're changing all the time. (I believe that the opposite of change is decay. I also believe that a day is wasted that you don't learn something new.) Creativity isn't about developing something new for others; it's more to do with developing something new to us, or in us.

When we change ourselves, the world changes with us.

That's because:

1. People around us are affected by the change in us.
2. We experience things differently because we have changed.

We use creativity to improve products and services already available, and to create new products and services. 'Improve' in this sense means both quality and quantity.

If you apply this concept of creativity to your writing, you can see that it will help you to write better, and to write more.

'Creative thinking' is the process by which we generate new ideas, and it can be accidental or deliberate. That some food tastes better when it's cooked was no doubt an accidental discovery when a nice haunch of brontosaurus fell in the campfire.

Making the process deliberate is the work of professional inventors and innovators.

Brainstorming is a means by which creative thinking can be made deliberate, and works as a group process by merging someone else's ideas with your own to create new ideas. As a writer, you'll be doing your brainstorming alone.

Some definitions of this kind of brainstorming for writers:

- a process for generating new ideas about a subject, theme or topic;
- a process of making associations between different aspects of a subject, theme or topic;
- a process of using specific rules and techniques to encourage your own creative thinking;
- a process of linking & referring to and from to generate new ideas rapidly & effectively.

Brainstorming requires that, as you employ your chosen technique, you follow certain rules, e.g. no holding back, no judgements, no censure, and no private or public censorship until the brainstorming is over. Allow yourself to be as wild and exaggerated as possible - you can tone things down later. Quantity counts more than quality at this stage. Get it all down and sift the wheat from the chaff when you read it over.

Branch out when a word, a phrase, or an aspect of your subject, theme or topic inspires you. Digressions and diversions are all welcome during the brainstorming session: everything has equal value. Write it down confidently and freely.

Brainstorming isn't only done by you, it's done for you. By you as Creator; for you as Critic – the writer's two selves.

When you've got everything down, the process of selection and sorting can begin. You have two decisions to make first: what to include, and what to exclude.

That's when sorting out your ideas and making them work as instruction, article or book begins.