

Creativity Starters

Karen M. Ball, Write from the Deep

1. Get quiet. Sit in a room, or in the woods, or on the beach...close your eyes, and listen:
 - ◆ to the sounds around you
 - ◆ to the voice within
2. Distract Yourself. Let something or someone else do the work for awhile. Try:
 - ◆ Watching cartoons.
 - ◆ Babysit a child
 - ◆ Reading cartoon or comic books
 - ◆ Visit the art museum or gallery
 - ◆ Watch Nickelodeon
 - ◆ People watch at the mall or airport
 - ◆ Go to a movie
3. Do something relaxing. Take a pad and pencil or a mini-recorder along to capture ideas when they spark.
 - hot bath
 - make cookies or fudge
 - go for bike ride
 - garden
 - Take the dog or cat or ferret for
 - make a cup of tea or cocoa
 - listen to music
 - take a nap
4. Play. Set yourself free by being a kid at heart.
 - ◆ Gather together some toys (yours from childhood or your child's), sit on the floor, and think up a character and history for each one.
 - ◆ Go to a playground and watch the children play (or play on the equipment with them!)
 - ◆ Exercise can be adult play. Rollerblade, racquetball, tennis, swimming, running, biking, whatever.
5. Write something on a topic that has nothing to do with what you're working on.
 - ◆ Try a silly story, a poem, a letter to yourself, or a note or letter to a friend.
 - ◆ Journal
6. Draw. Don't worry if your horse looks like a dog, just draw whatever comes to mind. Use as many or as few colors as you want. Try different mediums: charcoal, pencil, crayons, chalks, paint, etc.
7. Work with words.
 - ◆ crossword puzzles
 - ◆ word games
 - ◆ Scan the dictionary, looking for words that strike you. Come up with definitions for them, then see if you were right. Keep a list of these words and use them when you write.
 - ◆ play outburst, scrabble, anything with words.
8. Jump to a completely different scene or conversation in your story. Don't worry about writing chronologically. Sometimes starting in the middle is the best way to go.
9. Do the Dewey Dance. Walk through the library, pulling books at random from the shelves. Start out with a couple from each numerical section (000-099, 100s, 200s, etc.). Sit and skim through your stack, jotting down whatever is triggered.
10. Read:
 - ◆ poetry. All kinds. Get one of those huge Oxford anthologies and flip through
 - ◆ the classics, modern and early. Shakespeare, Poe, L'Engle, Shaw, C.S. Lewis.
 - ◆ Kids books. Shel Silverstein, Dr. Seuss, Laura Ingalls Wilder
11. Make a list of topics you want to write about some day. Give it an upbeat title: Brilliant Writing Ideas, Things I'd Love to Write. Keep the list for a time when you're wondering what to do next. Pull it out. Flesh it out. Have fun.