



10 Ways to Generate New Ideas

1. Keep a writer/speaker notebook. Jot down striking quotes, statistics, metaphors, arguments, soundbites. Experiment with opening lines and soundbites for future articles or speeches.
2. Read aggressively! Argue with the writer via brief marginal notes.
3. Read the op-ed page of at least one major newspaper every day. Carry on imaginary conversations with the authors.
4. Continue those conversations/arguments with family and friends during the day.
5. Listen to talk radio -- preferably NPR -- when driving, riding, walking.
6. Give speeches -- or teach a class -- whenever possible and take questions at the end. Incorporate answers to some of those questions in your next speech or class.
7. Choose a public figure or acquaintance you strongly disagree with, and then write out a beautifully-worded debate with him/her in your notebook.
8. Read psychology and analyze yourself and anyone else whose ideas or behavior affect you. This trains you to look below the surface and recognize the "subtext."
9. Focus on comparisons and contrasts. Always be on the lookout for interesting connections between seemingly different facts and ideas. What surprises lurk in the spaces between?
10. Draw simple diagrams of your thought processes and the structure of your arguments. Illustrate the links between ideas and the possibilities for new areas to explore.