

how to grow your own tale

the secrets of creativity, idea wrangling, and story crafting

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course description

Learn how to generate fresh ideas, weave innovative thinking into your projects (whether fiction or nonfiction), and improve the shape and craft of the stories you write. We'll explore and demystify the creative process while discovering simple steps for intensifying the impact of your writing. Whether you're new to writing or a seasoned pro, you'll learn practical, easy-to-master techniques that will save you time while taking your writing to the next level. An in-depth handout will be provided.

instructor

Steven James is an award-winning author, popular conference speaker, and creative solo performer. In the past six years he has written 23 books and spoken more than 1000 times across North America. Hundreds of his stories, articles and scripts have appeared in more than 80 different magazines and books including *Writer's Digest*, *Decision*, *Campus Life*, *Guideposts for Teens*, and The Complete Handbook of Novel Writing. Steven has a Master's Degree in Storytelling, likes chicken fajitas, science fiction movies, and rock climbing.

factors that affect innovative thinking

- Environment - distractions, mood, aesthetics
- Experience - personal expertise, memories, knowledge, imagination
- Fear - of embarrassment, ridicule, failure or success
- Physical Condition - state or mind, stress, worry, comfort level, health, attitude

growing great ideas

- Decide where to grow your field - _____
- Begin breaking up the ground only in that field--you're not sowing the whole county -

- Decide where your rows will be planted - _____
- Dig deeper to plant your seeds - _____
- Water your plants and provide a nurturing environment - _____
- Fend off the birds - _____
- Harvest and enjoy - _____ to _____

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14 ways to increase your ability to think divergently

1. Pray. Walk in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25). The more you become like Jesus, the more creative you will become.
2. Go to a novel environment. This helps spark divergent thinking. Visit a park, a new restaurant, a coffee shop, stroll along the beach, go to a hotel for the night, or drive to a neighboring town.
3. Change the type of media you are exposed to.
4. Think in terms of connections and relationships rather than propositions and arguments.
5. Develop a controlling metaphor rather than a theme statement.
6. Keep going after you think you're tapped out. The best ideas often take the longest to uncover.
7. Remove distractions. Clarity of thinking and concentration depend upon your ability to focus on one idea or concept.
8. Rotate the prism. Think about your problem, story, or idea from another perspective. Tell the story in first alligator. Alter the genre.
9. Change your comfort level. If you're used to being comfortable, get uncomfortable. If you're used to being uncomfortable, get comfortable.
10. Take a break. Serendipitous discoveries depend on your ability to be open to the ideas and inspiration that may pass your way unexpectedly.
11. Believe in the process and trust your instincts.
12. Work in a different direction.
13. Look at the projects as a whole or in small parts.
14. Understand the paradox of freedom.

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- Based on her appearance, how many hours of sleep do you think she's had?
- How long have they been on the Atkins' diet?
- What kind of people did they date in high school?
- What career other than writing do you think they would pursue?
- What would this person name his or her firstborn?
- How much does this person spend on (1) makeup or (2) hunting equipment?
- Are they late sending Christmas cards?
- How many children do they have?
- How many minutes do they spend each morning grooming themselves?
- What do they do in their free time / what are their hobbies?
- What would be his or her dream vacation?
- How many years has this person been married or single?
- What kind of pet do you think he or she owns?
- Does he or she like to cook?
- Number of minutes each week they talk on a cell phone?
- Favorite authors or genre of literature?
- What's the total cost of this person's outfit?
- What kind of car do they drive? Year?
- Favorite Movies?
- Favorite TV shows?
- Pet Temptations?
- What do you think will be the next word out of his or her mouth?

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What is Creativity?

