Speed Writing: Step-By-Step

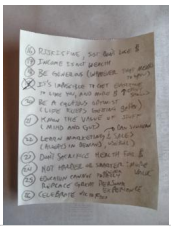
Basic Speed Writing

STEP 1: Idea Generation

- CAUTION
  - You're NOT writing anything at this point
  - You're NOT organizing or listing or categorizing
  - You're exploring opportunities
  - QUESTION: Why are you *only* thinking at this point?
    - ANSWER: Checking emotions; sales triggers
    - Related: Getting a feel for the "book hook"
- "Frameworks of Thinking"
  - Life Experience
    - story?
  - Examples
    - how to?
  - Case Study
    - story?
    - how to?
  - Victories
    - how to?
    - best practices?
  - Failures
    - how to?
    - best practices?
    - biography?
  - Lessons Learned
    - biography?
  - Models or Systems
    - how to?
  - Mentors Lessons
    - story?
  - Partners, Connections, Network
    - interviews?
  - Technical Expertise
    - Technology (e.g., HTML)
    - Personal Skill (e.g., writing grants)
    - Processes (e.g., building bird feeders)
    - Domain (e.g., tax law)

STEP 2: Capture Ideas

- http://www.myaquanotes.com/
- SECRET: Speed is your friend (you're STILL brainstorming!)
- SECRET: No idea is a "bad" idea at this point
- The Results!



STEP 3: Organization & Chunking

- a. review your notes; THINK
- b. review your notes more; ADD
- c. review your notes yet again; EDITS / TWEAKS
- d. convert all notes to digital version (spreadsheet, notepad)
- e. mark the very best ideas (bold, star, color)
- f. group ideas together if that hasn't happened organically
- g. CRITICAL: are all ideas are SINGLE ideas
  - WHY?
    - focus, clarity, "atomic level thinking"
    - rhetorical question: what do you need to create molecules? :-)
- h. final list of idea and topics = your chapters / chapter titles

STEP 4: Speed Writing Process

- RULES
  - a. set reasonable deadlines (per chapter)
    - WHY?
      - Deadlines = Focus and Clarity
  - b. once you start writing, don't stop
    - WHY?
      - Inertia (in motion, stay in motion)
  - c. every chapter is a sprint
    - WHY?
      - Because you love challenges...
  - d. NOT trying to write a New York Times Best Seller
    - WHY?
      - "Perfection is failure"
      - Amazon Best-Seller is "good enough" ;-)
- The Transformation Beast
  - QUESTION: Are all lists created equal?
    - No!
      - Unordered Lists
        - *
        - *
        - *
      - Ordered Lists
        1.
        2.
        3.
  - SECRET: Chapters only have to be 300-500 words
    - WHY?
      - huge benefit to readers (fast, simple, easy reading)
      - do the math: 8,000 words = 16 chapters x 500 words
  - a. convert unordered list to an ordered list
    - WHY?
      - prioritization (best first, 2nd best last, rest goes in the middle)
      - logical order (1st to last, top to bottom, start to finish...)
      - readers love structure (because structure is clarity ==> clarity is satisfaction ==> satisfaction means reviews ==> reviews drive sales!)
  - b. write 3-5 quick words, ideas or phrases per heading / chapter
    - all minor bullets have one purpose: support main bullet!
  - c. write the 1st 1-2 full sentences: hit most important idea
  - d. write 1-5 sentences per minor bullet
  - e. write final sentence
    - technique 1: summarize key idea again
    - technique 2: something shocking and memorable
    - technique 3: something to get them to keep reading
    - technique 4: humor, human interest, feel good (emotions)
  - f. lather, rinse repeat (b, c, d, e)

STEP 5: Clean Up

- Sweep 1
  - a. before ANY editing or proofing all writing must be done
  - b. read your book and focus on meaning
    - WHY?
      - ...because it must make sense!
      - ...because editing (cutting!) is 10x easier
  - c. add more content where needed to provide clarity, but no more
  - d. re-read your chapter for meaning (re-do step b, step c)
  - e. remove anything you don't like or that distracts from key point
  - f. re-read one "final" time
  - g. do this for full process per chapter until done
  - SECRET: focus, focus, focus
    - HOW?
      - use time blocks and deadlines
- Sweep 2
  - a. Sweep 1 *must* be complete (YES?)
  - b. spell check, grammar check
  - c. only fix what is broken
    - WHY?
      - "Perfection is failure"
      - Sweep 1 did all the heavy lifting for you
  - d. final chance to improve chapter titles (and ONLY chapters)
  - e. spell check AGAIN
    - WHY?
      - ...because you were still typing!
  - f. you're done: CONGRATULATIONS!

The "Zero Writing" Solution

- Outsource All Writing
- Speech to Text
  - Dragon / Nuance
  - Microsoft Speech to Text
- The Audio Monster
  - Audacity
    - Audacity: http://audacity.sourceforge.net/
    - LAME: http://lame.sourceforge.net/
  - Transcribe
  - Editor / Proofreader