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# First Time Co-authors:

*Increase Your Creativity  
To Write A Book*





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& Maria Chatzi

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Increase Your Creativity  
To Write A Book**



Stav Papadopoulos and Maria Chatzi, First Time Co-authors: Increase Your Creativity To Write A Book

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## **Introduction**

This book is a collection of advice, ideas, thoughts, tips, and other useful information for those who are thinking of writing an informational book with a co-author for the first time and want to make the pre-writing stage a daring and fun experience. So, if you want to explore and learn things about the “magic” that could initiate the book-writing process, or try this approach as a new creative hobby, or experiment in order to find out if you would like to get more seriously involved in creative co-authoring, you have found a book you can start with.

It is not a book for already accomplished, professional writers and co-authors. It is not a guide to writing a book and it does not give legal advice on co-authorship issues. It focuses on creativity and proposes co-authors increase their creativity in various ways before the actual writing takes place.

People mostly speak of how writing enhances creativity and how thinking creatively can help one become a better writer, as well as how co-authors can benefit from creative thinking during the writing process. However, there are great benefits in enhancing your creativity before you set out on a book writing journey. This approach comes with one caveat: It takes time (from eight months to a year of being actively involved for 2-3 hours every day). The more time you allow for increasing your creativity with activities and ideas presented in this book the greater the impact on your future writing. But, in order to see results, you have to be patient.

If you are in a hurry to write your informational book this is not the road to take - there are other books for you in the market. That being said, you can still benefit from reading it; you can use a good deal of the tips and advice offered (e.g. on becoming a good observer and listener and keeping records) even if you do not take the proposed route.

Why increasing your team's creativity before you start writing your book is a good idea

- Your joint escapades with your co-author will turn you into an idea machine and fuel your writing later on.
- You will learn to identify and appreciate creative opportunity, while at the same time you improve your skill at making decisions and become more tolerant of making the wrong ones.
- It will cultivate your diversified thinking and creative experimentation, negotiation and problem-solving skills, all crucial to writing with a co-author.
- As a result of all the above mentioned, you will gain confidence in your creative abilities and self-respect.
- You will have the opportunity to enlarge your creativity enthusiasts circle by joining people with the same passions, so as to develop strong creative communities.
- The various creative pursuits and activities this book suggests you get involved in will lead you to discovering your true passion and talent.
- You will establish and develop a unique creative identity which will work well for you, as individuals and as a team, when you will be writing your nonfiction book.
- Your eyes will open to seeing ways to pursue other personal creative interests of yours and accomplish other goals (related, or not, to the book you are writing), which will help enhance your skills further and make your approach to tasks and writing more challenging than ever before.

- You will get a chance to know your future co-author better, so as to make a more informed decision on whether they are the right partner for you or not, before you reach the stage of writing your book.

One more thing to keep in mind, before you start reading this book:

It is written for a team of two, one of whom has had previous experience in writing an informational book. The reason for this is that, in order for the future co-authors to benefit the most from this adventure in creativity, it is absolutely necessary that one of them keeps an eye on their writing destination and monitors the direction of their creative endeavors accordingly.

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## Picking a Partner in Creativity

### The stand-out in the crowd

Your creative “other half” is closer than you think. Right beside you, right under your nose, there is a creative soul with the skills and the characteristics you value.

<b>Community</b> Who is your closest friend or neighbor with creative potential and ambitions?	Friend, a friend of a friend, a past or current neighbor, acquaintance, community member and/or leader (past and present)
<b>Social media</b> Who is a close friend of a friend whose creativity stands out?	Online friend, fellow blogger, editor, contributing writer, (peer meetings)
<b>School</b> Who is an acquaintance who has the creative skills to complement yours?	Teacher, classmate, fellow staff, moms or dads groups or PTA members
<b>Work</b> Who is a colleague who has the talent and needs to believe in themselves?	Business partner, business associate, colleague, supervisor, customer, client
<b>Clubs</b> Who is the team mate whose creative pursuits fascinate you?	Team mate, gym buddy, coach, fellow sportsman, hobbyist and creative enthusiast

**Look for a good balance**

Look for a combination of skills and a personality you can actually work with. Finding the person who is closest to the creative profile you envision means fewer personal sacrifices, minimum friction and maximum results.

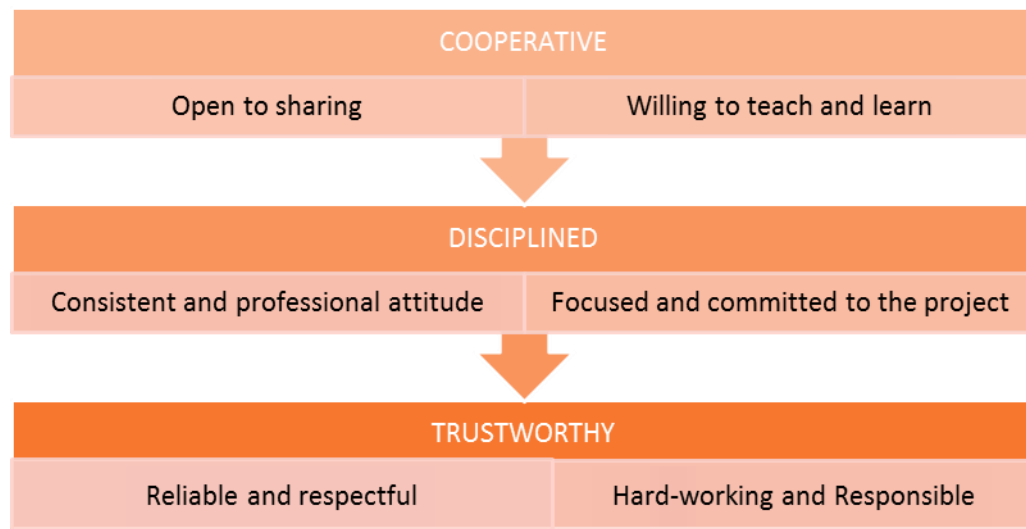
A friend willing only to gift you with their name but leave all the work to you is not the one. A successful or knowledgeable friend does not make a good match if they are constantly trying to outsmart or second guess you. Just as well, don't pick your closest buddy if they can't get over themselves (have too high an opinion of themselves and disregard for other people) and rather than collaborate, they want to dominate.

You also don't go for someone who wants the project over and done with overnight or anyone who is blasé about the whole proposition and believe they will be doing you a favor to join you in a creative project adventure.

**The ideal creative partner:**

1. displays a true passion for creativity and is free of hang-ups
2. has special interests and know-how and is open to sharing
3. is a compassionate with a fun-loving and easy-going nature
4. is willing and able to make time for creativity and
5. doesn't resort to cheap excuses about their lack of commitment

Create a long list of possible creativity partners adding their work or main interests next to their name. Which one of the candidates on your list possesses most of the following qualities? That's where to start.



Invite the friend who fits the ideal description out and catch up on the latest over a cup of coffee or tea. Hold off the talk about your creative plans however eager you are to get started. Even if the signs are there that you've found the one, you still have to scratch below the surface and see whether you are on the same page about subjects that matter to you.

Before you go rushing and confiding valuable details, make sure the person you are approaching is being straightforward with you and that they are not working on a personal agenda. What are the real intentions behind the words? Beware if they are more interested in what you can do for them and less in what they can offer you.

Should you discover along the way that the person you had in mind is a bad fit, turn to the next best candidate. Have a chat or two with a couple of friends on your list, before making your final decision.

If you should come across that special friend, you won't want the discussion to end and even before it's over, you eagerly look forward to the next one. Your buddy will listen to you and make you feel good about yourself. If this description reminds you of someone you know, you may be on to something.

The partner you've been expecting will enter your life like the wind. With the power of their dreams and clarity of their values, they will drive you to new creative

frontiers. This person is a risk-taker, who is ready and willing to take that creative leap with you.

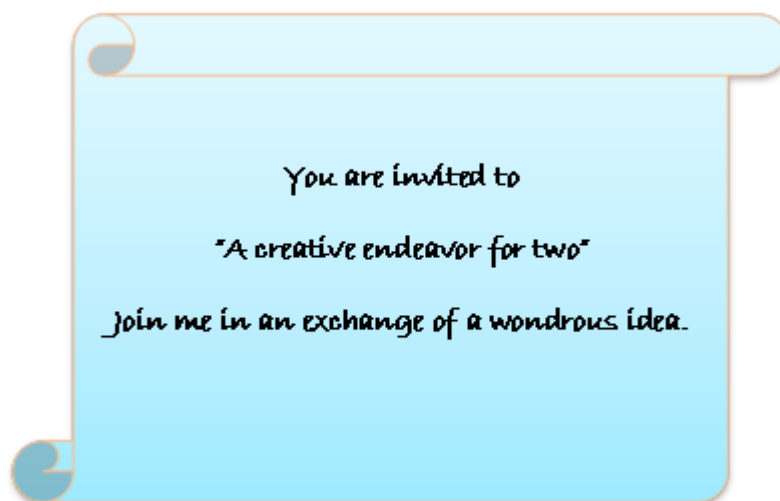
If you've found more than one candidate for your creative partnership, you'll have to make a choice based on your own personal criteria. Take some time to consider what makes one or the other an ideal partner for you.

### Why choose one friend over another?

Successful in realizing their dreams		
Admirable role model for you and your community		
Valuable professional or personal experiences		
A boundless source of inspiration with a unique style		
Special interests and positive outlook on life		
Desirable personal values and depth of character		

A good question for you to answer is: "How much like you or different from you should your partner be in order to get a perfect match?"

### Make that proposal



Although your partner of choice may be a person you already know, prepare well before you call or write an email. Ask yourself whether this is a collaboration you really believe in and want to be part of. Work out the reasons for picking a particular person as a potential partner over another.

Convincing someone to join you in a project can be challenging especially if your friend is not clear on what their role and the purpose of all of this is.

Approach a potential collaborator with:

- an invitation or request to exchange insights into your areas of expertise
- an offer to merge your experience and know-how to improve other people's lives
- an initiative to put in the time, skills, space, equipment for a creative outcome that will benefit both of you
- a workable plan with custom-made creative activities for the two of you

Take some time to prepare how you will go about convincing your buddy to team up with you. Have a rough idea how you want to talk about your creative collaboration.

It is often best to be made by the person who has previous experience with book writing, the one who is to become the project coordinator. However, the project could be equally successful if the initiative is taken by the follower-trainee who happens to have a great idea for a book project, but does not know how to bring their idea to fruition on their own.

Whether you tell them in person or write an email, the following should come in handy:



1. Start with the reason you decided to make this awesome offer (fun, opportunity, common interest).
2. Emphasize the benefits for both of you (skills, know-how, work prospects).
3. Tell your friend about your vision to join forces and why you thought of them (creative flair, enthusiasm, personality, outlook on life, passion, skills, resources).
4. Highlight the nature of the project (friendly agreement, flexible deadline, limited cost).
5. Say how and when this idea was born (a discussion, a problem, a person).
6. Bring up general topics you are passionate about (business, hobbies, self-growth).
7. Mention what challenges you may face (money, time, space, resources, priorities).
8. Have a troubleshooting plan (steps, solutions, approach, materials).
9. Make note of costs, if any.
10. Ask them if they have a different/better proposal to make. If they do, give it proper consideration.

### **Thinking it over**

No matter how unique and exciting your offer might be, it's reasonable to expect your friend to ask for some time to think it over. Say how long the offer stands because it may delay other plans or a loss of another opportunity for you.

Opportunities for promising projects don't come knocking every day. Rushing to exclude yourself from this offer may well deprive you of short and long-term benefits. Still, if you are quick to sense there is a lot to be gained from a joint venture and go for it, follow through with your promises and commitments.

Time will tell if the two of you can make it work. The dynamics for a successful collaboration should be there from the start. Don't insist or put pressure on a friend who immediately cites excuses. A person who is not remotely interested in collaborating with you will tell you upfront and not waste your time. It's just as well because any person who cannot commit themselves wholeheartedly will soon abandon the project even if they mean well.

Don't try desperately to form a collaboration that just won't stick. Study your options once again, think about the prospect and timing for you. Make sure the benefits of a creative collaboration are more than the demands on you.

Do something nice for your prospective partner when they least expect it. Reciprocate a good gesture, invite them to an event, send a link they'll find useful, introduce them to your contacts and put them in the loop.

Never make assumptions about your friend or their beliefs, skills, motives, life experiences or, at least, not stick to them. Don't be too quick to dismiss anything they propose before you understand what it involves and how you can both benefit from it.

Getting the partner you have in mind to agree is the first of many important milestones en route to your creative goals. Finding creativity partners for your next project turns out to be a whole new experience every time and you have to repeat the process and adjust your manner accordingly.

If you are used to working solo your initial enthusiasm may be followed by hesitation to be part of a team. You are coming from two different places and your reasons for joining do not have to be the same. Don't try to change to fit the profile of an ideal creative partner. Be straightforward about what you wish to get out of this exchange.

It's a reason the project may fail and to avoid future conflicts and departures you will want to:

- make all your objectives clear from the start.
- be very honest about your expectations.
- state what you are and what you are not willing to do.
- voice your concerns about trust and other issues.
- take time to consider the investment of time and skills.
- consider the given opportunity and the rewards thoroughly.

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# Stepping Out Together

## **Off to fun times**

Creativity partners get an opportunity to delight build team spirit while participating in activities they both enjoy. It's always best to share the experience. The more you engage in activities together, the stronger the motivation to get out and make new and interesting findings. The more discoveries you make, the more you enhance your creativity. So arrange a day and time with your future co-author and off you go!

When you plan an outing together, look around for what's past the ordinary and pick out the new, the odd, the gone missing. See creative people at work while you attend or take part in creative events. Study people in different creative roles and the same people under different creative circumstances.

Know where you are coming from to know where you are going. See how everyday people have incorporated creativity into their customs and rituals. Take an interest in local traditions, folklore and foreign cultures to learn more about yourself, people and different schools of thought.

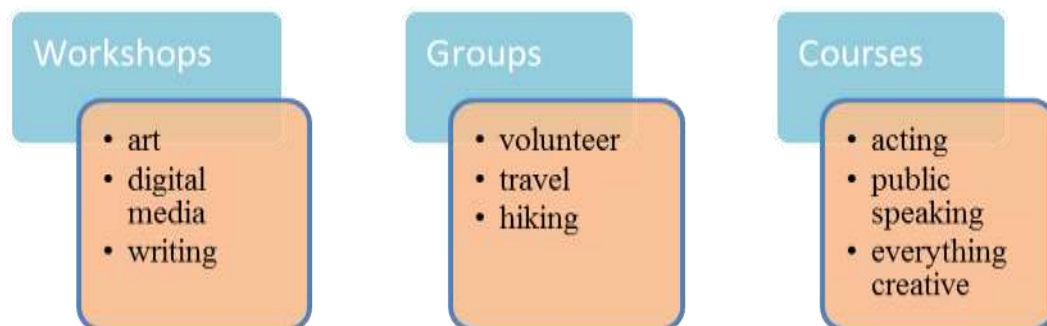
Keep in mind that all the creativity you will be experiencing along the cultural trail will leave its stamp on your collaborative book writing project, by enriching your life and identity as creative individuals.

## **Inspiring venues for the cultural trail:**

- Cultural and Community Centers (state, local, private)
- Festivals and Expositions (local and international)
- Museums and Galleries (renowned, obscure, private, online)
- Libraries (public, university, children's, community)

- Cinema (mainstream, independent, foreign)
- Theatre (professional, amateur, children's)
- Music Halls (concerts, shows, variety)
- Performances and shows (art, fashion, music, TV, radio)

**Other creative trails you can follow together:**



**What do you look for?**

- Check out the ACTION. What's the latest exhibition? What's the topic of the seminar? What is the presentation about? What are people communicating in the play? What does the course teach you? What did the organizers of the festival aim to do and what are participants expecting to see or hear?
- See and hear the REACTION- Does the event live up to people's standards? Are people receiving the message? How are they taking the news? Is the audience amused? Are participants convinced or confused? Are there objections and interactions? Do people remain interested throughout?
- Examine the INTERACTION-Is this an interview or are the speakers only interested in hearing themselves speak? Can the audience ask questions and when? What questions are those? How limited is the interaction among people in the library? Are people involved in the process? Do the participants at a workshop get to make things?

- Find out the MEANS-What equipment or materials are available at the workshop? Are there any odd uses of these materials? What do you notice about the décor or the props used? How are things arranged? What special media or effects are used? What literature or notes are available for the audience?
- Notice the MEASURES-Who is in charge of what? Is it easy to follow instructions? Is everything in place and easy to find? Are there signs you can follow? Is there an orientation session before the training sessions?
- Identify the OBSTACLES-What's causing the delays in the performance or interruptions in the course? What technical or communication problems are making it difficult for the audience to understand?
- Seek out SOLUTIONS-Are there replacements or substitutions of items in stores. What does the host do at a party when the supplies are fewer than the guests? Are there shortcuts to carrying out a task? Are there extensions to deadlines?
- Make an ASSESSMENT-How do you characterize what you saw? Would you recommend a performance? What is the creative value of what you experienced or witnessed? How much creative work goes into a single product? How clear is the message in the promotional booklet and how simple is a certain tool in its use? How does it help people?
- Attending occasions like these makes you aware of the effort creative people make to share what took them years to put together. You two can make things happen too if you have people's well-being in mind and join the large creative community.

But going out together and doing the things you've always wanted to do is not the end of it. The fun is just beginning. Before you call it a day, take some time to

reflect on your joint escapades. Find out if your observations and discoveries while in your joint activities coincide. Your experience will light up your conversation. Your personal views of it will fire it up. Create some space where both of you comment, agree, disagree, laugh, wonder, ponder, reconsider, decide together, strengthen your resolve. It's these moments of reflection and bonding that you'll cherish. Don't depend on your memory to retain all you notice and experience. And if you should be overcome with a feeling or thought about these joint activities and discussions sometime later, save it all in your "Book of Brilliant Ideas".

NOTES	
Reflections	Advice
Observations	Conclusions
Impressions	Descriptions
Opinions	Reminders
Random thoughts	Feelings

**Other ideas of things to keep a record of are the following:**

- encounters, visits, discussions, stories, concerns, problems, conclusions, impressions
- news, developments, changes, progress, highlights and low-points, complications
- names, addresses, references, concepts, quotes, slogans, mottos, jargon, slang
- feelings, views, comments, feedback, criticism, critique, tone, style, inconsistencies

- hints, advice, proposals, suggestions, recommendations, preferences, warnings
- requests, questions, ideas and activity, observations, talks, transactions, personal accounts
- dilemmas, doubts, observations, conclusions, comments, complaints, remarks, themes, topics, facts and figures, noteworthy news items, gems (stories and memories people share, points of disagreement, names, recurrent problems, strict criteria, standards, substitutes, alternatives, weekly highlights, expressions, references.

But if the time you are spending together is necessary to get your creative juices going, so is the time you need to gain some creative perspective. Unwind by noting down anything that caught your interest and would like to know more about. Keep pen and paper at your bedside for creative thoughts and ideas that visit before and during sleep and often just as you awake. Depending on memory alone is risky. You'll find important finds and ideas are lost if you don't work out a way to write them down. Odd moments of inspiration will happen...

- ...at home, when you are watching TV
- ...at work, as you go about your business
- ...on the go, as you commute or listen to music
- ...while you wait for services and daily transactions

Be ready for these precious instances. The sum of your reflective notes is of value to your co-authorship project. Bring your records together. The records you both keep will find a place in your joint creativity bank and will, eventually, be used in the book you will be writing together. Whatever doesn't will not go to waste; it will be used for another creative project.



***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY***

1. Make a list of your favorite places to visit. Compare your list with that of your partner's.

My favorites:

- a café downtown with a stunning view to unwind and destress
- the local street market for awesome crafts and antique shopping
- apple/peach-picking farms for weekend fun
- a ranch in a nearby town for adventure on holidays
- new exhibitions at the municipal library for historical/cultural awareness
- -----
- -----

2. Create a list of must-do activities you both want to try.

Must do together:

- catch a show/a local theatrical production
- go to a food/cultural fair or art/music festival
- attend a book presentation and signing
- do an online/participate in a graphics arts workshop
- -----
- -----

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## Your Creativity Wings: Motivation And Inspiration

### Motivation from common goals



What brings you to this co-authorship project? Knowing where you are headed helps you focus on what you want to achieve and why. You are off to a better start if you have a good idea what it is you want out of this creative collaboration. Your reasons may be completely different than your partner's but that's no reason to worry. Collaborations celebrate differences because it is these differences in personality, skills, profession, that offer even greater value to your creative plans.

### What do you personally want to do?

- What's your personal primary goal? Can you be more specific?
- What are your personal secondary goals? Why does it take to realize them?

### What do you want to do as a team?

- What is your team's primary goal? How will you achieve it?
- What are your team's secondary goals? How will you know if you succeed?

**How to keep the motivation ball rolling:**

- Share a personal account of a previous success or a failure with your creativity partner. Do you remember what led to these outcomes and what you learned as a result? How did you handle success? How did you manage to get over failure?
- Bring energy and enthusiasm to your joint activities and creative outings. When a creative activity or event is over, point out how the experience has enriched you, how it has affected your way of thinking or of seeing things.
- It's important not to lose sight of the reason you started this collaborative project. But even if the reason you're in this partnership changes, there must still be a good reason for remaining in it. Without a purpose to drive you, a worthy goal to achieve, and a much desired destination to reach, the project will be bound to fail. The lack of all the previously mentioned will make it meaningless.
- Maintain a good relationship with your collaborator. Allow no unresolved issues to spoil your joint adventure in creativity.
- Keep track of your individual and joint progress. Together with your partner, create a Journal Of Accomplishments, where both of you will write, sketch, paint, stitch, or glue, anything related to your team's creative achievements while being engaged in this project.
- It's good to get your intentions out in the open from the start but expect a lot to change for both of you. There's no better indication that the two of you are fully committed to the project than the moment when you've realized all your claims have been replaced with a single plan in mind; to, eventually, turn this creative adventure and the exchange of wonderful ideas into a co-authored informational book.

**Let the world inspire you**

Inspiration is what excites you and makes you fall in love with a project, what makes your heart desire to breathe life into an idea or a dream and express your creativity. Inspiration opens our mind to perceiving new perspectives beyond old and established realities; it leads to innovative creations. Keep in mind that you and your future co-author do not need to be inspired by the same thing or experience; in fact, if the force or source which ignites your creative spark is different from theirs, the impact on your collaboration will be stronger and richer.

**What is of inspirational value**

You can be inspired by anything, anyone, at any place and time. Following, are some examples:

- Go for the detail in things. Seek out the origins of things, their design, different styles, variety of colors, shapes and sizes. Re-examine objects at your desk, your room, your home, your neighborhood, your community, your city. It's not a chore but a brand new hobby that will reward you with awesome discoveries and a sharper mind.
- Enjoy the stroll around the neighborhood. Look again at old and new houses or buildings in the area. Find out more about which period and the order they were built, if they underwent repairs, how they were previously used.
- Begin your travels nearby and go further at the first opportunity. If travelling seems like a far-away dream itself, for now, try mentally revisiting everyplace you have been to. Watch wildlife documentaries, take a look at past vacation pictures, visit cities online, watch a video, ask a friend to share more of the pictures or videos of their journeys.

- People, their life and their work can also be inspiring. Read biographies of artists, scientists, psychologists, educators, innovators in all fields, great spiritual thinkers and philosophers, whose work has made a great impact bringing about a change in our society.
- Creative partners are a source of inspiration to each other. The vision you have for your team and your project will energize and empower you to continue your quest for thrilling ideas and awesome discoveries.

### *SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 1*

Write down your individual and joint objectives and sign your 'joint declaration'. Note the exact date to mark the occasion. But remember that nothing is written on stone in this project and that some of your initial objectives will no longer hold true as the project progresses. So, be prepared for regular updates.

Partner 1 Goals	Joint Goals	Partner 2 Goals
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 2***

Which of these became a source of inspiration to you? When and how did you come across it? What did it inspire you to do?

a question, a picture, a sound, a taste, a feeling, a smell- a person, a comment, a visit,

a time of the day, a special moment, a purpose, a setting, a historical event, a headline,

a season, a time, a gesture, an arrival, a departure, moving, a location, a journey

a part of a house, a neighborhood, a gate, a method, a love, a failure, a success, a motion

a reaction, the way someone said something, a question, a response, a conversation,

a task, a family gathering, an exhibition, a worldwide event, a news item, a game

a pet, a pet peeve, an eccentric or curious neighbor, an expression, a foreign phrase,

a film, a play, a local, a native, an elderly person, a tourist, an enemy, a competitor,

a rival, a colleague, a student, a teacher, a child, a parent, a container, materials, ceremonies, a past era, a joke

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 3**

Recall an inspirational story or name the person who is an inspirational model.

a celebrity	an athlete	a survivor	a successful
businessman			
a teacher	a friend	a neighbor	
a family member	a classmate	a colleague	

What makes your role model stand out?

hard work	ambition	generosity	foresight
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Note the people in stories of....

rags to riches	overcoming hardship	beat the odds
overnight success	international acclaim	reaching celebrity status

What made their story stand out?

courage	seized opportunity	unexpected help
coincidence		
optimism	patience	persistence
		resilience

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## Eyes and Ears Towards Creativity

### **Being a witness to all that's happening**

If you are looking for inspiration, you are moving it the right direction. By defining and writing your goals, you now have a clear vision of what you want to get out of this project. Your joint escapades have revealed how delightfully unpredictable inspiration is. All those ideas spinning in your head are eager to become reality. But there's more there to tune your senses to. While the visibly creative work and activity have inspired you to get started, a lot of it is still invisible to you. Training yourself to becoming an even better observer and listener becomes more significant because of this project.

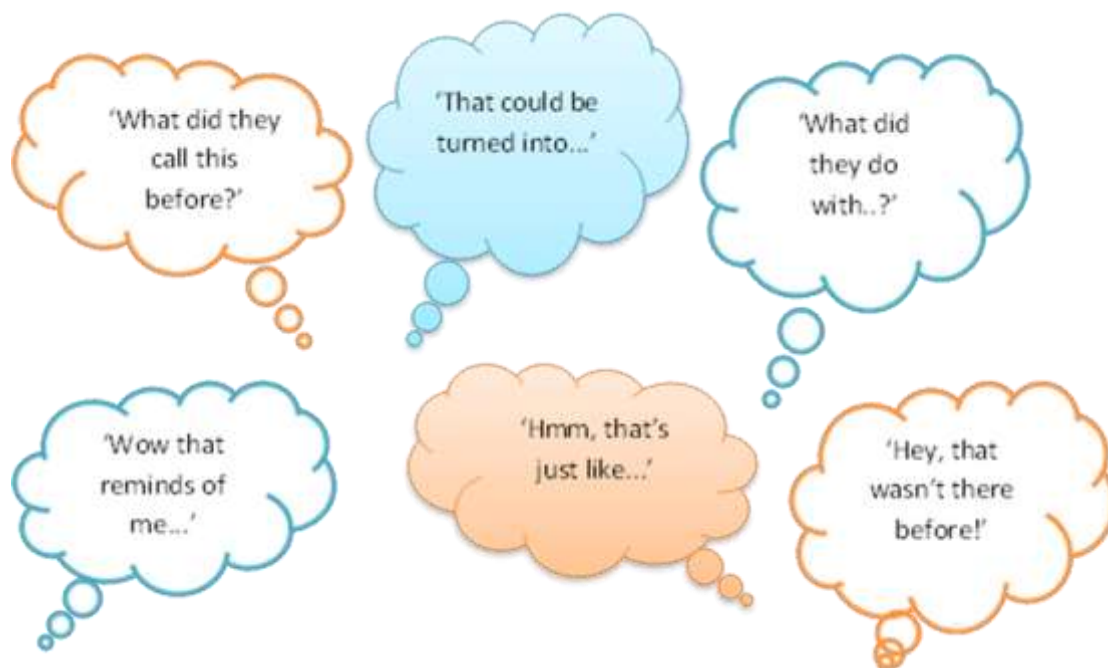
Sharpening your ability to see and pick up more cues from your environment happens gradually and not overnight. Your observations skill training requires mindful and constant practice. Target your observations and your listening and systematically go out in search of inspirational ideas.

Retain information that's not standard or repetitive; things you've never heard of before. Change is constant in every field and new information enters our lives daily. Equally, if you practice daily, you can develop a keen eye for information of superior creative value for your project.

Worthwhile information makes you stop and think. Compare it to what you know, decide if you can use it towards your project and in what way. Don't just note innovation, functionality, and progress in things you see or hear but think about how you would personally and as a team benefit from these signs of creativity.

Keep up-to-date with changing language in the field of your interest. Check that you are well-informed and keeping up pace with the experts in the field. Track changing or returning methods of doing things. See what equipment, tools or styles

are making a comeback. Develop a skill for spotting things that are amiss, try identifying odd patterns, reflect on the different sides of a story. Look further into why something was added or replaced. Decide on how you would do it differently and why.



Focus on the field you are closely pursuing but also step outside it for signs of creativity. Don't ignore the emerging information around you. Take note of what happens in your daily commute, business meetings and in your social encounters. Notice what people do or say, how they act and react. Put yourself in people's shoes and work out what might have triggered unexpected responses or reactions.

From that vantage point you will find plenty of inspiration for themes, topics, titles and you will learn to borrow tips, solutions, and strategies for problems that may arise. At every turn you make, there are indications clues and particulars that can eventually be woven into your co-creative project.

**Tips to becoming inspired:**

Always be prepared to assess the findings you make. Asking and answering questions for yourself also helps you remember everything about it as you experience it. Here are some questions to help you figure out if something your senses picked up is worthwhile:

- What am I looking at/listening to?
- Why did I stop to observe/listen to it?
- What did I like /dislike about it?
- How can we use this information in our project?

When you find fine examples of creative work, examine them closely. Note where they are displayed and how. Figure out what resources, tools, materials you would need to reproduce such work. Think about the creators of the works you discover and ask yourself:

- What inspired them to create?
- Is that what they set out to create?
- How long did it take them to complete it?
- Did they have any help?
- Were they happy with their creation?

Seek out people who have the knowledge you need. Engage with people and unearth meaningful old stories. Have your ears open for relevant, useful, sound, expert information you can use in your project. Learn more from experts in your field by taking a real interest in what they say in their interviews about how they got started and turned their ideas into reality.

Creatives outside your specialty also have the knowledge you need to go further. Research noteworthy artists, writers, scientists, etc. -not just the commercially successful ones- because those creatives, who shun the limelight, also have a lot to teach you about overcoming self-doubt and how to build determination, resilience so that you can make it to your creative destination.

Trust that everyone has something of significance to say, no matter how much more you think you know in comparison. Let others do the talking even if at first it seems as if they have nothing new to tell you. If not today, they may have something for you tomorrow. Give them the respect you would give an expert and listen as if your life depended on it. Practice holding off what you want to say until you have learned at least one new bit of information.

Once you learn to glean the important message, listen in for tone, distinct words or odd references in people's speech. At a later point in time, practice speaking in that tone and repeating the words with the same emphasis. How does tone and emphasis help or hinder the message?

Challenge yourself to listening differently and at different times during the day. Try focusing on someone speaking with background noise and also without. Go completely silent and listen to what's going on around you. Seek out a music station/talk station you enjoy listening to and focus on the message, the style and changing tone. What causes the presenter to change?

Designate 'learning days' so that you focus more on the listening and less on your talking. It goes without saying that however interesting or not people are, you have to fight the urge to interrupt when they are talking. Pinch yourself if you have to as long as you get what people are saying. Wait to ask your burning questions at the end and you will be rewarded with the hot tips you need.

Focus on the particular point of interest in a discussion and control your impulse to jump from one topic to another. Always take a moment to mentally note the takeaway from any conversation you take part in. Check to see whether you've been listening:

- Would you be able to retell the story?
- Why did they share that information with you?
- What were the highlights?
- What more would you ask if you had the opportunity?

Learn to distinguish what matters. Practice filtering information quickly as someone is talking. Listen for words, vocabulary, expressions you haven't heard before. What do they keep repeating and why? Take note of transition words that lead to examples, contrasts and alternatives. Categorize new information into that of primary and secondary importance. Think about ways new knowledge you acquire can be used in your co-authorship project.

If you are always on the go to stop or too busy to stop and look or talk to anyone, all you need is five minutes out of your schedule to sit back and reflect on what your senses have already picked up. Think back to a brief encounter or a short conversation and make a mental note of the important message of that communication.

Once in a while, we all need only to experience things that come our way and enjoy ourselves. Although it looks like you are only a passive recipient, it's not at all like that. Your mind isn't actually resting or being lazy, it's just reorganizing work it's done the year before and connecting it to new gains, so more new ideas will be born (something like what goes on in our heads while we're sleeping).

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 1***

1. There is an abundance of articles, stories, other offerings online. Find a shorter title, expression or wise old saying to summarize what you read.
2. The signs are all there and communicating inspiring messages to you.  
What from this list caught your eye? If so, write it down for future reference.

street signs	store signs	old store signs	door signs	garden signs
posters	advertisements	graffiti	billboard	custom license plates
maps	leaflets/bills	pamphlets	circulars	brochures
emblems	logos/slogans	blog names	hashtags	wifi names
TV commercials	radio spots	show/ episode titles		cartoon names
greetings				
jingles	mottos	quotes	verses	lyrics
headlines				questions complaints

key words	reverse order of words	emerging words	use of foreign words/expressions
odd uses/meanings/spelling of words	repeated/contracted words	figures of speech	
puns	slang/argot	alliterations	intentionally and unintentionally misspelled words

names	nicknames	brand names	street names	family names
film/book characters 'names	company names	pet names	bus/train station names	
film titles	series titles	episode titles	book titles	unit/chapter titles

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 2***

Observe your own habits of listening and speaking:

- How do you react to news, invitations, lies, disappointment, and criticism?
- How do you sound when you speak? Do you find it easy to get people's attention?
- Do people ask you to speak up, slow down, clarify, and repeat what you say?
- How do you greet people? How do you react/respond to those lacking manners?

- 
- What do you like to talk about? What do you avoid talking about?
  - Do you digress as you speak? What makes you lose your train of thought?
  - What expressions do you find yourself repeating?
  - What expressions people use do you dislike?

- 
- What do you do when you don't get answers to your questions?
  - What do you let on as you speak?
  - What do you do when people don't get what you're saying?
  - Do you speak differently depending on the occasion and the person?

## Drawing a Creativity Circle

### **This is the one!**

If you are gaining momentum in the hunt for inspiration and enthusiasm is running high, you are on the right track. You know it by the creative bliss you experience.

It's happening when:

- you are both determined to make a success of the project
- you are intrigued by your partner's passions
- you appreciate each other's concerns
- you don't impose on, intimidate or overshadow your partner
- you can lead separate existences and cooperate perfectly well
- you turn a deaf ear to outside interference and negative influence

If there's still something gnawing at you and holding you back, after all the comings and goings, the long discussions and the exchange of calls and emails, it may be a sign the two of you are not a good match. Keep the communication channel open; there may be more details about this creative collaboration you need to discuss, more questions you need your partner to answer before you commit yourself to co-authoring a book. However, there are times you will simply have to trust your partner's integrity and the project's creative process, especially when your doubts are rooted in your own fears. Otherwise, it's best to part ways early on to avoid future conflicts and departures at crucial moments, and find a better match from the list of prospective partners you made in the beginning.



### Are you compatible?

What is that line where you two meet? You may feel you are too theoretical and not as practical as your partner. You may be the one with the overly analytical nature and your friend is the practical time and energy-saving whiz. Forgotten accomplishments, skills still trapped in past jobs, and dreams indefinitely put on ice will revisit just as soon as you begin recounting your experiences.

PERSONAL	SOCIAL	BUSINESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tales of successful career moves and failed attempts</li><li>• Signs of ambition and reluctance</li><li>• Great memories and those of bitter disappointment</li><li>• Worthwhile causes and unexpected rewards</li><li>• Present dilemmas and future aspirations</li></ul>		

Strengthening your team dynamics requires time and an effort from both partners. You are in this together for the fun and learning but you will eventually come across a part of this project you fear; facing your vulnerable side. So what do you do when the time comes to let your partner see you warts and all?

Relax, be yourself and upfront about your side of the bargain. Voice your concerns, discuss your roles and divide responsibilities equally. Dealing with all of the drama early on will prevent friction and help avoid panic when your project's teething problems begin to appear.

If you fully understand that you are in this project because of your strengths nothing can stop you from moving forward. Give yourself permission to stumble and fall, to lose faith in the project, to lose your head even. Reveal your incredible powers, the child in you, your quirky, perhaps, but most intriguing nature, your odd but somehow effective way of doing things. Don't worry. You are in the right place and you are not in it alone.

Beyond the fun and laughter, there is some solid knowledge between the two of you and a strong desire to apply it. There is also a deep desire to learn more. Treat your partner as a trustworthy and dependable person. Showing who you really are helps your partner to identify you and to better understand how your personal qualities affect your actions and decisions, which will help the collaborative project process run smooth.

### **Truths and tales upfront**

What lengths will you go to make the project a success and where do you draw the line? Just as shaking hands on it is reason for celebration, keeping reasons for annoyance to yourself are cause for worry. Address these points of concern early on so they don't get in the way of progress.

- Daily habits and time eaters
- Serious objections
- Likes/ dislikes, will dos/ won't dos, can dos/ can't dos

Sure, there will be fireworks, some mistrust and friction but it's a necessary part of the process. Rather than hide your pet peeves or peculiar habits, see how you can incorporate that side of you into the project. For instance, being overly sensitive could make it easy for you to quickly pick up subtle clues no one else can. A tendency to exaggerate could develop into a talent for creating great story characters.

Personal projects and collaborations can co-exist and in fact one will fuel the other with inspiration. So, don't neglect invitations for other creative engagements and duties that you have to take care of on your own.

Having greater and diverse access to fields of knowledge, methods, problems, etc. gives you a better perspective. It makes you aware of what else there is out there and how much more you can help yourself and your readers by sharing it in a book.

What you experience from day to day becomes valuable material towards your future writing project. Pursue any activity you want but if you haven't tried something yourself, do a bit of research before you go on about it and recommend it to your creative partner.

Setting some basic rules (subject to change) will protect this initiative from taking a bad turn early on. While it may seem that rules and regulations are in charge of your actions, in reality it is you two who are running the show.

### **Committing and sticking with it**

Make sure you want to be part of this project and you are not in it only out of curiosity. Initial excitement may wane by the day if you are not in it for the fun and its creative prospect.

When entering a partnership, there is often doubt and fear you may be making a wrong decision – so, keep notes of your feelings and your thoughts (both negative and positive ones) for about 10-15 days.

Identify the fears underneath those negative thoughts and feelings – what is it that's really bothering you, what you are exactly afraid of (what's hiding under the surface). Don't lie to yourself and don't waste your time or anyone else's trying to make it work. There may be a long held, and wrongly held, belief that's holding you back from accomplishing a dream. Check your notes to see what they're saying about you. This joint work is your chance to outgrow whatever is holding you back.

Crisis is unavoidable when the old meets the new; it is an opportunity for positive changes. There is always a way out, you only have to look for it. Don't take

things so seriously, relax and go with your heart's present desire (or the "flow" if you prefer). Know what to do if you experience such a crisis. Share what is troubling you with your partner; it may help them to open up too. Agree to disagree with your partner and keep communication open whatever the circumstances are. Keeping your collaboration healthy makes it easy to overcome all other obstacles that threaten your project.



On the other hand, if this joint creative project is what you really wanted to do, you will find a way to do what's important to complete it. View yourself as an explorer. In reality there are no time-limits, no deadlines and no expiry dates (those are all man-made). That's the nature of this project. It allows for a great degree of flexibility. So you have plenty of time to explore your joint project and experiment too – clocks are ticking because we've set them towards writing a book.

### Tip

Search online for case studies and interviews of famous duos (artists, writers, businessmen, presenters etc.) who are known for their successful collaboration. Pay attention to how they interact and always manage-despite their egos and creative differences - to make it work.

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 1***

Produce (and later compare with your partner's) a **short list** of your greatest:

work activities    personal influences    relationships accomplishments  
pet peeves    fears disappointments    regrets personal professional  
challenges

Jot down a few facts that you'd like your mentor to know about you from the very beginning.

- What about your life, work and family makes you happy?
- What do you believe you are really good at and what not?
- Where do you draw confidence from?
- What personal achievements do you take the greatest pride in?
- What are your top skills and those you feel you should reinforce?
- What circumstances are likely to set you off?
- Which talent that you admire in others do you wish you had?
- What professions or trades appeal to you?

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 2***

How well do you know your creative partner? Take a closer look at your creative partner's experiences, present circumstances and future plans.

**Do you know...**

- where your buddy is coming from (origins, background)?
- where exactly in life is your partner at now?
- what they consider to be their greatest passion?
- what or who inspires or motivates them?
- what topics/issues is your partner sensitive about?
- what are their areas of interest are?
- who their favorite people, places are?

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 3*****Looking through your partner in creativity**

You've only just caught a glimpse of your partner's multi-dimensional character and you can't jump to conclusions about what they can do just yet. Creative partners will reveal themselves in the depths of time but to help them get a closer look, prepare what you will say when they ask you about:

- what are you excellent at?
  - what are you good at?
  - what could you improve on?
  - what are you not cut out for?
  - where do you draw confidence from?
- 
- your formal and informal schooling.
  - distinctions, awards, respect and recognition you've earned.
  - obvious, hidden and disguised talents
- 
- other professions or trades that you are fascinated by.
  - talents that you don't have but admire or wish to acquire.
  - projects, courses, and clubs you are or were involved in.
  - personal projects, initiatives or contributions.
  - arts, crafts, handmade designs, objects, gifts.
- 
- your personal virtues and vices.
  - desires and fears related to creativity
  - good practices and strange habits
  - guilty pleasures and innocent mischief
  - what no one would guess about you.
- 
- duties and responsibilities that weigh you down.
  - personal boundaries and matters of personal integrity
  - ambitions and standards -how much do you want to do and how much of it will satisfy you.
- 
- proud moments and regrets
  - preferences and pet-peeves-
  - VIPS and TIPS-people and advice which had a great impact on your life.
  - action hero moments/lifesavers-times you saved the day and people who came to your rescue.

## Your Sticky Book Topic

### **What's your creativity field?**

Your joint decision on which topic to pursue and eventually write about can be dictated by the need or the goal the two of you are out to satisfy. As partners you will both be researching a variety of topics thoroughly so you can get a feel for what is well within your capabilities and interests.

All ideas, no matter how absurd, have a place in the process. It can be difficult to choose what to eliminate and what to reconsider. Sifting through all of your great suggestions for the one takes time. Adjusting to a different course of action or theme as new information enters the scene leads to better opportunities. With countless topics to choose from, you'll both have to cross off more than a few items on your list. You can only write about one thing at a time and any other topics you love will have to wait. What direction your joint project takes depends on the best match for both your personalities, skills and time allowances.

Now is the time to form lists of the following:

- activities, hobbies and creative fields you've wanted to be involved in
- services, processes, methods, approaches you can develop
- seasons, holidays, events, occasions for creative activity
- topics which are most in demand at the time (the most popular or trending)
- topics you've not dealt with before but would like to try
- topics you've enjoyed before and would like to go deeper with your partner

Make a choice which reflects your passion for creative play, maximizes your skills and serves a purpose. Having a sense of purpose will instill in both of you a



greater sense of commitment to this co-creative project. Whatever you decide to do, have people's wellbeing and growth in mind. Help solve problems and improve a sector of their life with practical tips people can really use so they can be in control of situations and of themselves. Think of people who:

- need the specialized information and have no access to it
- want to delve deeper into topics they are interested in
- have to keep up with their professional peers

Do some research online to see what information, answers, or solutions people are looking for. Here's a short list of subjects people like to know more about, or need some help with:

- Frugal living (recycling, repurposing items)
- Time and money management
- School (homeschooling, adult learning or teaching)
- Celebrations (party, event , wedding planning)
- Pets (animal training, pet grooming)
- Nature (resources, gardening, landscaping)
- Wellness (health and nutrition, sports, personal training)
- Fashion (fashion design, jewelry making, hair, make-up and nail artistry)
- Arts (culture, tradition, folklore, cinema, theatre, music, media)
- Activism (consumer right, animal rights, charities, volunteers)
- Writing (creative writing, promotional writing, marketing, publishing)
- Travelling (arranging, packing, shopping, communicating, learning)
- Gift-making (decorating, styling, gift-wrapping)
- Food (Preparing, cooking, baking, preserving, packaging, safety)

Additional things to consider, when choosing a topic for your non-fiction book, are:

- your joint skills, experience, studies, knowledge, materials and resources
- the amount of time, effort you are willing to put in
- how you feel about the subject – you must be enthusiastic/passionate about it
- people who may be interested in reading your book; are they the same group you identify as your target readers?

When you finally hit the “big idea” topic, you will both be overcome with a combined sense of enthusiasm and anticipation. But until that happens, the fun and exciting pursuit of a topic idea can alternate with moments of introspection, as well as sharp pangs of doubt and insecurity over whether this can actually work or not.

### Break it down

Economy	Environment	Policy
Money	Personal	Rules
Time	Social	Regulations
Energy	School	Guidelines
Effort	Work	Instructions
Resources	Natural	Activities
Space	Home	Secrets
Materials	Living	Tips
Skills	Atmosphere	Safety

Turn the decision-making process into a fun debate. Short list your preferences down to 2 topics. Take turns presenting the pros and cons of each topic. Put your topic to the test. You'll know when you are close enough. It's your area of joint passion and expertise. Both you and your creativity partner need to answer questions like:

1. Is this your area of expertise?
  - How well do you know this topic (education, experience, stories, tips, ideas)?
  - Do you have significant know-how (methods, techniques, sources, materials)?
  - How well can you express these concepts (meanings, jargon, key vocabulary, phrases)?
2. Does it serve your team's purpose (prompts change, helps people, promotes creativity)?
3. Does it make you both happy (is it engaging, challenging)?

What is your area of expertise?

People	Money	Health	Home	Travel
Communication	Fashion	Beauty	Work	Fun
Learning	Crafts	Collections	Celebrations	Home

What do you like to talk about?

Relationships	Parenting	Food/Nutrition	Frugality	Tourism
Cooking	Jewelry	Make-up	Success	Hobbies
Sports	Holidays	Art	Teaching	Cars

What's your approach to the topic and who are you writing the book for?

- theoretical and scientific for the scientific-minded
- professional and technical for the expert
- simple and practical for the layman

- personal and light-hearted for friends and acquaintances

Your creative plans should be challenging to the mind but not too far from who you are and what you enjoy doing. What you choose to co-create is to simplify your circumstances and not complicate them. Are you still questioning your choice? Try going deeper down the topic you seem to prefer or explore other options instead.

**Step 1** Place your ideas under broad categories.

Say, for example, “Home” is your special interest in the following categories.

People	<b>Home</b>	Fun	Education	Work	Communication	Travel
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**Step 2** Choose the most likely topic and break it down into sub-categories.

Which of these topics relating to “Home” do you know more about?

<b>Home</b>	Buy/Sell	Security	Decorate	Comfort	Maintenance	Supply
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**Step 3** Pick an area you believe you are better at and follow that lead.

What about “Buying/Selling a home” do you know more about?

<b>Buy/Sell Home</b>	Reason	Money	Area	Space	Condition
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**Step 4** Select your area of expertise and keep analyzing until you find your path.

What aspects of the “Area of buying and selling a home” will you focus on?

<b>Area</b>	Cost	Facilities	Security	Commute
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**Step 5** Set a starting point and set off for your destination.

Start at “The importance of facilities in the area you buy/sell a home”.

<b>Facilities</b>	Services	School	Entertainment	Transport
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Even if you have a possible winner, don’t be too quick to dismiss the rest of the ideas. Keep them aside for a while (and keep collecting information just in case you change your mind).

As time passes and as you enter the planning stage you are likely to discover that what now seems to be a brilliant idea is nothing too special. Some early activity may show that it's not what makes you happy or it is just too demanding on your time and skills.

You need a quick antidote to such frustrating developments so that you don't lose your initial enthusiasm. Your second and third choices of topics can be a quick fix to the problem.

Consider the questions people are likely to ask you when, later on, you tell them you're writing a book.

- What's so special or unique about your topic?
- What areas or points do you focus on?
- Why should people be interested in the knowledge that you bring to them?
- How will it be useful to them?
- How easy and cheap will it be to apply?
- How could they benefit from know-how from two different fields and people?

Before making the final choice, answer the following questions:

- Are you making a decision based on its popularity at present or because you are interested in what it will mean for you some 20 years later?
- Are the circumstances so urgent that you have to make up your mind on the spot or can you take your time to consider?
- Is it a decision that has fewer demands and consequences for both of you?
- Is it the only decision you can take for lack of a better choice?

- Do you want to surprise yourself and others by doing something completely out of character?
- Compare and contrast one idea against the other. What will you and your prospective readers gain and what have you got to lose?
- Imagine people asking you for proof that what you say works. Will you be able to defend your decision, your role, your book?

**Rate your topic! How well does it fare on a scale of a 1-5?**

FEATURES	TOPIC 1		TOPIC 2		TOPIC 3		TOPIC 4		TOPIC 5	
Has it been said or done before?										
Is it a new proposition?										
Is it necessary today?										
Does it have a modern appeal?										
Does it have a practical purpose?										
Is it easy to achieve?										
Will it inspire action-taking?										
Will skills improve?										
Is it easy to apply?										

Which of your topics ticks most of the boxes? If you both feel your heart is in it, this could be it! Salvage your next best choices to use as a safety net. While on the road, your first choice of topic for your project may prove to be more of a burden than a pleasure.

Remember that if the two of you make a mistake choosing one topic for your book over another, it's O.K. – as long as you're honest with yourself and each other and still have a long way to go, you can change the topic. Nothing of what you will learn and experience together will be wasted-especially time- and no decisions are irreversible.

#### ***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 1***

Take a short break from your routine to unwind to and create a list of your **TOP 10.**

1. Fields you prefer
2. Fields you like
3. Fields you are good at
4. Popular fields
5. Obscure fields
6. Challenging fields
7. Emerging fields

Use your creative energy to break down these ideas until it becomes clear how exactly you can match your skills to the task. Write down everything you mention during the activity. Group your notes under three broad titles with related subtitles underneath. A good round of sessions is necessary before you can identify a topic you both want to be involved and engaged in.

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 2***

Practice minute-long THINKABOUTS

Name the activities :

- that you enjoyed as a child/ teenager
- that you take joy in doing now
- that you would like to take up in the future

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 3***

You have great choices lined up but which one is best suited for your team and your creative project?

It's difficult to make choices when all the themes and topics are appealing. Here's a way to work out which topic, theme or other items you will be selecting score highest. Place the topics on your short-list in the columns in random order. Pick a color each and mark, in your opinion, the features each topic presents.

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# Digging up the Treasure

## Hunt high and low

Creativity changes the way you have been learning and your approach to learning. It leads you to self-directed learning, which sets you free. You and your partner will each be in charge of your learning and you each get to ask the questions that will give you the knowledge you seek.

Even if you are a whiz at digging up information online, you can always advance your research skill to the next level. Familiarize yourself with the fields you are most interested in and look for fresh and practical information. Avoid distractions by focusing on one domain at a time. Save time by concentrating on information that can be used towards writing your book.

What to look out for when you research your topic:

- Concepts, trends, names, titles you can use for reference
- Jargon, terms you can use to simplify your language
- Practices, habits, methods and techniques that everyone can use

Be just as critical a reader, as you are a viewer and a listener. Check out all people's claims and confirm facts and figures. Rethink your favorite sources and always go for online sources that give you more than run of the mill information. Here are some questions you need to answer while researching your book's topic:

- Do you have trusted sites, blogs, video channels, forums you tune into to get informed? What brought you to them?
- What makes you trust them? How did you discover them? How often do you visit them? What kind of information do you usually look for?

- What is it about a book, an article, a blog post, a video that draws your attention?
- Do words such as strategies, secrets, tips, lessons make you stop and look again?
- Do you read an article or listen to a speaker out of curiosity or real interest?

Re-read a post you disagreed with, see the video you didn't like one more time, listen to a song from the past you never liked. And then do the same with media you loved and used to enjoy to the full. Think about what was left out or what was repeated. Do you still feel the same way about them? If so/ not, why? Always bookmark or save your sources links and any material that you are likely to make reference to in your book.

As you look for hidden treasures daily, ask yourself these questions:

- *Find your focus* - What are you looking for?

a phrase	a quote	a definition	a theory	a solution	a method	a story
inspiration	ideas	tips	pictures	references	templates	books
items to buy						

- *Identify intention* - What do you want or need?

gain knowledge	satisfy curiosity	confirm claims
find fun facts	find an explanation	find future trends

➤ *Name your options* - What are your research options?

search online	take a free course	go to the library	read books
read articles questions	watch tutorials	use social media	ask people
talk to people videos	read writing blogs	listen to podcasts	watch
ask questions	participate in a course	observe people at work	talk to people

➤ *Describe your findings* - Decide whether the information you found is:

a new proposition	a practical tip	a useful item
a relevant topic	a cost-effective suggestion	a time-saving technique

➤ *Show what you can do with the information you now have* - Where can you actually use it?

for a presentation at work communicate better	to help the community	to
for your next book current	for a competition	to stay
to build on your existing knowledge friends or clients	reinforce your skills	to inform your
to better understand various concepts	to become self-reliant	for your other creative pursuits

Where did you find the information and how do you save it?

saved files	take notes	summarize	sketch	take pictures	video
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### **Tips**

- Save content related to the central theme of your book. Carefully record, collect and set aside all the good material you get your hands on.
- Make order of chaos by labeling and placing information/material under general headings.
- Set aside an Online Sources Reference Document. Quickly copy/paste and save links to articles or videos with likely useful information for your project.

### **Good material to save**

It's a keeper if it's news to you. As a rule of thumb, anything you didn't already know, unexpected, striking, smart, new, useful, practical, funny, irritating, absurd makes its way into your records. You know you've made a find when you find yourself panic-stricken looking for a notepad to capture the thought/idea in words.

Read all about current trends and future developments in the field your project looks to and keep notes. Find out what books already deal with similar subject matter. If you want to write well, you have to become a keen reader first. As you read other writers' work, carry on a 'would be' conversation and ask them questions about the reason they wrote a particular piece and what they wanted to achieve. Get curious about their choice of words, phrasing expressions and the manner by which they get their message across to you.

Closely examine non-fiction books to get a sense of how you will approach your writing. Check out how information is structured into a table of contents.

Study your reading material, highlight and note down:

- genre, aim purpose of the book and other literature
- titles, subtitles and captions
- style, tone, sentiment (mood, tense, wording)
- noting key phrases, words, elements
- the types of questions raised and answered
- visual maps, charts, diagrams, graphs, illustrations, pictures, etc.
- fonts and multi-modal signs
- format, references, bibliography

Technology skills are necessary to research, write, save and secure information. Find out what restrictions apply to using information, pictures and tools on the web. Check the capacity of your technology resources (available and updated programs and applications). Know the basic writing and graphics hardware and software tools and applications. If necessary, take a short course or do a tutorial or get some help from a tech-savvy friend.

- Learn how to solve minor technical problems by learning all the -available to you- word processing and other file format features. Find out more about using search engines, making queries and using filters to access information.
- Expand your knowledge of office suites and main components to save time and easily create templates and illustrations of your own.

### **Tips**

Use proverbs and idiomatic expressions to summarize and remember your readings. Take note of Titles (of honor, professional, articles, books, stories, films, TV shows, episodes, etc.), which will help you think up some of the titles and subtitles in your book.

### It's all in the lists

Note-taking in the form of lists is a good start to writing your book and it will help you keep up with the weekly writing tasks. Working with lists also gives shape and direction to this collaborative project. It is a quick way to record, organize and keep track of the project related activity and book content. Making, extending or shortening lists will keep your creative juices flowing when you want to while away the time. Where and how do you save your inspired lists from which you will draw for your writing? A good idea is to create a table like the one below.

Draw some columns on your writing pad or use a spreadsheet application with the title BOOK LISTS. Group lists under specific categories. Don't cross off or delete items unless you revise or finalize your list.

BOOK LEDGER					
SERVICES	PRODUCTS	OCCASIONS	RULES	VENUES	ACTIVITIES
QUESTIONS	CHAPTERS	OBJECTIVES	EXPRESSIONS	CONTACTS	PROBLEMS
TOPICS	TITLES	MATERIALS	KEY WORDS	LINKS	SOLUTIONS
COURSES	SYMBOLS	TOOLS	QUOTES	REFERENCES	OPTIONS

SOURCES	CODES	DEADLINES	HEADINGS	BOOKS	OTHER

### ***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY***

*Topics you can research*

#### **PROJECT**

- How to manage your know-how, your time and projects
- Effective strategies and practices for success

#### **CREATIVITY**

- Opportunities for creative activity in your community
- Prospective collaborators for future projects
- Famous creative collaborations and their outcomes
- The 'Creative Culture' and your role in it
- The pioneers in your field and what sets them apart
- The characteristics of past and current day leaders and innovators

#### **SELF-IMPROVEMENT**

- Developing a broader understanding of concepts, cultures, creativity
- Building, improving and putting skills to practical use

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# Your Creativity Power Tools

## Get the scoop

The more creative your team endeavors, the greater and the more intense your need for information will be. Your questions are tools that will get people thinking and talking. Consider questions as being ultimate collector's item and start building your own collection of thought provoking questions. Come up with your own set of questions and use them as prompts to get people talking about the topic you are interested in.

- Probe like a philosopher and as if unconvinced, ask again and get people to think deeper, to prove their point, to rethink their beliefs, to reflect and think things through, make predictions and ponder the meaning of things.
- Do like a teacher and aim at someone's imagination with simple and straightforward questions. Work your way to questions of higher difficulty.
- Be as inquisitive as a student. Find out how you do something by asking for instructions and for clarification to make sense of things.
- Confidently ask specific problem-solving questions like an expert does.
- Take precautions like a novice and ask "what to do if in case.....?"
- Circle around the question like a detective until you confirm a story. Try to verify the general facts before you get to the specifics.
- Simplify your questions like a disoriented tourist in need of directions.
- Familiarize yourself with new circumstances and ask even if you believe the question you have in mind is insane or naïve.
- The more diverse the people you interview are, the more thought-provoking the answers.



- Approach people of different ages, cultures and professional backgrounds with questions they would be likely to answer. Asking people about their work or interests is a great way to get them to open up.
- Rephrase to avoid confusion, offer examples to facilitate their thinking, give them time to respond if you have to. Mind your manners and your approach so that you don't turn people off or make them suspicious. Remember you are not a journalist and you are not an interrogator.
- Turn to people whose life and work intrigues you. Speak with experts and amateurs alike and don't hesitate to inquire into unfamiliar fields and trades. Take home the stories people narrate to you and share them with your project coordinator.
- Don't assume what the person knows or does not know. Ask for clarification when there's something that doesn't make sense. Look for the value of every answer you receive.
- Ask questions even if you think you know the answer. Your choice and order of questions set the mood for more probing questions. The more specific the question, the more satisfactory the answer. What questions you ask depend on the reason you are asking.

- Choose questions that look to creativity and are appropriate for the age, circumstances and level of expertise of the people you approach. Modify and make your questions specific; ask exactly what you want to know and help the process by offering a personal example.
- Create pleasant conditions so that you both enjoy the talk. Ask directly what you wish to know and don't make people feel they are wasting their time.
- Get past distractions (noise, phone interruptions, and irrelevancies) and tune into the message, the moral from a story, the solution to a problem, the consequence of a decision. Ask for examples, a source to run to if you need further guidance.
- Avoid turning a friendly encounter into an interrogation. There is no need to neither put pressure nor appear pushy and nosy. People are happy to talk about themselves so long as you keep your conversations relaxed and offer some of your own personal tidbits in return. Ask people if you are free to borrow their ideas or if you can reference them.

Share the takeaway from the activity at your next session. Your creative co-author may just help you interpret and realize things you may have missed.

Just as eagerly as you look for information and your curiosity levels rises, so does the interest in what you plan to do with the information.

#### **When you go around looking for answers:**

- You might just get a question about what you are doing. If you find yourself tempted to tell them exactly what you are planning for your book practice restraint.
- If you are the one asking the questions, prepare what to say when people want to know why you are asking. Have a plan or an answer ready for busy-bodies

who may also question your motives and go further along into what you plan to do with the information.

It's not easy to contain your enthusiasm when you are writing a book. Know what your response will be when friends and acquaintances ask what your book is about. Be careful not to give away too many details about your project.

Take care of the digital footprint you leave behind. Protect the resources and content of your book. Use discretion when you share ideas and finds on your social media, sites you contribute content to or personal blogs.

### **Sources: Your everyday heroes**

When you want to know something, it's best you go straight to the source. You and your partner in creativity are a constant supply of valuable advice and information to each other. It's important you trust sources that offer you more than common sense advice and content. Learning to evaluate your sources early in the project stages will enable you to approach later tasks with greater confidence.

Turning to a variety of sources enables you to form a more objective point of view and come into new and revealing bits of information. Seek out formal knowledge from scientific studies and publications, books, journals, newspapers, magazines and trusted internet sites.

Just as well there are informal sources you have access to on a daily basis. Read about your main interests online, sign up for newsletters from trusted sites. There's people, places, and then there is you and your experience that you could draw from.

**Formal or informal sources of information****School**

textbooks    courses    assignments    projects    collaborations  
lectures  
books    notes    extracurricular activities    presentations  
sports teams

**People**

teachers    tutors    mentors    family    classmates    colleagues  
neighbors  
team mates    club members    speakers    lecturers    presenters    hosts

**The Internet**

sites with specific content    blogs    social media forums    videos  
podcasts  
video conferencing    ads    webinars    lectures    e-learning courses  
newsletters

**Media**

television    radio    newspapers    magazines    comics    crosswords

**Daily life**

transactions    interactions    stories you hear    situations you experience

**What do you ask yourself?**

Use a different approach to evaluate your sources of information. For example, is it a person, a book or an object and what kind of ideas do you draw from each of them.

- What and how will a particular source contribute to my project?
- Why is a source easily accessible or inaccessible to me?
- What or whom is the source most suitable for?
- Who are the people most interested in it?
- What is it that I don't know about the source?
- What other sources are there like it?
- How can I use this source?

What sources do you use for your book project?

- personal knowledge and information
- personal and professional experience
- personal notes and collections
- books, press, the internet
- history, tradition (folklore)

What other research tools do you need?

- dictionary
- reference books
- technical books

*SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 1*

For a fun-filled creativity session for two:

- Do like celebrities and have some serious creative fun answering a famous questionnaire. Look for famous creativity questionnaires and surveys.
- Using these questionnaire models, build on that experience and create a fun set of questions together.

*SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 2*

Try out your interview skills with the following questions, until you come up with your own set:

- What aspect of creativity would you like people to understand?
- What are some creative activities you most enjoy doing alone and/or with others?
- What are the challenges you meet in your work or personal life and how do you deal with them?
- What is the greatest motivating force for you?
- What's your next creative goal?

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 3**

Create a questionnaire to help you with your research. Use the sample to get you started:

1. When searching online or other sources do you look for –
  - a. Encyclopedic knowledge and abstract concepts
  - b. Practical tips and guidance to problems and topics of interest
  - c. Strange but mind-provoking tidbits
  - d. Other.....
2. What is one thing you'd like to see a change in?
  - a. Personal life
  - b. Professional life
  - c. Social life
  - d. All of the above
3. Which two things would you like to acquire in the future?
  - a. Happiness
  - b. Knowledge
  - c. Wealth
  - d. Job security
4. What do you believe will help you get it?
  - a. Education
  - b. Connections
  - c. Experience
  - d. Personal effort and development
5. What are your sources of inspiration?
6. What is one dream which is still unattainable despite your efforts?
7. What is holding you back from making that dream come true?
8. Along with creativity what other things would you like to learn?



# Creativity Pedal to Creative Metal

## Multiple paths to creative discovery

Thinking critically helps eliminate doubts and insecurity about matters that you take into your own hands. Up and down the winding road to writing your book, there are decisions to be made just as there are problems to be solved. The decisions you make -alone or together- will continuously transform the project and strongly affect you and the team. Thinking critically helps eliminate doubts and insecurity about important decisions you will be taking down the line.

You've already made some important decisions about committing to the project and topic you will be pursuing. But there will be decisions to be made at every turn just as there are problems to solve. Here are some more opportunities in the project that will get you to think critically and creatively:

Make the right decisions	Solve problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• which people to approach</li><li>• which partner does what</li><li>• what subtopics to include</li><li>• which information to include</li><li>• what theme to use</li><li>• what titles to choose</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• find sources</li><li>• manage time</li><li>• organize ideas</li><li>• build skills</li><li>• salvage material</li><li>• proceed with project</li></ul>

If you are not sure what to do, look to how you respond to challenges in your everyday life and apply a comparable solution. A lot of what you do eventually decide depends on different sources, people, and circumstances. Overtime you will get a feel for what information you take from them is valid and how you can use it

towards the project. The following will help you make a calculated/ well-thought out/ sensible decision that concerns the project:

- First get all the information you need about the demands of the project.
- Do a thorough research into related topics to your central idea.
- Evaluate information by comparing what you already know to what you find out.
- Consider material worth keeping for your project and don't waste time over unsupported or commonplace ideas. If, for instance, your research brought up a number of possible sub- topics for your project, how would you use them? Why keep some and not all? Where or how else you can use them if anything should change?

### **Tips**

Setting order and making sense of the ideas, materials, sources, references, etc. you've been gathering can be a daunting task, especially if you haven't done it before, but it's nothing you can't handle.

- Make an outline that will facilitate both partners; develop a preliminary set of titles to prompt you start writing so you can move fast forward with your project.
- Devise a system that works for you; use color, numbers, symbols to code your work and find your way around a maze of information.

Once you accumulate material for the book you will be co-authoring, you will have to make a number of decisions. Here are some questions you might ask yourselves:

- Why choose one writing approach over the other?
- What if I get lost amidst the many paths your project is following?
- What if I can't make heads or tails out of the material?

What works for one person doesn't necessarily work for another. You can be as proactive and as prepared as possible but if problems persist, drastic measures can be used. For the answer to arising questions or problems rethink the sources, symptoms, causes or reasons that brought the problem about. Figure out what the consequences will be if you choose one solution over another.

The lesson to be learned in that is not to doubt yourself and your way of doing things. It's your thinking processes and your experiences that will give you the strength you need to keep going to the next stage. Go with your instinct and if that doesn't work, go back to the point where things got out of hand.

Critical and creative thinking are awesome powers you have but they may await a call to action. Apply them to the project as you do in everyday life in order to enjoy their magical benefits:

- the knowledge that you are a problem solver
- the satisfaction that you put your mind to meaningful work
- the pride that you can solve any thorny problem
- the confidence that you arrive at safe conclusions
- the joy of seeing the idea you envision come to life

There will be many creative challenges ahead and your decisions-individual or joint- will have an impact on the success of your project. Critical and creative thinking, combined or interchangeably, will help you overcome any obstacles on the way.

### **Following the signs back to another creative road**

You set out with a superb idea in mind and then one of you makes another fascinating suggestion. Having to reconsider is a possibility. It's not you that's not making up your mind but rather having to process and incorporate your day to day findings into your project that gives rise to these questions:

- What if our idea turns out to be a dud?
- What if this is not for us?
- What if something escaped our notice?

Reconsidering is necessary if it is to remove any doubts about your decision, your approach, your process, your goals, your outcomes. Don't look upon it as a cause for frustration or disagreement but an opportunity to re-examine the circumstances. Whether because a topic is too broad or too time consuming, it may be necessary to change your topic. Rather than see this as a problem, view it as a chance to find the ideal topic for you.

Some decisions will be spared. Strange coincidences involving a project similar to yours or a publication with the subject matter you are producing may have you drop your topic of choice. Seeing the topic of your choice already published by someone else is not the end of the world.

What with their different background and life experiences, no two people have the same perspective on a topic. If anything, it is a blessing because readers can get an alternative viewpoint and get the best of both worlds. In the event you are so attached to the concept or topic and refuse to let go, you can salvage it. Slightly change your angle and approach, or take a different path within your field of choice or expertise, preferably the one less travelled, and delve deeper into the topic. There will always be something you can add to the original idea even if all has been

said and done. It can be updated, redone, remixed and revamped and you may be the one that makes the difference, so go for it.

If you should discover your idea has been used then it can only mean one thing. It wasn't that unique in the first place and to prove your creative mettle you often have to surpass your own ideas. You are not the only one to come up with brilliant ideas. You may believe you are one of a kind until you realize that "yes!" everyone has equally good ideas. Some daring souls have even managed to realize many of these ideas long before inspiration paid you a visit.

A lack of enthusiasm may also send you both right back to the drawing board for a new selection process. This doesn't come without its disappointments and further delays. It's all part of this project which calls for you to adjust quickly and to persevere. Eliminate some of the pressure by taking a step in the right direction. Here is what you can do to quickly bounce back:

- Re-examine the prospect and make sure you are being true to yourself.
- Present a rough plan and timeframe to use until plans are finalized.
- Take care to answer all the whys and wherefores before you decide.
- Take time to think about the decision and its consequences.

Remember that reconsidering another option may actually be better in the long run.

### *SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 1*

Revisit your selected topic to work out what sub-topics you'll be working on consider the following:

1. Make a list of as many sub-topics you are considering.
  - a. How many sub-topics are you thinking of adding to your book?
2. Focus on the sub-topics that naturally answer the topic
  - a. Do your sub-topics appear as a group or a set of related ideas?
3. Choose a reasonable number for your subject matter.
  - a. What would happen if you added or removed a few from your list?
4. Rate your sub-topics on the basis of must-have and could-do without.
  - a. Which sub-topics are top grade and why?
5. Prioritize. Put your sub-topic in a logical order.
  - a. Can you justify why one sub-topic precedes the other?

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 2***

Are any books or articles on blogs remarkably close to what you are planning on writing? If so, great news. You now have a great starting point.

1. What makes it so similar? What's so different?
2. Consider the creative value of your work as you compare similar projects.
3. The focus on the area of interest. Would you narrow it down or broaden it?
4. The approach to the topic. Would you go more traditional or go over the top with it?
5. The number and essence of the sub-topics. Would you say what matters in a fewer words or pages?

The appeal/ suitability of the theme. Would you choose familiar over futuristic concepts?

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## **Weaving Work and Bliss in Your Creativity Sessions**

### **Creative revelations**

Creativity sessions will foster a successful collaboration and project. These fiery meetings are a means for the team to remain motivated. Through the exploration of each other's personal creative work and ambitions, creativity sessions also go a long way into building strong bonds.

Purposeful creativity sessions are the glue that holds your team and the project together. They are the break in the routine, the establishment of trust, the happy hour you look forward to each week. The discussions about anything and everything, the checking of facts and figures, the stories you exchange will become part of the fabric of your book.

There's no need to resort to expensive means to have fun and talk creativity. Sitting around your kitchen table or a quiet corner at a nearby café drawing up your project strategy will do just as well. Be self-reliant and seek out inexpensive means of recreation and outings.

Give new meaning to your game nights and your weekend hangouts by preceding or following them with thoughts of creativity. Devote your early sessions to creating your unique culture and building rapport. Fill each other in on your day to day challenges and things will take their course.

From the beginning to the end of your project, different and meaningful occasions will bring you together to enter yet another creativity discussion. Sometimes brief and others too long, often to celebrate and at times to console, these creativity sessions are absolutely the best part of the project.



Depending on the goal and purpose of these meetings, some examples of various types of sessions are:

- *initial sessions* to get to know each other better and see if you make a good match
- *creativity sessions* to organize your project, exchange information and develop skills and confidence
- *brainstorming sessions* to fire up interesting discussions and eye-opening analysis
- *impromptu sessions* that are a natural consequence of your activities or chance meetings
- *emergency sessions* when either party is in a jam or the project at risk
- *celebratory sessions* to mark special occasions, small successes and future endeavors
- *reconsidering sessions* to make agreements and take decisions
- *wrap up sessions* to take care of the last details and to see the project through

These get-togethers are meant to prevent insecurity and chronic habits from affecting you to the point of giving up. Meeting regularly works against fear, frustration and procrastination. It's easy for these sessions to turn into heated debates and conflicts of egos. Telling your side of the story and justifying your way of thinking, as well as hearing your partner's side and justification, enables both of you to build tolerance and an understanding for other people's truths.

Weekly creativity sessions are an opportunity to learn from each other. It's important to understand that you don't necessarily have to be, think alike or agree on everything. At times, what seems to be a simple and trivial matter to one turns out to be a complex problem for the other.

You get together to plan your next activity, to inspire and motivate each other to act upon the plan you develop as you go. The time you spend together is an investment in creative fun, friendship and learning and you get to decide how it's done.



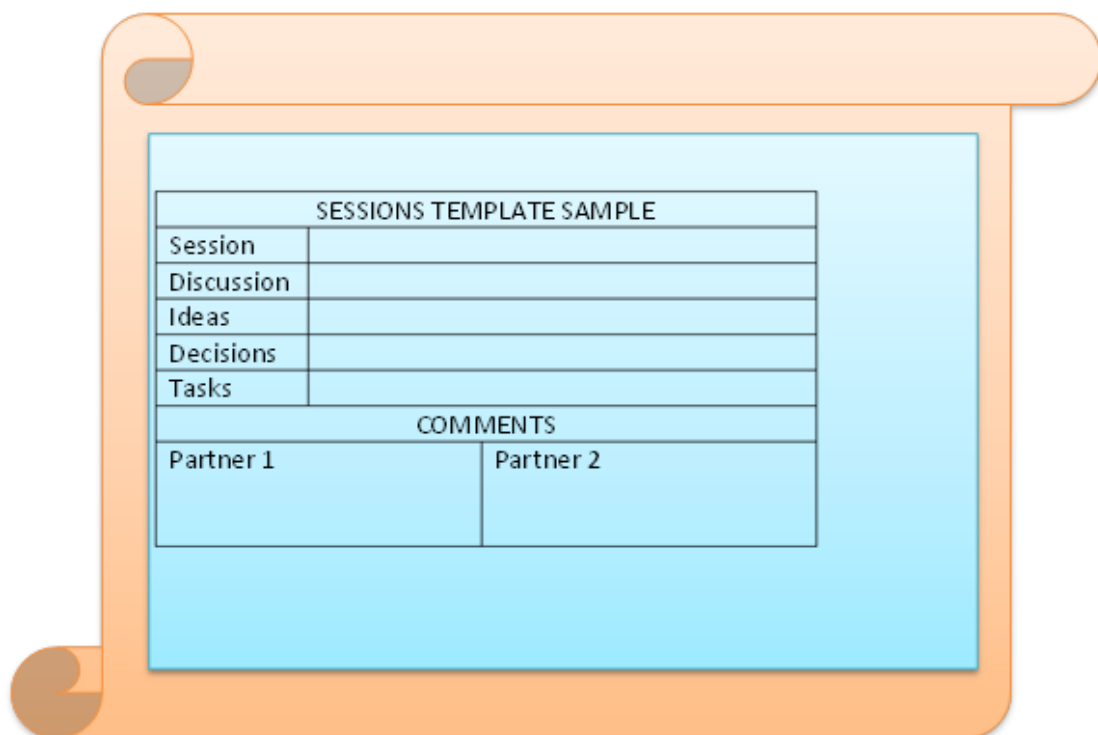
### **Tips for your sessions**

- Arrange a distinct time for your sessions.
- Choose from a variety of places to hold your get-togethers.
- Have a list of topics to cover from week to week.
- Welcome and record new ideas, suggestions and questions.
- Decide how formal or informal you want these sessions to be, how often you meet, the topics you take up, who gets to keep records and what methods work best.
- Whenever you get together for your project, set a few moments aside to come up with your own ideas, compare notes and then generate some more ideas together.
- Exchange and discuss completed work and ask for comments and feedback.
- Respond to problems or disagreements if there's a decision to be made.
- Measure your progress before setting new assignments.
- Schedule next sessions, outings, tasks, deadlines.
- Reschedule missed sessions or welcome last minute invitations

Despite your otherwise important tasks and prior arrangements, these sessions are proof of your commitment. The joint planning from week to week is not in vain. Without such an arrangement, your time might be wasted on some trivial task.

Instead you are spending time co-creating something meaningful and enjoying the company of your co-author and engaging in:

- Recreational activity
- Inspiring talks and stories
- Purposeful discussion
- Idea generation and analysis
- Skill building and practice
- Material preparation and planning



SESSIONS TEMPLATE SAMPLE	
Session	
Discussion	
Ideas	
Decisions	
Tasks	

COMMENTS	
Partner 1	Partner 2

### Secrets of successful sessions

This scheduled interaction should resemble play rather than work. Having a standard time and day will work well so that you arrange your schedule accordingly but since it's not always possible to hold someone to their word, welcome a change in time and routine.

Set up your next rendezvous at a different venue from week to week. A change in day and time will help as well because you will get to see what the other creative half does. How about turning your lunch date into a session for creativity?! A midday meeting will do well but also try out a late evening session; often, variety works best.

Give your creativity sessions a real purpose. Why not take your party of two to your favorite café or restaurant or even during the drive to and from the movie theatre? Liven up your discussions by bringing a few things along - a story or an experience from your past, a controversial topic, a problem to solve, a present concern and a vision for the future. Come in with your props and suggestions or use questions as prompts to get you started.

Don't hold back your ambitions. Thrilling statements and stunning revelations transpire during your sessions. Talking about your creative accomplishments and dreams come to prove you are a precious find for your partner in this creative collaborative project. Talk about it, record it, map it, sketch it; you're good so long as you save it. A lot of what emerges during your sessions will be blended into your book.

You can also hold your sessions at home with the partner hosting choosing a particular theme for that session. Surprise your creative partner and incorporate fun and play into your meetings as well. Dress up for the occasion and decorate accordingly. Set up to watch a relevant film together, read a poem, share a story or invite a special guest who can enlighten you on the subject.

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY -1***

Use this guide to develop your team's creative itinerary. Choose the suitable venue and that will ensure your team gets plenty of action but don't forget that it's always subject to change.

	AIM	PURPOSE INTEREST	VENUE
1	Recreational	Fun Project	Cafe
2	Cultural	Friendship Collaboration	Museum
3	Social Events	Inspiration Topic Related Matters	Talk/Seminar
4	Courses	Skill-building Related Matters	Workshop
5	Community	Experimenting Learning Matters	Library

Now choose the theme, purpose and venue for your team and complete the list.

6	.....	.....	.....
7	.....	.....	.....
8	.....	.....	.....
9	.....	.....	.....
10	.....	.....	.....

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY -2***

What happens at the meeting stays with the team.

- Who will be in charge of your Creativity Bank?
- How often would you have a session and where would you hold them?
- How much time and what topics will you take interest in?
- What could you do or bring to make your sessions fun?

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY -3***

If you were to report on your latest creativity session, what headline would you choose to describe it?

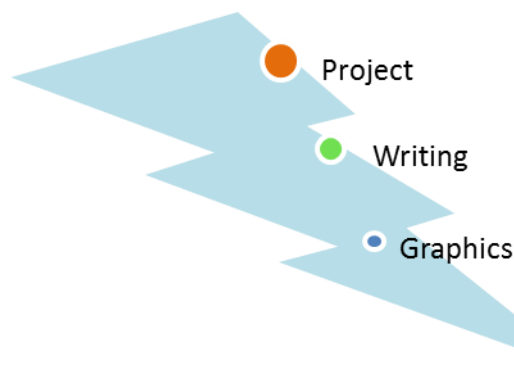
- What question got you thinking about it?
- What comment created mixed feelings?
- What topic of discussion is still lingering on your mind?

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## Becoming an Idea Machine

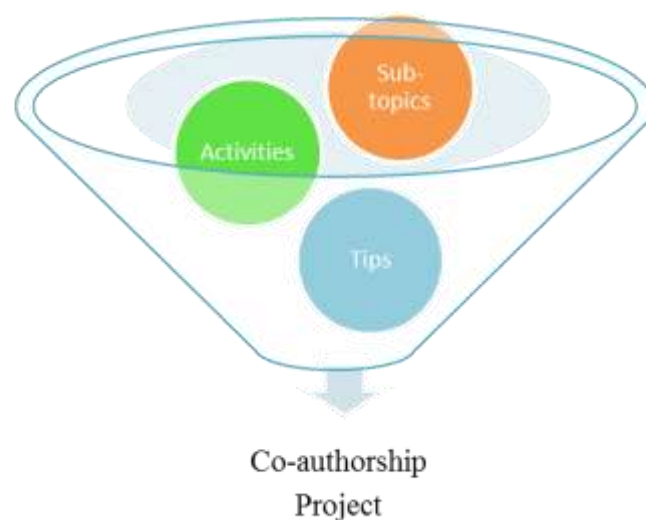
### Go for the bigger ideas

With your dynamic creativity sessions in progress, it's a matter of time before you realize that you are thinking up creativity ideas like one lean mean idea machine. Focus on your area of interest and you will begin churning out volumes of ideas. Ask a question and see how many brilliant ideas begin to fill pages and pages of your notepads. Keep thinking about how to approach a topic and you will be rewarded with not one solution but a number of alternatives. Before long, your creativity bank begins to overflow with the extraordinarily bright ideas you are generating.



However many great ideas you have, there is always room for more in this project. There is no saying where and when all the ideas you accumulate will be used but one thing is for sure. You will find a way to apply them whether you use them in this co-creative venture or your next ones. Look inside and outside your creativity team for ideas. You will find answers, ideas, solutions and alternatives to them in unusually surprising, places. There is neither a right time nor place to come up with answers to questions your project poses. Start the practice of idea generation until it becomes an effortless and fun pastime.

Develop a readiness for retaining your ideas regardless of when and how they arrive. Have a system to write them down and to categorize them so that they are not forgotten and so you can them where and when they are really needed. There are ideas that pour out impulsively, those that need their time to develop and then there are those that come out of the blue to save the day. Some ideas are right on spot and can be put right to use and others slightly out of focus. All ideas are welcome, however common or out there they are. No idea is of less value but if you have plenty of just good ideas, you can certainly come up with even better ones. Just as well there are no ideas in excess because all ideas can eventually prove to be extremely helpful.



### **Where do you get ideas for your project?**

Both partners can bring great ideas to the project by relying on themselves and also everything and everyone around them. Between the two of you, your project will benefit from a volume of great ideas. Invest in the pursuit and discovery of fine and novel ideas.



Here are some doors you can open up if you wish to become a masterful idea generator:

- Cross over into a new field. Keep your focus on your area of interest for your project, but also broaden your knowledge by taking an earnest interest in what people do in other fields. Start close to home and learn the ins and outs of family members and friends' occupations. What line of work are they in? What is important about their line of work? What problems do they come across? How do they solve them
- Associate a field, a person, an activity with another. Since you are delving into the lives and professions of loved ones and beyond, compare and contrast your experience with theirs. Figure out where your fields of interest meet? What do you have in common? Are there similarities in your approach to people or processes? How could your knowledge help them improve? How could you benefit from their experience?
- Observe everyone including yourself as you about your daily life and work. Work on observing one thing at a time, one day at a time so that you can obtain some information and material that you can really use. Approach the subjects of your observations scientifically; do it for a period of time, be systematic, record what you see, draw conclusions.
- Join clubs, teams and volunteer schemes. While the primary purpose is to have fun or to do good, getting involved with different groups and teams serves another purpose. People will inspire you if you are a curious and a sincere listener. They start talking and a current of ideas follows. Turn your encounters with people into a hobby and take delight in their stories. The rush and volume of ideas as you reflect on them later will surprise you. Ask for advice and people will give you some pointers. Discuss some plans and they'll freely share their ideas about exciting

things to do and places to go. Pay attention to what friends are enthusiastic about; these references are likely a lead you want to follow.

➤ Dig up stories. While the locals can be a great source of inspiration, travelling places and speaking to people with a different mindset and customs will enable you to make more connections and come up with more ideas. That said, you don't need to go far to observe or talk to people with a different perspective. When you do meet people in your travels, what are they doing differently? How are they coping with certain problems that all people have in common?

➤ Read anything you can get your hands on. Everything from the flyer handed to you in the street to the academic article is a piece of the puzzle. For you to figure it out, all you have to do is realize that there is value in the messages people send through their writing. If all you've been reading is a particular news agency or blog, change your ways. Do some serious research and find a site or a blogger that does not deal in topics or issues you usually read or know much about.

➤ Take a real and renewed interest in your work. If you keep thinking and saying you have done it all and been everywhere, you are depriving yourself of fresh new opportunities. If you want to get the idea machine rolling welcome problems and challenges and not only in your line of work. Other people's problems are a source of inspiration calling your idea generation skills into action. Take note of questions, requests, problems, doubts and work out answers and alternatives. Keep honing your idea-generating skills until detecting problems and finding solutions becomes your favorite pastime and builds you a reputation as a no-nonsense problem solver.

**What is it that makes you run out of ideas?**

- *Changing times* - What's gold today turns to dust tomorrow. Certain ideas need to materialize quickly because they don't pass the test of time. If all you do is collect ideas so you can use them at a later time, you might just find time has surpassed them.

- *Misusing them* - You may burn a brilliant idea about a project or a book if you use it for the wrong purpose. For example, you can misuse a grand idea for a book if you use it to write a post or an article in your blog. In the same way, you can stretch an idea to make it fit a bigger and better purpose. That is sometimes a good idea can be expressed in a small paragraph and cannot be stretched into a chapter.

- *Overusing them* - A signature topic or an appealing idea in your project or writing can easily suffer and lose its impact if it is so repetitive or recurrent in your work.

- *Oversharing them* - Lend your friends your ideas and you will soon have none to use towards your project. In fact, your idea may appear in their book or project before yours does. Especially in projects involving two or more people, the ideas generated and collected from the group cannot be discussed with others.

- *Squandering them on trivial projects* - Great ideas can be diminished to nothing if all you do is waste them in small daily projects. No one will be able to experience its probable positive impact and appreciate its value.

- *Not sharing them* - While oversharing drains you and your team from noteworthy ideas, that is not to say you can't help out a friend with advice for a project or an idea for a theme for an event.

- *Distancing yourself from your interests* - If you distance yourself so much from a project that you stop thinking about it, those moments of inspiration will soon cease to occur. Even if you have to take a break due to circumstances you simply can't

help, don't forget the commitment you make to the project and to the team. Continue looking for good ideas and don't give up your brainstorming.

- *Not using alternative sources* - However rich with resources your creativity source is, it can be limiting. Be on the lookout for ideas outside your norms. If you don't know where to look, ask around and you will be led to fresh sources to draw inspiration from.

- *Using them in your routine and as result underappreciating them* - You may make things look easy because you all you have is great ideas. But that may not allow you to appreciate how your ideas contribute value to your project.

- *Limited brainstorming* - Last on this list but most important is brainstorming. It's what keeps you connected to your co-authorship project and by making it part of your day and your weekly creativity sessions you will fuel your book from the start to its finish. What it comes down to is that when you need good ideas for any stage of your co-authorship, you have to ask yourself questions and note down as many answers as you can. It's an excellent way to sharpen the mind and can turn into a fascinating game if you brainstorm together with your future co-author. Hold on to records of your own or joint brainstorming sessions; they are pure gold for your project.

Brainstorming Takeaways:	
•	.....
•	.....
•	.....
•	.....

### What are the consequences of drying up and running out of ideas?

- Reduction in productivity which delays the project indefinitely
- Abandoning your project and destroying your relationship
- Destroying useful and sensitive information that fails to serve its purpose

- The cycle of information is broken and completing the project becomes impossible

### **How can you deal with the problem?**

- Change the balance between relationships – work - project
- Learn where, when and how to use your ideas effectively
- Check leaks (who you trust your ideas with)
- Develop a system for using ideas as they are conceived
- Use snippets, not chunks, and save the rest
- Reduce pressure on yourself to outdo yourself

**Can we use this idea ? How?**

**Is this the best we can do?**

**Do we both agree on it?**

**What happens if we don't use it?**

### **How do you identify a good idea?**

- You can find a close, or remote, association with your project – e.g. it may provide an answer to a question of yours, or be the alternative you have been looking for.
- It aligns with your core values (team's and personal), your interests and goals for the project. If it's not talking to your heart and soul, it's not meant for you to use. Good ideas do not force you to compromise your ideals.

- Your team already has the resources needed, or has a way to get access to them, and can apply the idea with relative ease (even if you are required to learn some new skills)
- When assessing it, it becomes obvious that the opportunities it offers are rewarding enough and outnumber any difficulties. For example, it fills a void, or it's an idea that can be expanded and used in multiple areas of the project.
- It helps you grow as an individual and as a team because neither partner has dealt with nor approached it before. You can see at least one way your team, your project, you personally, or your future readers will benefit from it.

Rate your ideas from the big picture down to the last particle.

Do your ideas have a mark of quality? Use the table below to rate them.

Assign your ideas a grade from high to low.

What made you think of it or who inspired you?	
Does it fit the project/theme like a glove?	
How is it a necessary part of the body of the project?	
Does it have a supportive and/or functional role?	
Can you justify or defend its presence in your project?	
Will it stand up to time?	

***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY***

Where do great ideas go at the end of the day? If you have one or more ideas cross your path, don't let them go. Make sure you note them down some place and take a few minutes each day to ask yourself:

How could you incorporate your new idea into your future book?

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## **Your Creativity Bank**

### **Your pot of gold**

On those fine days when you have inspiring ideas and produce material you can use towards your book, save everything right away in your creativity bank. Record label and file new entries as you generate them. Write down everything, nothing goes to waste. Don't put it off for a later time as valuable information might be forgotten or lost. Write down everything; nothing goes to waste. Draw up a table and divide it into three columns, one for week, topic and material you are to produce. Record notes from your meetings, your joint brainstorming sessions as well as your personal reflections, tips, diagrams.

Take notes of the exchanges with your partner, what you learn, hear or discuss about the topic from day to day. Keep your notes headed and grouped for future reference. Use titles such as Observations, Discussions, Ideas, Thoughts and write everything clearly and concisely; you may not be using your notes for days, months, if not years later.

Keeping records is vital to the success of your collaborative work because it helps you manage the project and follow up on its history. Keeping records also helps you with future goal setting and increases your awareness of the project, so that you can check whether you're going the direction you've set to go.

Organize records and have them easily accessible, so both of you can review your work from time to time. This also helps you avoid or foresee mistakes and check what has worked and what hasn't. You can highlight problem-areas and either find a solution or change plans.

Your records ought to be as complete, detailed and as accurate as possible. Write down everything said, learnt, done. Some of these will prove useless for this



particular project but a useful source for another future project. In other words, records kept often prove valuable for thinking ahead.

The time you devote to keeping records depends on how important the particular records are for the joint venture. This means you do not devote the same time to all aspects/topics of your work – it's up to you to decide, but it has to be a joint decision. You can alternate roles keeping records at different stages of your project, and as it evolves. Don't forget to re-evaluate what's important to keep/put down in paper and what's not.

### **Tip**

The partner acting as creative project coordinator can form a shorter list –a table of contents in a manner of speaking–by combining related topics and activities. This will expedite the process and you can use the titles you use as writing prompts.

### **What records to keep:**

- emails and all handwritten notes, messages, reminders to yourself and partner
- emails and correspondence with third parties for project related matters
- entries in your calendar, diary and daily log, tasks folder and sessions slips
- invitations, lists of tasks, proposals, extra activities
- links, bookmarks and references to sources
- books, newspapers and magazine cut-outs and promotional materials
- links of relevant articles, sites and blogs to writing
- popular and frequently used expressions and proverbs
- excerpts from books and articles with inspiring content
- articles and stories with moral lessons

- photocopies of articles and book extracts
- print-outs and bound notes and manuals
- spreadsheet and presentation (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) documents
- outlines and checklists
- agreements (collaboration/contribution) and ious
- illustrations, tables, diagrams, graphics
- list of quotes, proverbs, phrases, expressions and key words
- expenses receipts and stubs (purchases, note-binding, postage, tickets, admission fees)
- dated receipts of usb, notes and records
- miscellaneous contents in your creativity bank

#### ***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY***

What creative treasures do you have lying around the house that can be rich sources of information for your project?

Where or who can you go to find more creative sources and material?

How do you make sure these treasures aren't just deposited and forgotten in a creativity bank that will keep on growing?

- Start your creativity bank with information and material you already possess. As your first deposit, use items of interest, articles, photos, notes you have saved over time.
- Next, look through books, magazines and other cherished collections that can be used as material/sources of information for your project.
- To further enrich your creativity bank with meaningful sources for your project visit a library or borrow relevant books/photos from close family members.
- Regularly scan the horizon and the internet for crispy new ideas and material.
- Remember to keep an inventory of what you own, what you find and what you borrow making sure you return loaned to you items just as soon as you get what you need from that source.
- Regularly update your inventory and remove (set aside) sources or material that will not be used towards your project.
- Immediately note where and when material/source has been used to avoid confusion and repetition. For example: Used in Ch.2 -Date: 04/15/0000

### **Saving your brilliant ideas**

All ideas -original, borrowed, tried and proven, tried and failed- will find a place in your book if they are reserved on paper or a recording device. Whether some items deserve a mention in your book will be decided during the editing stage. If an idea is too valuable to forget, then again, write it down. Label it, note what it will be used for and safeguard it until you need to use it.

Your notes will help you write a significant part of your book. Together with your drawings, sketches, tables, diagrams, charts, your notes act as a rich supply of prompts. As a natural consequence of the creative activity, ideas, thoughts, reminiscences are bound to come rushing to your head. Be ready for the flood that comes when you least expect it:

- If you are awoken by nudging thoughts in the middle of the night or a if a vision flashes before your eyes first thing in the morning jot it down.
- In a flash? Your mobile phone will save the day. Note it, text it or email it to yourself.
- See or hear something beautiful? Capture unique sights or sounds on your phone camera or recorder.
- Don't forget to jot down your daily musings as you commute or as you wait to see the doctor?

Keep your book notes headed, grouped, clear and concise. Check that notes are legible and that you understand what you write. Your creativity partner is likely to also use these notes so they should be clearly labeled and easy to read, especially if they are handwritten notes.

When you can't write or otherwise record important material, take mental notes.

- To help you remember where your file notes away, form an information chain with regard to object, person, time, place, reason and manner of doing things.
- Summarize a group of notes with a suitable title or expression.
- Look for key words, signs and symbols or mnemonic devices such as acronyms to help you retain the information.

Create your paper and computer folders from the very start to help you get organized when you start your writing. Any items written or produced for the project are accounted for including pictures, diagrams, drawings, maps, etc. Keep exact dates and sources of all the material you collect or produce.

Limit the number of folders on your computer to one in which you keep writing, notes, articles, links, posts, emails, s, photos, videos and recordings from you and your partner so that you don't lose track of them. Use the following sample to help you establish a manageable and easily accessible filing system for all digital records and documents.

<b>OUR BOOK</b> ➡	<b>Partner A</b> ↓	<b>Partner B</b> ↓	<b>Drafts</b> ↓	<b>Graphics</b> ↓
	Writing	Writing	1	Pictures
	Activities	Activities	2	Covers
	Other...	Other...	3	Other...

Always save them in a portable data storage device as an extra copy because your partner will at times want to have a look at the material. Avoid e-mailing sensitive data to each other and if need be, print out a copy of a document you want to look over with your co-author.

Be quick to put away handwritten notes, messages, memos, pictures, drawing in your paper folder. Unlike your computer folders, you can't have a backup of these, so take a picture of them and keep them some place safe.

Transfer and keep all your recorded sessions, pictures and videos in your computer folder. On a regular basis, transcribe all handwritten memos, notes and random thoughts from your notebooks and other sources. Have a box for notebooks, illustrations, arts and crafts, commercial literature, clippings, books, calendars. Keep larger items such as books, catalogues, posters, crafts, souvenirs, tools, materials, in a box or a small trunk. A shoe box will do just fine.

The topic/theme you've decided on for your informational book, the plan for your journey in creativity during the prewriting stage, the challenges and risks, meeting discussions, changing course, finances and other aspects, all have to be written down. Update your records periodically to avoid repeating a task and to eliminate irrelevant items. All your records go through developing and testing too – what was applicable in the beginning of your work may not be any more.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITY**

Even the most brilliant ideas can get lost in a crowd. At the rate you've been saving your ideas, your creative bank can become an overflowing mass of words. Learn to sift through the chunks of creative gold for fine material you can use towards the particular project you are working on.

Lay out all the paper/digital notes and other items.

- How are they related? Find the common denominator.

Example: Party planning

Sort the notes/items according to subject/theme/area.

- Where do they belong? Create categories.

Example: Planning your class/home/office party.

Be moderate and avoid the wear and tear.

- Are there similar notes/ideas.

Example: Planning a summer party at home. Planning an outdoor party.

Set aside general and keep specific information.

- What contains solid advice, clear instructions?

Example: 5 steps to making a piñata.

Find a place for it in your plans/project and label it.

- Where and how can it be used?

Example: Fun activities for children's parties.

# Planning in the Works

## **Your path to creativity**

With your brilliant ideas in hand, you are moving steadily and surely moving on your path to co-authorship. However informally you start out your project, planning is necessary. Do remember though that no plan is fool-proof in a project so get ready to:

- Make a swift change to a new plan if the situation is not helping
- Improvise when you have no plan from one week to the next
- Adopt a combination of plans and choose the one that works for you

Plans can change but the experience will stay. Enjoy it. You don't need to strictly adhere to the plan. An unexpected departure, any emergency that arises will toss your plan out the window. You come into new knowledge and you create as you go.

Any deviation from the plan is an opportunity for you to learn to adjust quickly. Embrace changes and challenges and take them in your stride. Don't let a diversion course prevent you from getting ahead. Follow the new road signs. You may just come across a real find.

The creative project has a dynamic effect and often forces you to reconsider. Planning from week to week makes it easier to define your joint project and makes it easier to change your direction (if a fork in the road is reached). Short term planning helps you:

- Set priorities
- Be more flexible
- Keep track of your progress regularly

- Feel more in control of your work
- Organize your time, your thoughts and ideas, your materials

A good question to answer during your sessions is: “How detailed should our planning be?” Answering this question gives you a clear sense of where your project will be heading as well as how free each one of you could be with creative ideas that will come to you later on (and which, of course, are not in your present plan).

Get your plan on paper. Track and collect everything you need for your plan. Plan for short and specific activities you plan to engage in at a steady pace (remember the tortoise beats the hare).

PLANNING YOUR BOOK	
STAGE #:	
PURPOSE:	
TASK:	
SKILLS TO BUILD:	
MATERIALS YOU NEED:	
TIMEFRAME:	
RESULTS YOU EXPECT:	

While planning, it is a good idea to make “to do” lists as well as “will do” lists, as each kind has a different functionality. Relate them to a specific date or time –have

open discussions with your partner about how long you think it will take to complete a stage in your project. See your how flexible and available you both are.

Take measures because there will be unexpected twists and turns, however well-prepared you are. When planning a stage consider your partner's work level of skill. You might want to add in between activities and/or stages. You might discover that you need to learn from or teach each other about the topic in question. Your partner may well need to develop or improve a skill before you get started.

Foreseeing what may be missing before you get started enables you to prepare adequately. Incorporate the need for skill building into your planning. Arrange your next joint activity accordingly. For example, sign up for a writing or graphics workshop for one or for both of you.

Don't panic thinking a break in your plans will take your joint project off course. Unexpected interruptions are, in essence, opportunities. Projects often get a new life after a long break as new skills are gained and new knowledge is shared between team members.

The real challenge is to keep focused on a plan when you get side-tracked or make amazing creative leaps from stage to stage. You are NOT spoiling but altering the plan to bring in exciting new knowledge into your collaborative project. Remember, you each have your own way of doing things – your approach and response to challenges is different.

It is reasonable to complete some stages faster than planned while for others you will reach your destination. Start afresh and work out something for emergency cases such as when:

- the plan you have fails to ....
- you need to rethink your approach to...



- you are not ready and need time to grasp a concept
- another stage has to be added to better prepare you for the next step
- an unexpected departure or event forces you to delay or expedite things

If you don't want to work with a plan, then you can improvise and let the process guide you, but this can easily take you off track. Meeting a weekly challenge is only advisable when the project coordinator is experienced with such collaborative creative projects.

Purpose	Activity	Individual Task
Get to know each other	Reflect on and discuss your creative passions	Jot down your thoughts/beliefs
Create a vision	Define creativity goals for yourself and for your team	Draft an informal agreement between partners
Increase your perception	Observe the world around you/ take an interest in people, trends and developments around the world	Note your feelings/discoveries impressions /findings
Plan your course of action	Choose roles/divide tasks	List your creativity ideas/ interests
Find the topic you love	Short-list your ideas/ compare and contrast each topic	Find trusted sources and preferred topics
Generate and ask questions	Interview people with creative pursuits.	Brainstorm and explore your ideas further
Decide on a topic that excites you	Propose and create a list of sub-topics	Find trusted sources to go to for information
Organize your creativity bank	Collect topic-related	Label and prioritize your material.
Improve on your skills	Do an online tutorial/ Participate in a workshop	Create drawings/graphics/ Take pictures

Fun filled evenings, brief meetings and lengthy calls for planning are enough to leave you with more material to juggle than you can handle. There are both theoretical as well as practical concerns. Before it all vanishes or becomes too overwhelming, develop a system to manage the information and tasks from hereon.

- Decide who gets to take and keep records during the planning sessions as well as of anything you create together (Hint: it doesn't have to be only one of you).
- Any planned activity needn't be so demanding that you have to make special time for. If you are not interested in an activity, suggest one you wouldn't mind participating in.
- Remember schedules have to be flexible as well as stretchable. There's no need for strict timetables and deadlines just yet.
- The time you put into planning sessions is to be respected. Any suggestions or plans you present are to be assessed and not dismissed.
- A half-finished conversation or one that you never find time for can always be carried into the following planning sessions.
- Should you feel that something is beyond your means say so. When there is a task which goes against your own set of rules, by all means, express your concerns.

**When planning for your sessions:**

- Draft a rough outline of topics that relate to your proposed project.
- Look up information on the topic you want to focus on.
- In deciding on a topic, consider your partner's preferences.
- Decide on how you would like to present it.
- Find a creative way to present it.
- Figure out how much time you will spend on it.

Planning sessions will keep you both motivated. Think of them as steps towards achieving your end goal. There are no rules nor rights or wrongs when it comes to what you talk about or plan ahead. Each session is a distinct and unique experience from which you learn and enhance your creativity. Don't be afraid to share.

Are you ready? If so, check that you:

...know what is expected of you and what you expect of yourself	
...dealt with all stresses, obligations and possible distractions	
...reviewed and prioritized the list of proposed activities	
... decided on the topics you will focus on and prepare	
... gathered the information you need for your creativity sessions.	

**Deal with these problems just as they occur.**

- There are bound to be rainy days and droplets of doubt which threaten to ruin your creative setting. Worrying about whether you have what it takes, diminishes your motivation. Introspection and insecurity about your ability to see this project through begin to loom.
- There are many feelings that will emerge and you'll have to face and overcome-selfishness, self-doubt, mistrust, suspicion, curiosity and such. It's easy to mislead your partner and have them believe all is well. Not voicing your concerns puts the project at risk but there's nothing a heart to heart conversation can't fix.
- Get organized, so you won't waste your time (set project tasks to be completed within a week or month). See what resources are available for task management. Decide who will carry out a particular task. Break down a difficult task and consider which task is "urgent" or "important"- being both makes it top

priority. Define “complex/difficult” and “simple/easy” tasks. Ask for or offer clarification before intimidating tasks. Praise small accomplishments/good ideas.

- Check your partner’s prior knowledge or experience with a given task. Reinforce areas you find your partner needs help with. Offer prompts, give examples.

- Distinguish individual from joint tasks. Create a task-dependency chart. One task often depends on the completion of another. Have “Pre-tasks” prepare the road to the Main Plan of the project. Break down tasks to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Slowly but surely, this method opens the road to the Main Plan of the project.

- Set priorities for your tasks. Place them on a timeline and discuss your progress from session to session. Work on your tasks even on lazy days and do the work you’d rather avoid. Don’t let other people misuse your time. If you can’t complete the whole task then work on what you can.

#### ***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY***

If you can’t plan, perhaps it’s because you still don’t have a clear picture of what you will be creating. Work on your vision so you can set about reaching your goals one after the other.

What do you wish to see at the end of the project?

- Draw up as detailed a plan of what you want to see.

Can you see the whole picture?

- Note what is keeping you from seeing the whole picture.

How far into the project can you see?

- What parts of it are visible/ within your range?

What do you need to gain clarity about what lies ahead?

- List of items you believe will help you gain a better perspective.

What or who can help you strengthen your vision of the project?

- For a better view, have a set of questions to go over with your partner.

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## Flying Together and Flying Solo

### **Creative fun on your own**

While partnering up provides a safety net for your book project, you have to set time aside for self-directed learning and explore new areas for creativity. Tending to your personal engagements is necessary for both of you; when the time comes to co-author your book, you need to be able to work as a team and independently.

You may be thrilled about an upcoming event or performance but not necessarily your partner. A creativity partner may prefer to invest their time in something more important to them. See it as an opportunity to make new friends and meet your future partners in creativity.

When you are in charge of your own creativity initiatives, your confidence soars. Find a creative outlet that is suited to you alone. If it seemed to be out of your reach, it's not any longer. What have you always dreamt about doing but never got round to doing it?

- *Arts and Crafts* - Learn more about new materials and techniques for your craft and organize an art-and-crafts event for new crafters, to exchange ideas.
- *Sports* – Join the rest of the runners in the next event and then find a way to write about it that makes it relevant to what you're blogging about.
- *Travelling* - Take a small trip just outside your city for a day. Repeat that the following weekend. Then prepare a small traveling brochure about the place you've visited.
- *Photography* - Learn different ways of seeing and earn the title of family photographer.
- *Song and dance* - Learn to play an instrument, take singing or dancing lessons.

- *Culinary school* - You have the knack for it. Everybody says so. Would it help your future plans for a book or a show to get some pointers from other experts?
- *Decoration* - Check into an interior design course or join a workshop and find the idea for the next book you will co-author.
- *Restoration* - Once you get all the information you need, and also try your hand on some projects, it's an interesting topic to speak about to children in your local library.
- *Technology* - Want to explore graphics or make the illustrations for your next book? Learn how to edit pictures by signing up for a course.
- *Fashion design* - Who can help you fill your closet with your own designs? Will taking fashion and design courses help you realize your dream of having your own line of clothing sold in stores? And write all about that too.
- *Landscaping* - Learn how to take your inspiration and the materials a step further by attending a seminar with landscaping architecture enthusiasts like yourself. The illustrations alone of the surroundings will make a great book.

### **Finding your creative vein**

Make a list of things you want to know. The following list can help you work out your needs and wants. Break them down into three categories:

"MUST learn"	"NEED to learn"	"WANT to learn"
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

Be prepared to embrace complexity and find the beauty in simplicity. Being able to adjust your behavior to deal with problems, make tough decisions and correct mistakes are secrets to for successful co-authorship. You'll have to overcome your usual inhibitions and fear and sometimes alter your routine to make the partnership work. If you are stuck in standards and rules that limit creativity and get in the way of healthy partnerships, you'll want to become more flexible.

Don't follow common patterns and repeated practices in your creative process. You don't have to use repeated practices when you set out to form your lists or begin writing. Don't copy anyone's style or blindly follow a process that works for someone else. Plan your own outline, ask your own questions and make your own writing plans. You don't have to be told what to write and when you write. You do it when you are motivated, and when you feel you have all that's necessary to write. Try out many approaches to writing, organizing your material and managing your time so you can settle on the one that help you achieve more in less time and express yourself in writing with confidence and in your personal style.

### **Learn from others**

- Find all about your role models cultivated their talent. If their quotes, personal advice and articles published in sites and blogs inspire you, go for it and take what you need.
- Watch interviews of your favorite drama or comedy writers talk about how they succeeded in sharing their life experiences by incorporating them into writing for their shows.
- Turn to an accomplished creative or a friend with special creative pursuits and ask for tips or answers to questions about their methods and techniques.

- Research and turn to well-selected documents, blogs and sites online to learn a skill you'll need. Look for tutorials where creative individuals share their know-how and give you clear instructions on the skill you are building.

### **Do your own thing**

- Develop a comic strip by combining your writing and artistic flair and create a comic character who will get the message across in your posts or future books.
- Write a guest article for a friend's blog or submit an article for publication to a site whose readers are always looking for sound advice.
- If you feel daring enough, enter a writing or artistic competition so you can become familiar with such events and their regulations.
- See how good you are at story-telling for kids.
- Save your memories by starting your autobiography.

### **Participate in new activities**

- Improve a skill, like book illustrating, to use towards your book project.
- Seek out inspired people with commendable passions, wisdom and expertise.
- Study the instructor's expressive language, ways and sources of inspiration.
- Learn to appreciate your peers' ideas and creations and to give feedback.
- Work alongside more experienced and compassionate creatives.

### **Experiment with writing**

- Start a daily journal with all that's happening for your creative project.
- Poke fun at an incident that happened at work in a short play.
- Save a childhood memory in a poem.



- Express the change happening in you in a song.
- Write a short story with you or your child as the hero.
- Write a proposal for a promising new project with your creative partner.
- Welcome and train newcomers in your field in a short booklet or manual.
- Introduce the book you will co-author with a script for a short clip.
- If you want to bring it up a notch, try writing a stage play or a film scenario.

### **Figure out what works**

- Look systematically for people who share your interest in writing and ask about how they cope with problems they encounter in the creative process. Work out how any of their recommended methods can be of use to you and your book project.
- Approach your writing tasks as if you are an expert problem solver. When all else fails, minute-long brainstorms can help you find the solutions to problems that stand in the way of your co-authorship project.

### **Express your creativity and help people out**

- Think up sensational headlines to describe and summarize your day.
- Wrap up your best advice in an article or a post and contribute it to a blog relevant to your field of expertise.
- Write your end of the week or month reflections in an email to your co-author.
- Be a guest writer on a friend's blog before you take on the upkeep of your own site or blog for (school/personal/business/news).
- Reinvent your abandoned blog or embellish the one you've been struggling to keep up to date by focusing on practical stuff this time around.

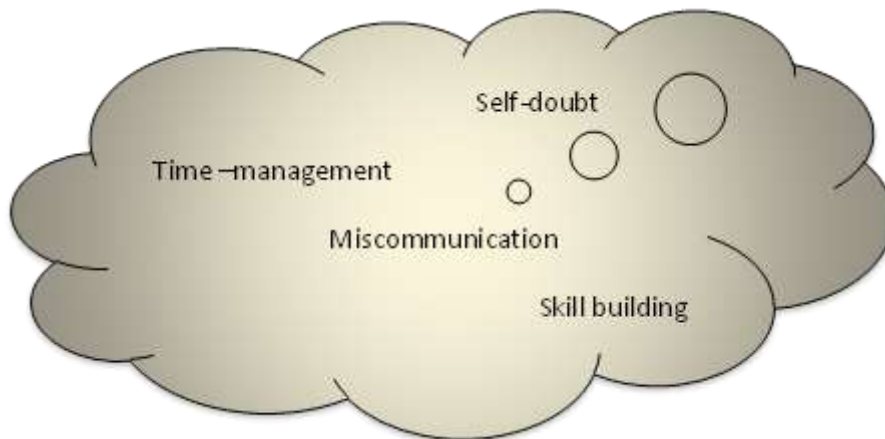
***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY***

Doing something useful for you community will inspire and motivate you to write. Sharing what you know with a wider audience is a way to thank those who helped you get where you are. Lend an idea and you will receive tenfold in return. Embrace your community and its people and volunteer your time and your special quality.

- Help a friend organize a significant event in her life
- Teach, talk to and provide services to people in need
- Decorate the school, community center, club for a special occasion
- Upgrade or repair equipment and furnishings
- Construct props and prepare costumes for artistic endeavors
- Prepare tool kits for special projects and emergencies

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## The Monsters Around The Corner



The project, the team and the newbie writer are bound to lose their way if major issues are not addressed from the start. Mixed priorities are to blame for the panic and frustration created within the team.

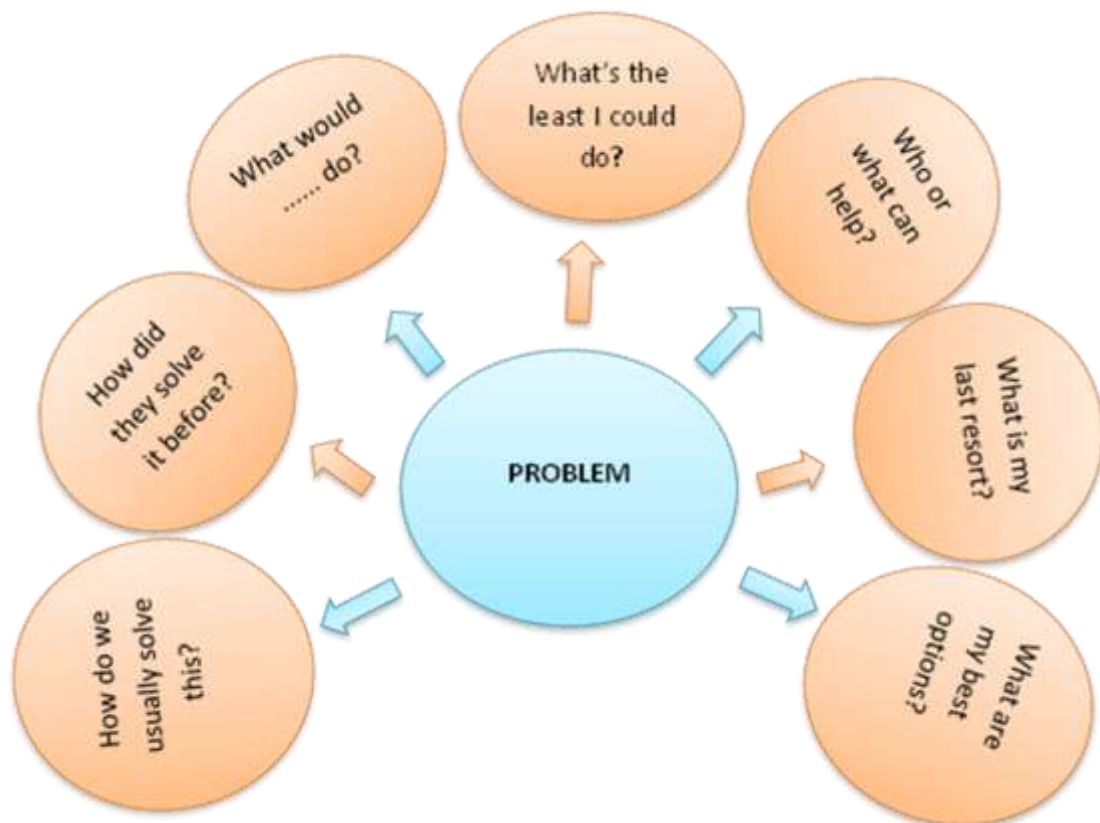
- Project problems due to ineffective coordination.
- Interpersonal problems resulting from miscommunication.
- Personal problems owing to lacking confidence and skills.

See what options you have and choose the better one for your circumstances. If that doesn't work, choose the next best solution to correct the problem and adjust your ways as many times as you have to.

Here's something to think about to help you find your way out of the woods:

- Look at the challenge in the eye and do on the spot brainstorming.
- Ask yourself lots of questions to figure out why the problem keeps resurfacing.
- Recall how you dealt with similar problems or situations in the past.
- Don't be coy. When you get an offer for help, take it!
- Change the conditions, order, place or time to do your tasks.

- Name a problem differently to understand it better and sort it out.
- Break the problem down into little pieces and solve each part separately.
- Try some reverse engineering. Start from the end and work your way back to the source.
- You may already have what's missing. Keep going back to your notes.
- Take a creative break or find another creative outlet to find inspiration.



### Can you trust your collaborator?

Teaming up with a friend can make or break the relationship. Overcoming the fear of sharing and over-sharing wisdom is a matter of confidence and you will develop it in the passing of time. Just as you seek friendship and support so does your creativity partner. You give your share but you also get a lot back in return.

Let the common vision and the values you both share help you overcome mistrust. The trust you seek in your partner will break and glue back many times

before you discover that it is trust in yourself and your abilities that matters more than our trust in others. Give your creative buddy and the rising team the shadow of doubt. When you get past your team's creative threshold you will be eager to keep moving ahead.

Even if a partner has the best intentions, there is no way they can convince you to trust them from the start. To work alongside someone who will enable you to reach your creative potential is an opportunity which doesn't come around often. Whether you have initiated this project or you have been invited to join there is only one thing that you can be certain of; such collaborations will reinforce your creativity and self-trust, which will result in greater self-respect and self-confidence.

Following is a short list of "Trust-benders" you need to be on the lookout for:

- Playing on your partner's fears and undermining their efforts
- Saying or claiming one thing and meaning or doing another
- Not appreciating the give and take and instead taking but not reciprocating
- Not delivering on your promises for help, support and consistency
- Breaching your partner's confidence by revealing personal facts
- Giving away or selfishly using what is considered 'team property'
- Not doing your share and dumping all the responsibility on your partner

To safe-guard your collaboration, here is another short list of "Deal-breakers" and "Heart-breakers" to avoid:

- Abandoning the project halfway in favor of another without notice
- Rude, insulting, defensive or aggressive behavior
- Assuming the role of authority and allowing your partner no initiative

- Treating your partner as a subordinate or redundant
- Insisting you follow a specific method even if it doesn't work for both
- Forcing your views and allowing outside intervention
- Being inflexible with errors, delays, small failures and emergencies

### **Are you speaking my language?**

You and your creative partner are not alike... and it's what makes all the difference. Diversified thinking will result in a more creative and unique informational book.

However great your vision for this project is, personality clashes are bound to get in the way and you don't want the project to turn into a battle of egos. This is why it is recommended to alternate roles in leading different stages of the project based on what skills you have or need to build.

Each partner is seen as an equal contributor and is encouraged to take initiative. Take a strong interest in the ideas of your partner(s) and try to understand. Ask questions and, if needed, go into details. Welcome all comments and suggestions for improvement.

Know your strong points and limitations. If being a leader is not your strong point, then lead a stage so you can master it. Take charge when things get tough if you want to learn how to save your team time and trouble. Work out who leads the direction and who the action as you move along from stage to stage.

As a team you need to work in harmony and feel comfortable talking openly about anything that stands in the way of the team's progress. There needs to be consideration for the other's opinions, joint decision making and personal priorities.

Don't disregard skills and knowledge your partner possesses. Put all your skills, resources and tools to good use. Both your opinions and ideas count the same, as they are all helpful in getting ahead. Don't criticize but try to understand why there are opinions and beliefs when it comes to a particular stage or issue and if anything use your reasoning to argue a case.

It's a reality that one understands only that the more you get out of the collaboration, the more you give. The more the associations you make, the more productive you become and eventually, you feel more competent, more fulfilled and happier. Jammed schedules are ok if you enjoy what you're doing.

If you feel that you don't have much to contribute, do an exercise in creative skills appreciation. Retrace your steps by noting down significant moments of your life on a timeline. You might just find out that currently trending skills or activities you excelled in, simply go by another name! Draw a time line and you'll find forgotten talent and accomplishments will spring forth.

#### ***SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 1***

**Collaborating is a constant give and take.**

- Do you have to give back exactly what you get in return?
- Can you return the favor in some other form and at a different time?

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 2**

- **Home -Where did you grow up?**

List all the countries, cities you've lived, and worked in. Describe the best parts of your hometown, the homes you've lived in and don't forget to mention what impressions or memories you still have of them.

- **School -Where did you go to school?**

List all the schools you've attended and your choice of studies. Did any teachers make a difference in your life? Did you get any distinctions or awards?

Given another choice what would your study?) Note your studies and justify the reason you chose to study or do one thing over another (passion, ambition, employment prospects, peer/ family pressure).

- **Work -What kind of work do you do?**

Note the jobs you've had since your school years, the positions you've held and all the duties you've carried out. The best and worst jobs you've had and the reasons why. Given the chance, what profession or trade would you choose for yourself today? What is your ideal job?

- **Interests -What activities were you interested in?**

List hobbies, sports, recreational activities when you were a child up. Which of these do you continue to do or participate in now? Which would you take up again?

- **Travels -Where have you been?**

Remember places you've travelled to, the cultural or other differences and what you learned as a result. Mention the places you've always wanted to visit and say what exactly makes them sound appealing. The places you've visited and destinations you've only dreamed about. What are some things you learned in your travels? What do you do when you travel? What makes you want to travel or what keeps you from travelling?



## Moving on to the Co-Authoring Adventure

### A word of caution

For this project you will need to openly share your notes, thoughts, ideas and feelings with your creativity partner as soon as the pre-writing stage, that is from the time you set out together for this adventure in increasing your creativity, and throughout the whole book-writing process. This exposition makes both of you vulnerable and this is as it should be for creativity to flourish.

However, you must remember that, when you start co-planning and co-writing the book, you are entering into a partnership, which means things may go wrong. Whoever you choose as your partner, *before you reach the point of laying out the structure of your informational book, do not neglect to seek the advice and services of a competent attorney in order (for you and your writing partner) to sign a book co-authoring agreement.* This is necessary even if, when you start writing, neither of you intends to sell the book you will write together, and even if you are co-authoring it with a close friend or family member; or rather, it is absolutely necessary in such a case.

As you set out, both of you may have the best intentions for this collaboration but circumstances change and human reaction to new circumstances is often unpredictable and far from ideal; the new “status quo” may no longer be in favor of your collaborative project. Take action to protect yourself, the project, and your relationship with your creative partner from future disputes and frustration caused by issues such as disagreement on what to do with the book and on financial matters (after the book is written), author credit/copyright, project abandonment by one of the writing partners (for any reason), etc.

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The idea of **Saita publications** emerged in July 2012, having as a primary goal to create a web space where new authors can interact with the readers directly and free.

**Saita publications'** aim is to redefine the publisher-author-reader relationship, by cultivating a true dialogue and by establishing an effective communication channel for authors and readers alike. **Saita publications** stay far away from profit, exploitation and commercialization of literary property.

The strong wind of **passion** for reading,  
the sweet breeze of **creativity**,  
the zephyr of **motivation**,  
the sirocco of **imagination**,  
the levanter of **persistence**,  
the deep power of **vision**  
guide the saita (paper plane) of our publications.

Are you thinking of writing an informational book with a co-author, for the first time? Are you looking forward to a fun, fulfilling experience but don't know where to begin? This is a book full of ideas, thoughts, practical tips and little secrets, as well as other useful information to help you start your creative collaboration journey; consider it as a long, detailed prelude to the actual writing stage.

Unlike other books in the market, it proposes you invest a considerable amount of your time in boosting your creativity before you start writing your book. To reap the fruit of this approach, it takes an innovator's mindset, especially courage and patience.

If you are a writer (or aspire to be one) who likes to explore and experiment with new ways of doing things this may be the book you have been looking for.

