Have you ever gotten an idea and not known how to bring it to life? Or do you need a big-picture view of everything that a project comprises but have a myopic view of the idea? You might feel like you can’t organize the information or that your idea feels too big, too unwieldy, too confusing. Or it might feel too small; you can’t build it out.

Solve these problems with a mind map. This visual-thinking tool explores ideas and concepts graphically and helps you switch from left-brain thinking to right-brain thinking, structure information, and analyze, comprehend, synthesize, recall, and generate new ideas.

Mind mapping uses the power of free association or brainstorming around a concept. That concept lives at the center of a blank page. You then add words, images, or phrases around the central concept. Each lives in its own circle and is connected by lines.

You can use apps or programs to mind map if you like. You also can use a large piece of posterboard and some colored pens or sticky notes, or a whiteboard.

Allow your mind to connect one idea to the next. Let your ideas flow like an electric current, each one lighting up in succession. Then organize the ideas by connecting them with lines and circles or by moving the sticky notes around into clusters of related topics. In this way, you can control the current. Force it to flow in a more logical and useful manner.
Dump Your Ideas

Use a mind map to dump your ideas onto the page. Pick a writing project, and dump all your related ideas—and your thoughts—below.

From there, you can clean up the brain dump by organizing your ideas and thoughts into a mind map.
Create a Brainstorm

Mind maps help you brainstorm. The process activates your brain and your big idea to trigger a downpour of related ideas. Every once in a while, a bolt of lightning shoots through your mind—another great idea generated to bring the original idea to life.

Create a brainstorm for an idea below.
Switch on Your Light Bulbs

Sit in a dark room. Give your eyes and mind a break from all the distractions. Daydream. Meditate. Nap.

Then open your eyes, and allow your mind to play with ideas … or your need for an idea. Wait for the light bulb to turn on.

Write down your light bulb moments below. Don’t filter out the ones you perceive as “bad.” Just jot them all down.

Can you connect any of the light bulbs? If so, draw a line between them.
Mind Map a Book Concept

Below, create a mind map of a book idea. When finished, use the map to help you write a detailed table of contents.
Mind Map an Article Concept

Do you have an idea for an article or essay? Super! Use a mind map to figure out how to start, what content will appear in the middle, and how you will end the piece.

Mind map your essay or article below.
Mind Map a Course or Talk Related to Your Book

Here’s a great way to promote a book, build a platform around a book, develop expert status, or earn some extra income: Produce courses and speeches, training sessions, webinars, or teleseminars based on your work. If you aren’t sure how to get started, try a mind map!

Pick a topic about which you would like to speak. (It should relate in some way to your writing.) This could be a chapter in your nonfiction book, a theme that runs through all your novels, or a “signature story” that relates to how you became published.

Next, use a mind map to brainstorm all the possible information about which you could speak or on which you could train.

Mind map a course, teleseminar, webinar, or speech below.

For example, if you wrote a book about how to achieve goals, you might want to produce a talk or series of webinars on this topic. (You could then turn this talk or series into a course—see my e-book, Authorpreneur, for more information on how to do this.) You might create a first video about why goals are important. The second video could discuss how to set goals. The third could be about how to achieve goals. Before recording each video, mind map the information you would cover. For example, for the second video, you might talk about SMART goals, emotional tie-in, or purpose.
Mind Map Products and Services

You can provide products and services to your fans and followers, such as courses, T-shirts, a podcast, speaking, or coaching.

Below, mind map product and service possibilities. Keep your themes, topics, and expertise in mind as you do so.

Don’t forget to mind map what you have to do to make these monetization methods a reality. That means you must create a to-do list for each idea.

Here’s an example of a to-do list you might put together from a mind map.

**Book** →
- Online course
- Speeches
- Consulting

**Online Course** → **To Do**
- Create curriculum
- Record videos
- Develop members-only site to house course
- Write sales letter and design landing pages
Brainstorm Blog Post Ideas

Your blog is like an animal whose appetite can’t be satiated. It needs to be fed regularly and often. That means you must prepare a constant menu of blog post ideas.

Brainstorm blog post ideas below. Which ones can you cook up quickly to feed to your blog—and your hungry readers? Make sure the dish you prepare is beneficial to your readers!