By writing continuously, you force the edit-crazy part of your mind into a subordinate position, so the idea-producing part can keep spitting out words.

Your best thought comes embedded in chunks of your worst thought. What’s the only way to reliably mine your best thought? Write a lot. Think “quantity.” Think “word production.” Think of yourself as a word and thought factory.

Writing for short, timed periods (normally in ten- to twenty-minute range) concentrates the mind. Deadlines motivate.

Freewriting isn’t writing per se; it’s a means of watching yourself think. Since you’re writing for yourself, you don’t need to spit shine your raw thoughts to please others. All that matters is that you yourself understand your logic, references, word choices, and idiosyncratic ideas.

To open up a word, write down four things:
1. A word for study
2. The generally agreed upon definition of that word
3. Your thoughts on the accuracy of the definition
4. A personal definition that suits your eccentric tastes.

In freewriting always explain to yourself why you think what you think.

Focus-changers are simple questions to ask yourself, in writing, that help you redirect your mind toward the unexplored parts of a situation.

How can I make this exciting?
How can I add value?
What else can I say about this subject?
Why am I at this particular point?
How can I get unstuck?
What am I missing here?
What am I wrong about here?
How can I prove that?
How can I disprove that?
What do I think about that?
If I continue to think that way, what might happen?
What others problems like this one have I experienced?
What solutions can I borrow from past problems that can be applied to this current one?
What does this remind me of?
What’s the best-case scenario?
What’s the worst-case scenario?
What am I doing right?
What am I doing brilliantly?
How can I jump the track?
Which strengths of mine (or my company’s) can I apply?
Which weaknesses need to be compensated for?
Where’s the proof that that statement is true?
How am I the wrong person for this project?
How am I the right person for this project?
How would an arbitrator judge that?
If I wanted to make a big mistake here, what would I do?
What data do I need that I don’t already have?
How can I better use the data I already have?
How would I describe the situation to the CEO?
How would I describe it to my mother?
How would I describe it to my most supportive friend?
How would I describe it to a disinterested stranger?

Prompts can warm up and send your mind in unanticipated directions. The best prompts are short and open-ended.

Often, you’ll realize you have no basis for your belief. What then? Apply a little mental elbow grease, and come up with a belief that will better serve you.

If you’re looking to solve a problem, don’t ask, “What’s the solution here?” Ask, “In what ways might I solve this problem?”

Under the guise of being “realistic,” we often limit ourselves more than we need to. One way out of this trap is to consciously use lying in our freewriting as a way of testing alternative universes and ways of acting.