6 CONTENT BRAINSTORMING ADVENTURES

Brainstorming prompts so that you're never at a loss for content ideas.

Making Headlines

Gold Mining

People Watching

Being a Bookworm

Time Traveling

Phoning a Friend

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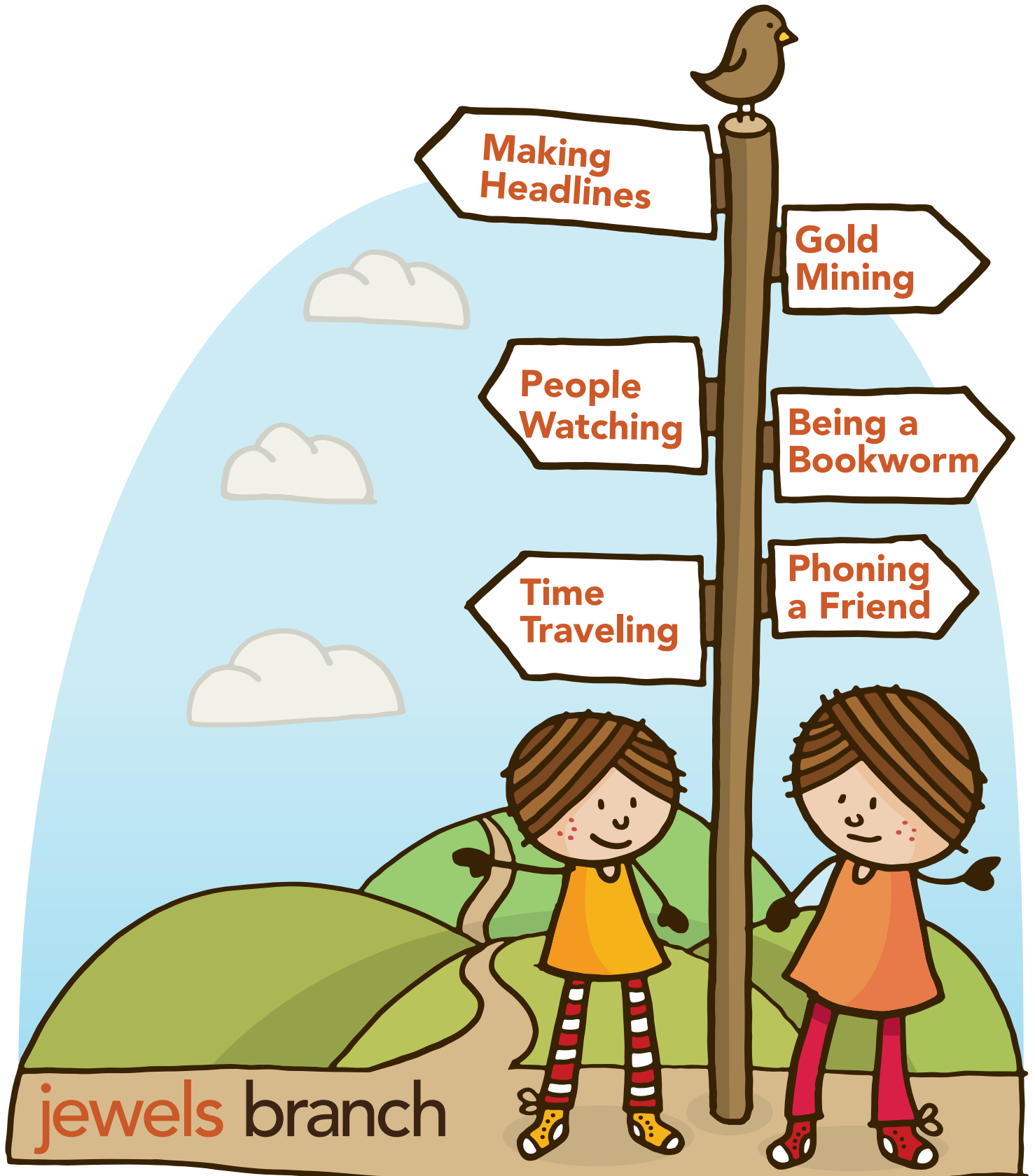
Your Brain is Full of Great Information

Brainstorming 101

Your goal during brainstorming is to dump as many ideas out of your head, as fast as you can. That way you keep your brain so busy making connections that it can't interrupt with any negative thoughts.

Go Brainstorm Some Content!

GO WITH THE FLOW. THE MORE THE MERRIER. DON'T EDIT.

Try out different ways of collecting your thoughts to see what works best for you:

Physical: pen and paper, white board, sketch pad and markers

Word processing apps: Pages, Word, Open Office

Collection applications: Evernote

TIME YOURSELF

Focus helps your brain work! Set a timer and challenge yourself to come up with as many ideas as you can in 10 minutes. Then keep repeating in 10 minute increments until you're out of ideas.

Just when you think you're done and completely out of ideas, take a short break and come back and brainstorm for another five to 10 minutes or so. That's when things will start to get really creative.

SORT YOUR LIST OF IDEAS

After you've exhausted your brain and have a long list of ideas, go through them and sort the good from the bad.
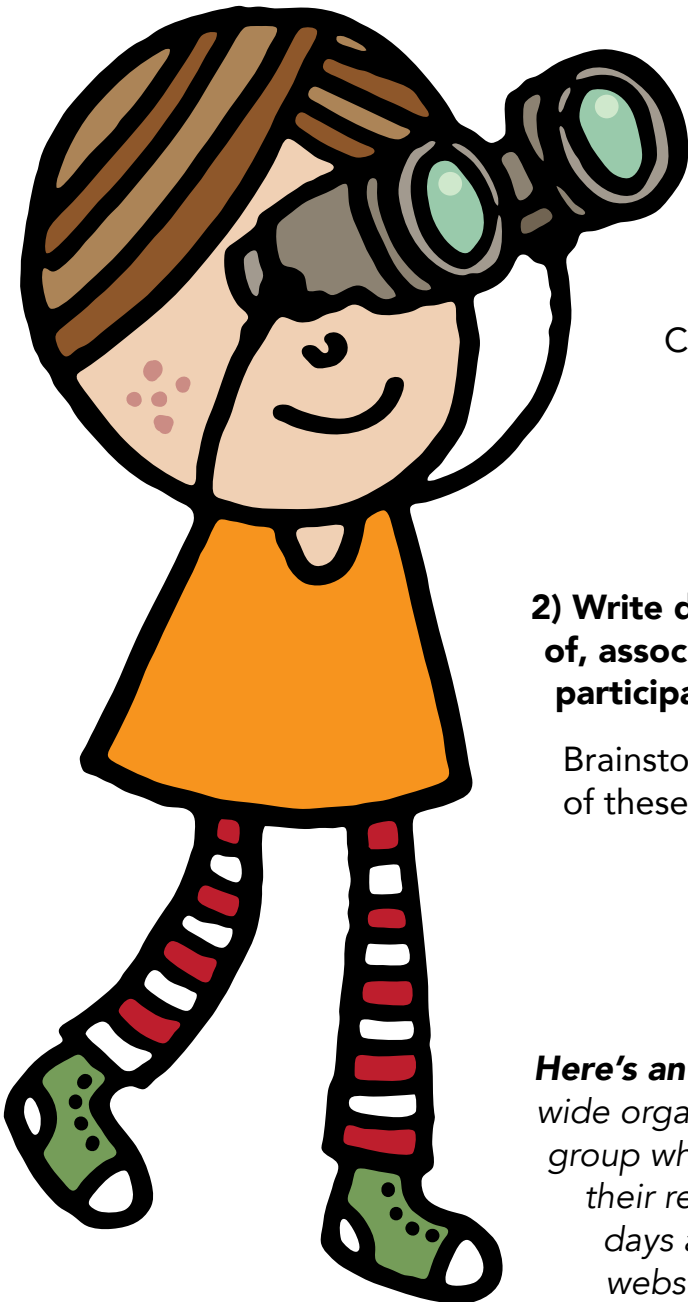
Cross out any ideas that don't quite fit your brand and any that feel too boring.

Then review the good ideas and see how you want to use them (blog posts, video, course content, etc.).

PEOPLE WATCHING

Use this prompt to draw on the power of your connections and to crowd source content.

Who are the people in your neighborhood?

1) Brainstorm a list of the trend setters, people to follow, up-and-comers, collaborative partners, and the established gurus in your niche.

Who would you love to interview?

What would you ask them?

Could you start an interview series?

2) Write down all the Facebook groups you're part of, associations you belong to, and real life groups you participate in.

Brainstorm topics you could crowd source using the power of these groups.

Here's an example: A cat agility trainer is part of a state wide organization of cat breeders, they have a Facebook group where they hang out. She could ask everyone for their recommendations for gifts for cats during the holidays and compile everyone's answers and links to their websites into a blog post.

PHONING A FRIEND

Use this prompt to access your teenage brain and add humor to your content.

Two Heads are Better Than One

1) Get on the phone with one of your business friends (someone who isn't afraid to joke around) and help each other brainstorm ideas.

Ask each other "silly" questions about your niches. Things like: "How could you help a turtle learn graphic design?" Keep following whatever crazy train of thought that shows up.

Your goal should be to make your friend laugh at the absurdity of your ideas and answers. Keep on exaggerating your questions and answers until they are completely absurd.

2) Write down all the ideas that your conversation sparks, no matter how crazy.

Put this list aside for a few days and come back when you aren't laughing to see which ideas are usable.

TIME TRAVELING

Use this prompt to help you plan out all the different content pieces you could create as part of a product/service launch.

Imagine you're standing just past the finish line of your latest business goal.

You can hear the roar of the crowd and smell the hot dogs and popcorn in the bleachers. You're walking the victory lap, a little bit winded, with your company flag over your shoulders.

Now hold on to that feeling and hit the rewind button.

Go backwards step-by-step from the finish line to the very first glimpse you had of that goal. Write down the entire process and document all the steps that made this your most successful business win ever.

Here's an Example: You have a packed house for your first ever live event: Agility Training 101 for Rescued Cats. What did your clients experience along the sales route?

Day of event: An event schedule, list of cat friendly restaurants.

Week before the event: reminder email, Facebook status updates detailing all the last minute preps for the event.

After ticket purchase: A welcome to the event email with a "Traveling with Your Cat" pdf and list of cat friendly hotels in the area. Tweet/ Facebook shout out to welcome them to the event.

Keep going backwards in time writing down all the awesome content that you created along the way that made your ideal clients feel taken care of, entertained, and educated!

MAKING HEADLINES

Use this prompt to quickly come up with headlines that you can build a blog post around.

Try out these free headline generator sites.

Just type in your answers into their forms and they will generate headlines for you.

Write down the headlines that spark something for you and use them as a jumping off point for writing blog posts or other content.

PORTENT'S CONTENT IDEA GENERATOR

http://www.portent.com/tools/title-maker/

HEADLINE WIZARD

http://www.internetmarketingcourse.com/freeheadlinegenerator/

HEADLINE MAGICIAN

http://hughestech.com/headline-magician/headlines.php

Here's are Examples:

Our cat trainer used Portent's Content Idea Generator to come up with content.

Cat Agility Training in 10 Easy Steps

The Simplest Ways to Make the Best of Cat Agility Training

Why Cat Agility Training is the Key to Hillary 2016

GOLD MINING

Use this prompt to see what content you already have that can be repackaged.

Examine Your Blog!

1) Examine your blog post categories and tags

If you've been categorizing and tagging your posts use this ability to sort by topic to your advantage. Pick one category or tag and drill down through the blog posts. Look for big picture themes, how-to posts that go together to explain a larger topic, and posts that can be grouped together into a package of content.

Here's an example: A fitness coach has posted 30 healthy snack recipes on her blog over the past few years. With a little bit of editing and design she can repackage those into a PDF recipe book to sell or use as a freebie for her opt-in list.

2) Shine a light on your wisdom

You've said some brilliant things in blog posts that have never seen the light of day. Now it is time to bring these bits of wisdom to light. You can rescue neglected but powerful posts by pulling them out of the archives and showing them off.

Go back through your blog posts looking for little phrases, tips, quips, etc., that are totally you. You can turn these into branded tweets or tips to share on Facebook. You can do this with your vintage blog posts, too.

Here's an example: In March 2011 I challenged myself to blog everyday. You probably didn't see my post "Do online businesses need a logo?" because we didn't know each other then. Occasionally, I pull that post out of the archives and send out a tweet. Every time it gets retweeted.

You can turn some of the content into an infographic. Check out sites like: Easel.ly and Piktochart for inspiration.

BEING A BOOKWORM

Use this prompt to engage your inner author and competitive spirit There's nothing like seeing a best seller and thinking, "I could have written that!" So, let's get started brainstorming that best seller (or at least some content for your blog).

Go on Amazon.com and search for the top books in your niche.

1) Use the "Look Inside" feature so you can take a peek at the table of contents.

Jot down any ideas that come to mind as you're looking through the table of contents.

Be opinionated: What's missing? What else would you cover?

Pretend the table of contents is your outline: What subsections would you put in each chapter? What tips or resources could you add to each chapter?

Check out the book's reviews: What do the reviewers say is missing and how could you address that?

Here's an example: You're a health coach and you check out books about eating raw. You notice that most don't address how to eat raw on a budget, what the best juicers are, or how to eat raw when traveling the world. You have expertise in all those areas so your content can fill in those gaps for your ideal clients.

I hope this workbook has your brain buzzing with inspiration!

If you love what you've learned to do with this workbook come on over to Jewels Branch: the ultimate creative resource for women building online businesses.

Boost your business confidence by learning branding, graphic design, content strategy, and marketing skills, so you can build your dream business and make more money.

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