Before we get started I’d like you to think about a paper, a project, a headline, a concept, a lecture, an idea that’s frustrating you. That’s blocking you.
Now, I’d like you to write it down, in just a couple of words, and put it to the side.
This talk is a boiled down and sped up version of a course I sometimes teach – an innovation workshop.
But it’s also about a way to open up and engage the classroom to do something that is very very hard for most people.
Heck, it’s even hard for people who do this dangerous act professionally.
What you’d like to do.
…but wait there is another way…
...nope.
You can take up another career. Like, say, a skywriter…
The good news.
We are all Picassos...
If you’re alive, your DNA is closer to Picasso’s than it is to any other creature. We are programmed to create.
We’ve just got to find a way to get out of our own way.
So, what’s a writer/creative/designer/innovator to do?
Play a child’s game.

Really.
Rock
Paper
Scissors
Shoot
It is a process. If you go with it, you will emerge on the other side. With ideas. Inspiration. And a stomach that still has some of its lining left.
This is the foundation of an entire course I teach, an ideation workshop focused on advertising/marketing and that I’ve adapted to creative writing (fiction and non-fiction)
But since we have limited time today, I’ll just give you a little taste of the “game.”
So let’s begin...you sit down at the computer to write and...
Meet the Rock
It is impossible. Can’t be done. It is a rock. I am blocked. Forget about it.
The key here is acknowledging that you have an enormous boulder in front of you. One the size of your house. Yes, the task of writing the next “Catcher In The Rye” or “Just do it” is impossible.
Well, there are several things you can do with the Rock:
Blow it up
Go around it
Go under it
(deflate it)
Fake it out
Drown the rock.
Flood the rock.
Mask the rock.
Dig under the rock.
Make the rock invisible and walk through it.
Grow wings and fly over it.
Turn the rock into cotton candy and eat your way through it.
But how do you do this?
At a computer?
The important thing here is you are dealing in the realm of imagination so you can imagine yourself out of the box.
If you are writing a Haiku, write a sports report for the New York Post instead.

If you are writing a screenplay, write a sonnet.
If the problem looks like Gibraltar, make yourself look like David Copperfield, the magician, click your heels and make the project a game.
Here’s an example. You want to write a book. No, you want to write the next Moby Dick. No, you want to write the next David Sedaris “Me Talk Pretty.” Heck, let’s go all the way, you want to be…
Blow up that rock! Or, better yet, turn it into a giant rubber rock, take a run at it, and spring over it.

Or…
Here’s

another tactic I sometimes use --
Do it completely wrong so the rock will try to discipline you and make you go to the principal’s office and when the rock comes after you, dash around it to the other side.
Let’s all try this way to blow up the rock.

One of my favorites…
Take the scene/line where you are blocked and – kapow – turn it into a Broadway Musical!
Let’s do it...

Get out the piece of paper from the beginning of the talk.
Get all Nathan Lane on it.
You have TWO WHOLE MINUTES!
...and???
Make up your own ways to get around that pesky rock.
Think of Wile-E-Coyote.
It may be scary. It may be ugly. But it may also be great. One thing’s for sure. Bye Bye rock.
Now you’re ready for the next part of the game.
Paper

OK, here’s where it gets interesting. Get some paper — yes paper. And just start scribbling.

Dirty a lot of paper. Don’t think.
This fakes out the editor.
Annie Lamont’s Vomit draft
Paper

Don’t edit. Don’t look. Do the overnight test.
...then

On your mark, get set...
Write a hundred titles for your work in five minutes.
Write a hundred last sentences in five minutes.
Draw 20 scenes that you would never never never never put in your story. (Especially if you CAN’T draw!)
Take your main character’s name and write twenty different names for him/her/it that rhyme.
Start writing your story backwards!
Make a clip file of 30 images that would be great for the cover/poster.
Make a clip file of 30 images that would be completely wrong.
Take your main character, write a paragraph in his or her voice about he or she feels about Comet Cleanser. Yes. Make it so true and personal you can’t believe it – like you’re a combination of Freud and a priest/confessor.
Don’t stop writing for 10 minutes at least.
Go back to the paragraph – circle words you think are cool, interesting, different. Maybe work that scene into your story/poem/screenplay and see what happens.
None of this has to be seen. It is all done behind closed doors, in the privacy of your home, between consenting adults.
So get some paper – the cheaper the better – and pencil with eraser and go.
Alt NYC Tiny Roth Eisenberg
@ swiss ones

side project
design ambassador

Martin Bermann PhD - sum of choices

Find what you love - don't stop until you do

(April time is unnecessary)
goal = for who we are when we get there

side projects turned into jobs

2. Don’t complain - offer solutions

problem solving

Rock Trafalgar Quiz: Friday 1st October 2010 Remember to do the best.

Julie Andrews - Horseman, Dragon & Sun

Sporting Annuals Mexican Pigons

Joyce Page - How Many Standard Battles of Chalumeau?

Which two worded alphabet letters continue to give title of Shakespeare play?

What were used to make your Latin Water?

Where is The Ryder Cup being held

Sculpure of Angel of North. Choice name game

Four components of the Warhine Cult. Choose one

Main ingredient of Basil

Brock - 1986

Hepatitis C - strong signal

Gallstones of Cholangiary

Bunhedge for Bevda

Bath bombs

Body Olive

Biscuits - lemon

Beans - lentil - 4Tun

Bacche - Rubbed Sam Carrot

Carrot - Chutney, Spiced Juice
The wastepaper basket is the writer’s best friend.

Use pencil on paper!
Now you’re ready for the next step...
Scissors
The mash-up
Combine/inspire
Forces your whacko mind
Make bad combinations

All the kids are doing it. It’s the power of “the mash up.” By slamming unconnected ideas together, amazingly, wondrously, a new beast emerges. Often a better fresher beast. Often nonsense. But you’ll feel it when you know it and you’ll know it when you feel it.
This actually requires scissors, old magazines, and tape.
Go through a pile of old magazines and newspapers and clip 30 to 40 pictures you think are “cool,” for whatever reason.

Put them in a pile and forget about them.
Take the last setting or scene you were stumped on. Now, grab a picture that describes the scene for you. Something that catches its vibe. (It could be someone falling asleep…) Then, cut out some other pictures that would take it and make it great. Weird. Horrible. Solve the problem with pictures you’ve clipped.
Alternatively. Take one of the pictures you’ve found for the cover and then grab some random pictures you’ve clipped from your files and mash them up in threes.

Look at any combinations you like and go to the place you got stumped or stopped in your writing and pick up from there working in the picture.
Or try this...
Work the word pomegranate into your next sentence…
It will be weird. But it will suggest new directions. New angles. New…ideas. And you’re off and running. And remember, there’s always the magic of the “save as” command.
And finally…

The shoot…
Shoot
Put it out there
It ain’t creative unless it sells
Get it up, get it on its feet, get it out the door
All of this is for naught unless you actually get your baby up, get it on its feet, and send it out the door. Send your ideas out there. Sure, you could try for Knopf or the New Yorker off the bat, but you would be just as well to get it on a small press website or even your own blog. The important thing is, FINISH IT AND GET IT OUT. Then you can start it over or even better, make another one. Just keep writing the kinds of things you want to read – as a teacher once said to me, ideas are like balloons – let one free and more will come in its place.
make mistakes

being right keeps you in place,

being wrong forces you to explore
switch and steal
DO
IT
WRONG
“Fail better.”
Samuel Beckett
Ed Catmull
Head of Pixar – Fourteen #1 hits in a row from Toy Story to Frozen
“Pixar films are not good at first, and our job is to make them so, to go, as I say, “from suck to not-suck.”
oblique strategies
http://music.hyperreal.org/artists/brian_erno/oblique/oblique.html
Apply. Rinse. Repeat.