



What is your story?



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LESSON #1—Creating The Big Idea

*The philosopher contemplates ideas; the teacher energizes ideas;
the student generates ideas. ~ Lionel Crocker*

To know where you are going, you need to know where you have come from, take a personal inventory of where you are today and, hopefully, know where you want your Big Idea to take you as you write your story.

Because YOU MATTER your STORY MATTERS too!

Atoms are unseen. Stories are lived outloud and are meant to be seen . . . and heard . . . and written down.



Every story begins with an IDEA. In your case, telling your story requires you to discover THE BIG IDEA and then put it into the form of a book. Let's talk a bit of what makes a BIG IDEA big and then I'll offer some practical steps in getting you from an idea to crafting a BIG IDEA.

To create a BIG IDEA you need to begin looking at a few synonyms for the word idea. Before you begin to write your story, you need a big sense of AWARENESS, IMPRESSION, KNOWLEDGE, and a big CLUE.

Great stories always begin with an idea that transcends the barriers of blandness and elevates your mind to excellence. Here are five practical questions you can answer as you create a BIG IDEA for your book.

1. What is it that makes my story compelling? (Overcoming obstacles, interesting circumstances, good story telling, etc.)
2. What are some of the major life events I've experienced where my readers will be able to relate?

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3. What is it about my story that will give the readers hope?
 4. Will my story inspire others to take action?
 5. How will this writing this book change my life?

Let's unpack those five questions and go a bit deeper in creating your BIG IDEA. We will talk about the tools I'll share with you later in the course, but for now I'll use some bullet points to prompt you. Jot down some of your thoughts that come to your mind as you respond to each question.

- **What is it that makes my story compelling?** (Overcoming obstacles, interesting circumstances, good story telling, etc.)

- **What are some of the major life events I've experienced where my readers will be able to relate?** (Challenging Relationships, Rich Relationships, Career experiences, Health, Family, etc.)

- **What is it about my story that will give the readers hope?** (Some call it, "Redemptive Perspective" where there is value even in the hard things).

- **Will my story inspire others to take action?** (from the status quo to the status go!)

- **How will this writing this book change my life?** (In other words, how will the telling of my story cause spiritual and personal growth in me?)

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How I Got My Big Idea For A Book I Wrote About My Life

“Bitter Busters: How Choosing Forgiveness Can Set You Free From Becoming Bitter Against Family, Friends, Career, Church, and God”

The BIG IDEA for this book was not just about my life. That in itself alone, would be boring to the reader of my story. But when I began to think about what I had to overcome, the danger of becoming bitter, I needed to put a spin on the need to forgive. I needed a “Bitter Buster!” which is . . .

When you get offended or rejected, you
Make a decisive decision
To appropriate the dynamic and supernatural power
Of love and forgiveness
When you’d rather be bitter

I needed a creative way not to only *COMMUNICATE* my story with the reader, but even more importantly, to *CONNECT* with them. My BIG IDEA was a Bitter Buster. It must have worked. It has become one of my best-selling books. Bitter Busters has been an encouragement to many who have struggled with forgiveness.

I’m going to share FIVE steps to creating a BIG IDEA for your story.

Step One: Purpose to take a “Thought Sabbath.” Give all of your creative and random thoughts a break and rest in your story. In other words, jot down some of the emotions of what you felt.

In my case, I had just begun a season of one of my challenging times of my life. I had just lost a dream career position and as a result, lost a level of income that set me reeling. In addition, I was preparing to close out a failed marriage and consequently, I lost my family too. And yet . . .

I felt ISOLATED. I felt ALONE. I felt like a FAILURE. And I felt I was given a great opportunity to tell my story one day, in a redemptive kind of way.

Now, it’s your turn. As you think about the story of your life, list a few of your emotions and as best as you can remember, what were some of your defining circumstances of your story.

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Step Three: Make A List Of The Important Relationships Who Are Important Characters In Your Story. We do not live in a vacuum. Stories gain “color” in a black and white world because of the colorful people in our life. List who they are and why they are an important part of your story.

Step Four: Life Categories Are The Backdrop To Your Story. How your story is illustrated by categories like Family, Friends, Career or Education, Church, and if you are a person of faith, God, makes your story believable.

In what Life Category (or Categories) does your story take place?

Step Five: Your BIG IDEA has To Meet The Felt Needs Of Your Reader. Your BIG IDEA has to do at least two things. It has to be *realistic*, and it has to be *reproducible*.

My BIG IDEA is realistic (Yes) _____ (No) _____

My BIG IDEA is reproducible (Yes) _____ (No) _____

If your answer is yes to both, proceed to the next line. If it is no to one or both, go back and rework your BIG IDEA AGAIN.

My Big Idea Is _____