

Break Through Writer's Block

Find What's Wrong So You Can
Get Back to Writing

Dani Abernathy



About Me

Dani Abernathy (she/her)

- Author Accelerator Certified Book Coach
- Enneagram Teacher
- Creator of the Rooted Writers Mentorship
- Live in Northwest Arkansas
- Love books, rainy days, and deep conversation
- Enneagram Four, INFJ, Capricorn

My Mission

I help novelists write the stories they need to tell so their readers can feel seen and can see others.

I believe stories can change the world, one reader at a time, because they teach us to have more compassion for ourselves and others.

Stories are one of our most powerful tools for having less war and more love.

My Goals for Today

- Help you embrace yourself as the most important part of your story
- Give you actionable steps to implement right away
- Leave you feeling encouraged, energized, and connected

Today you will:

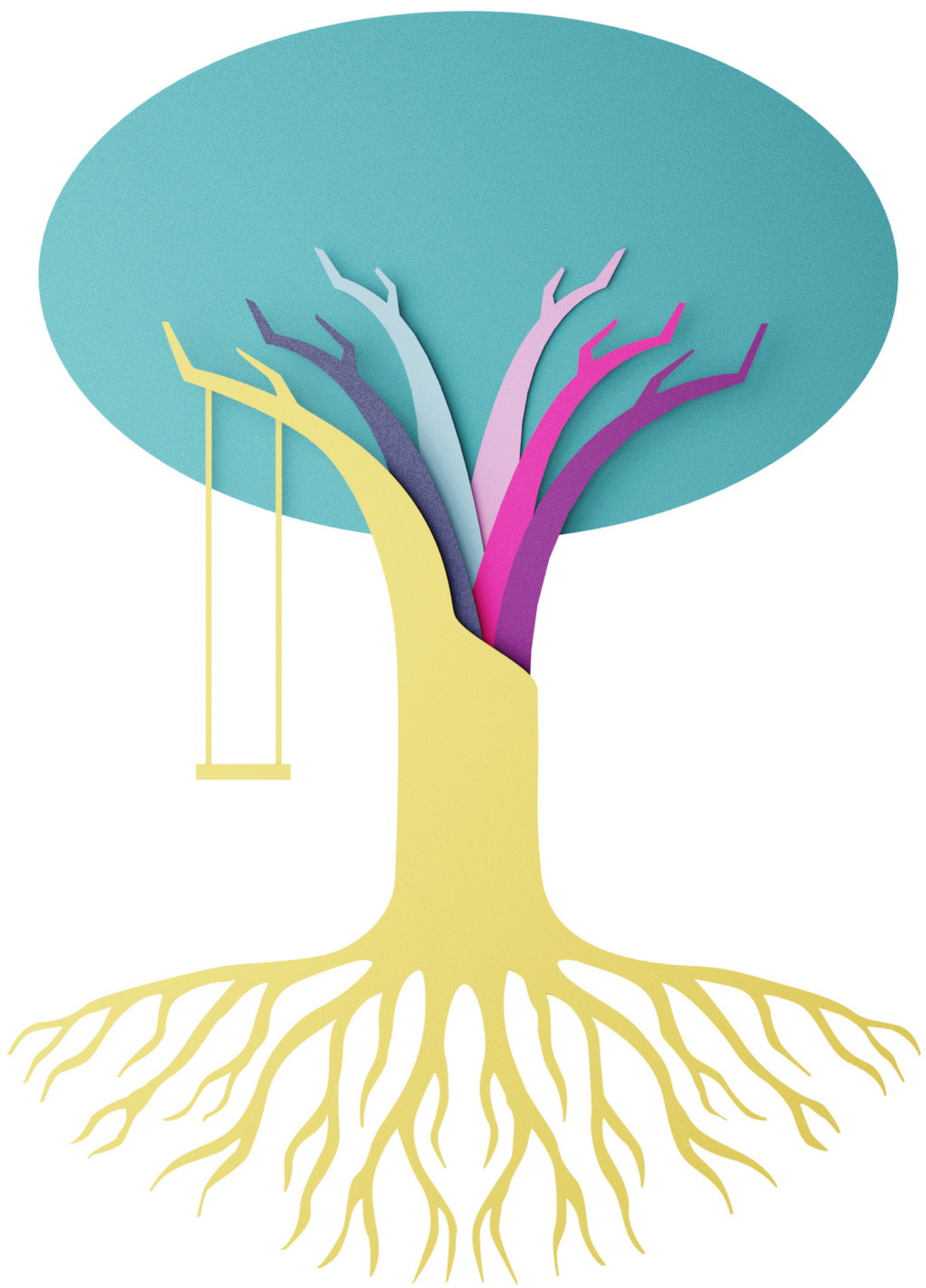
- Learn the symptoms of writer's block
- Discover the hierarchy of blocks
- Assess your own block
- Find tools to move beyond your blocks

Get the Guide

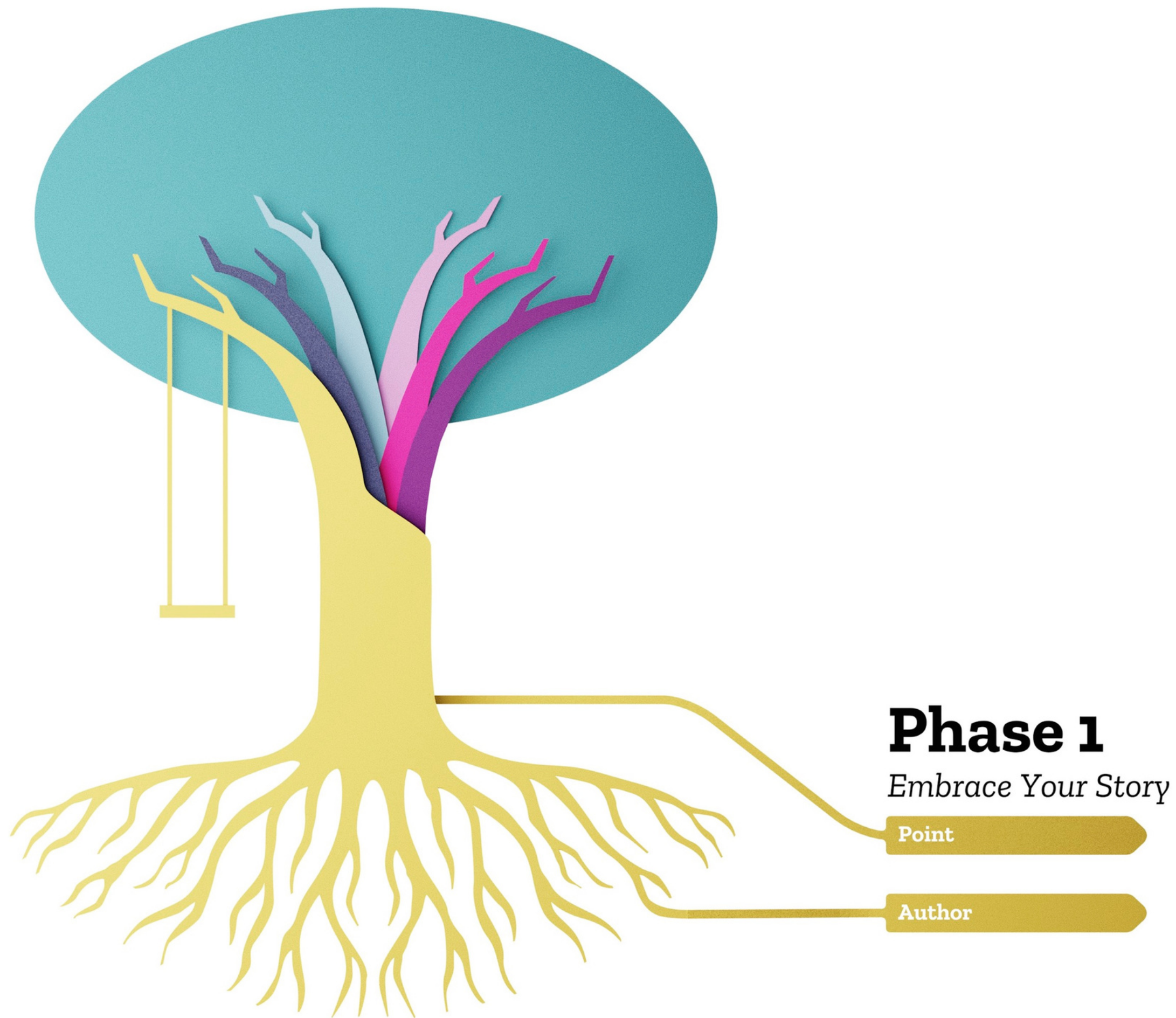
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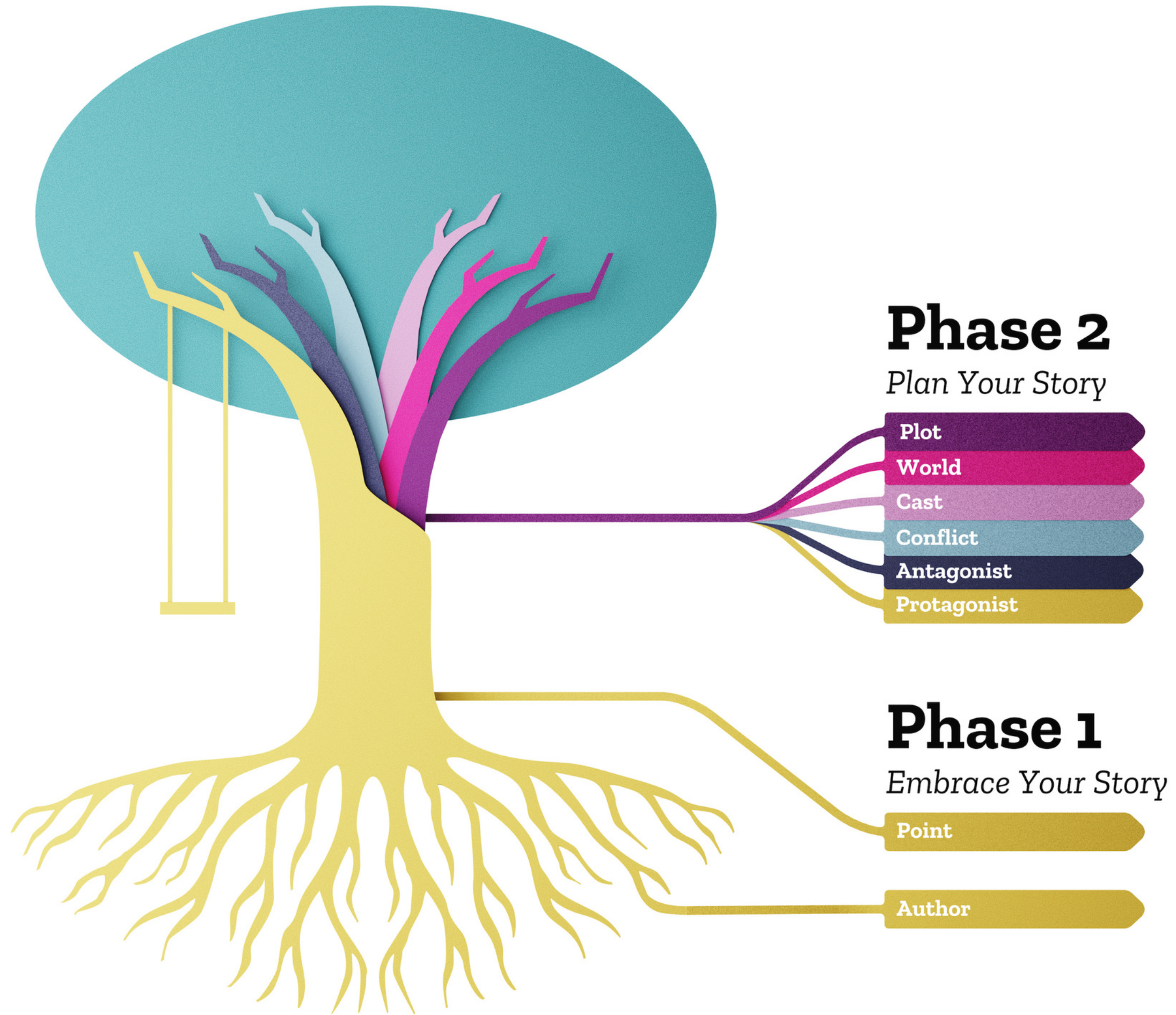
The Story Tree



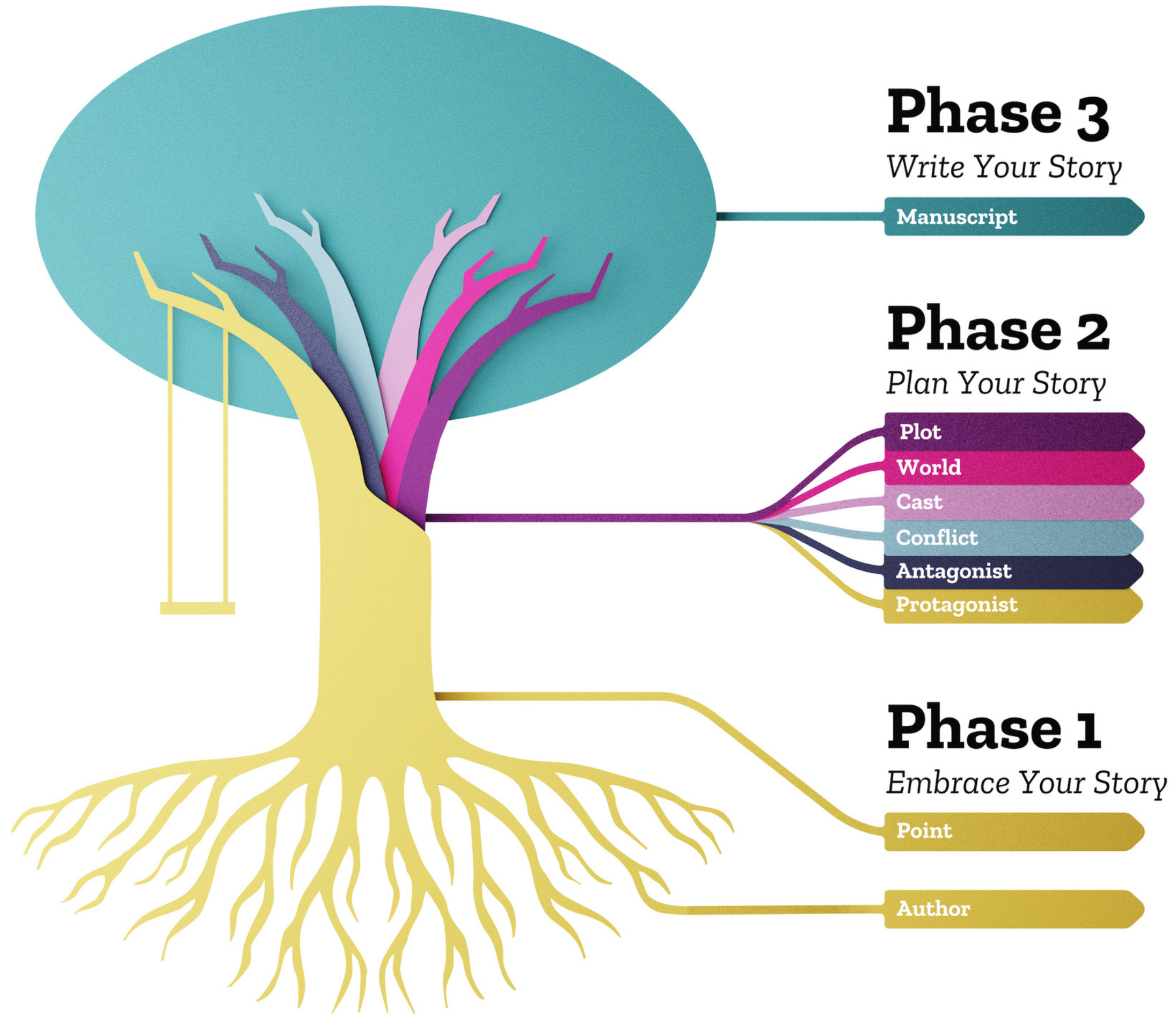
The Story Tree



The Story Tree



The Story Tree



Writer's Block

What is a writer's block?

The inability to engage with or progress in your writing

How do you know if you have writer's block?

Symptoms of Writer's Block

Stuckness

- Stuck on one scene or issue
- Can't start
- Can't get in the flow
- Feel overwhelmed
- Feel defeat

Symptoms of Writer's Block

Avoidance

- Cleaning the windows
- Binging all of Game of Thrones
- Reorganizing your closet
- Scrolling IG for three hours
- Gaming
- Being too busy to write

Symptoms of Writer's Block

Productive procrastination

- Mood boards
- Playlists
- Worldbuilding
- Getting feedback, over and over and over
- Getting sucked into a research black hole
- Procrastilearning

Symptoms of Writer's Block

Perfectionism

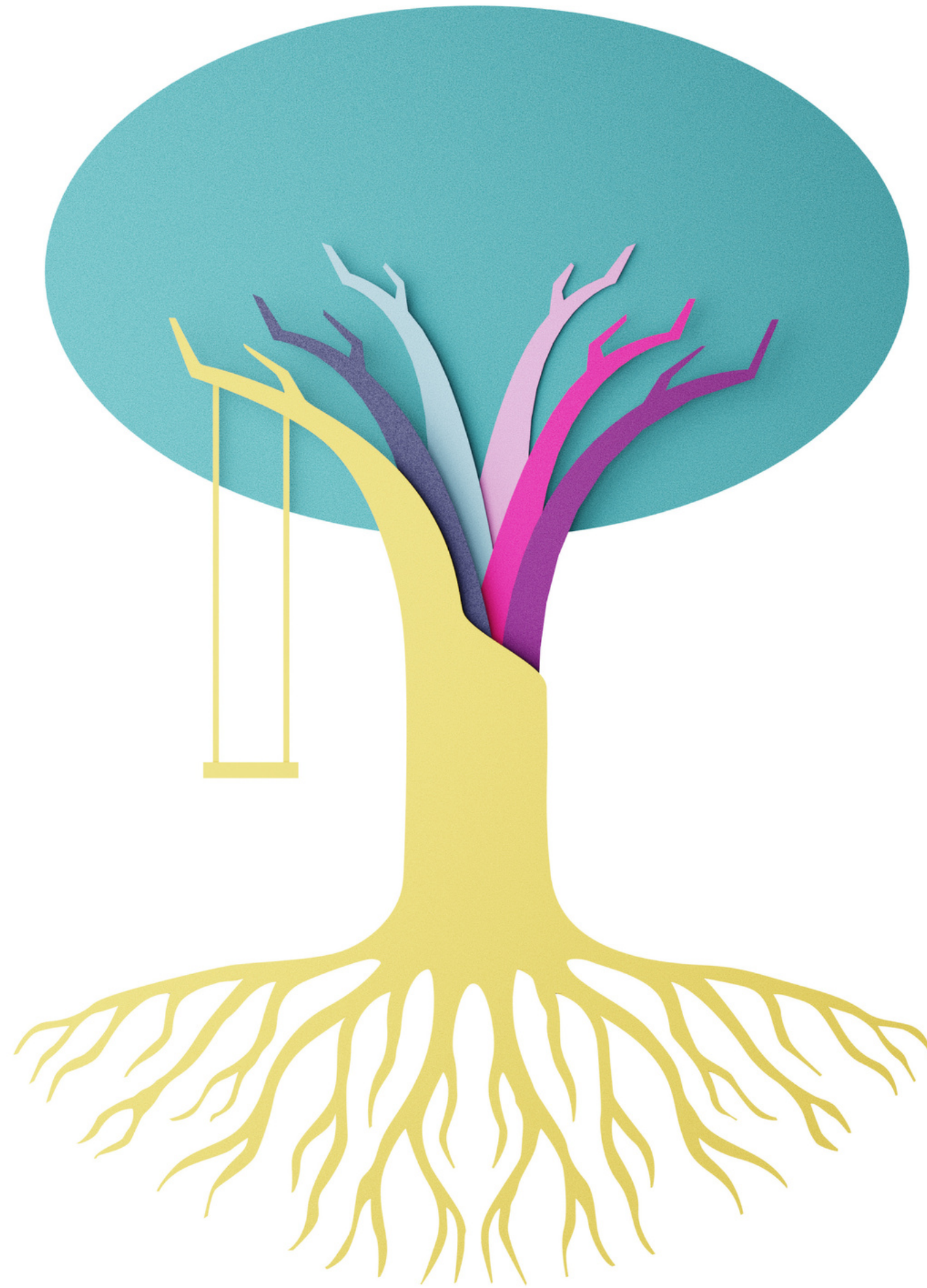
- Rewriting the same chapter over and over
- Perfecting sentences
- Obsessive thesaurus use
- Putting off the next step because what you have isn't good enough yet
- Trying to get everything right at once

Heirarchy of Writer's Block

Three Levels of Writer's Block

- Story Blocks
- System Blocks
- Personal Blocks

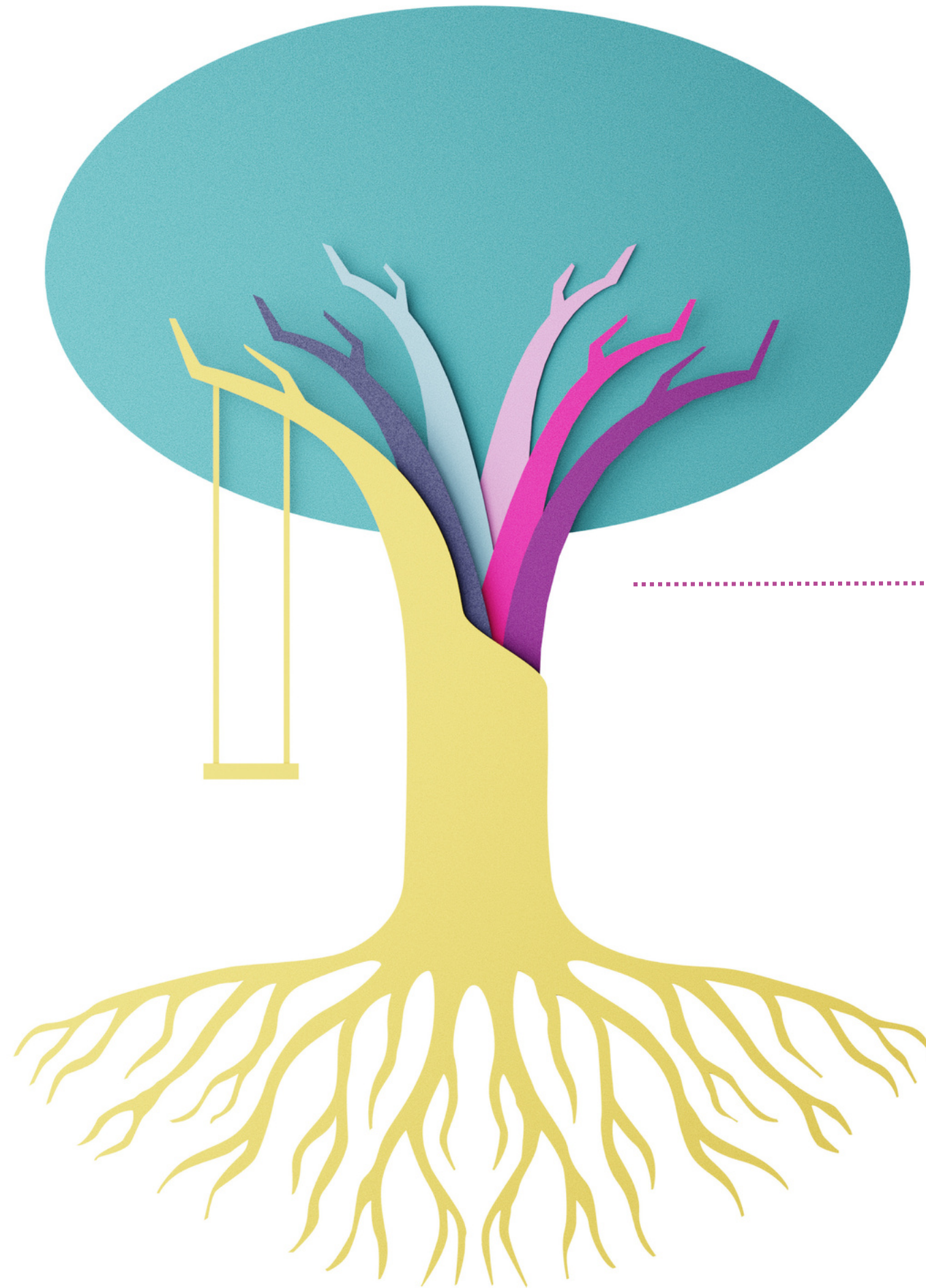
Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



..... Story Blocks

Unanswered questions about or underdeveloped elements of your story

Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks

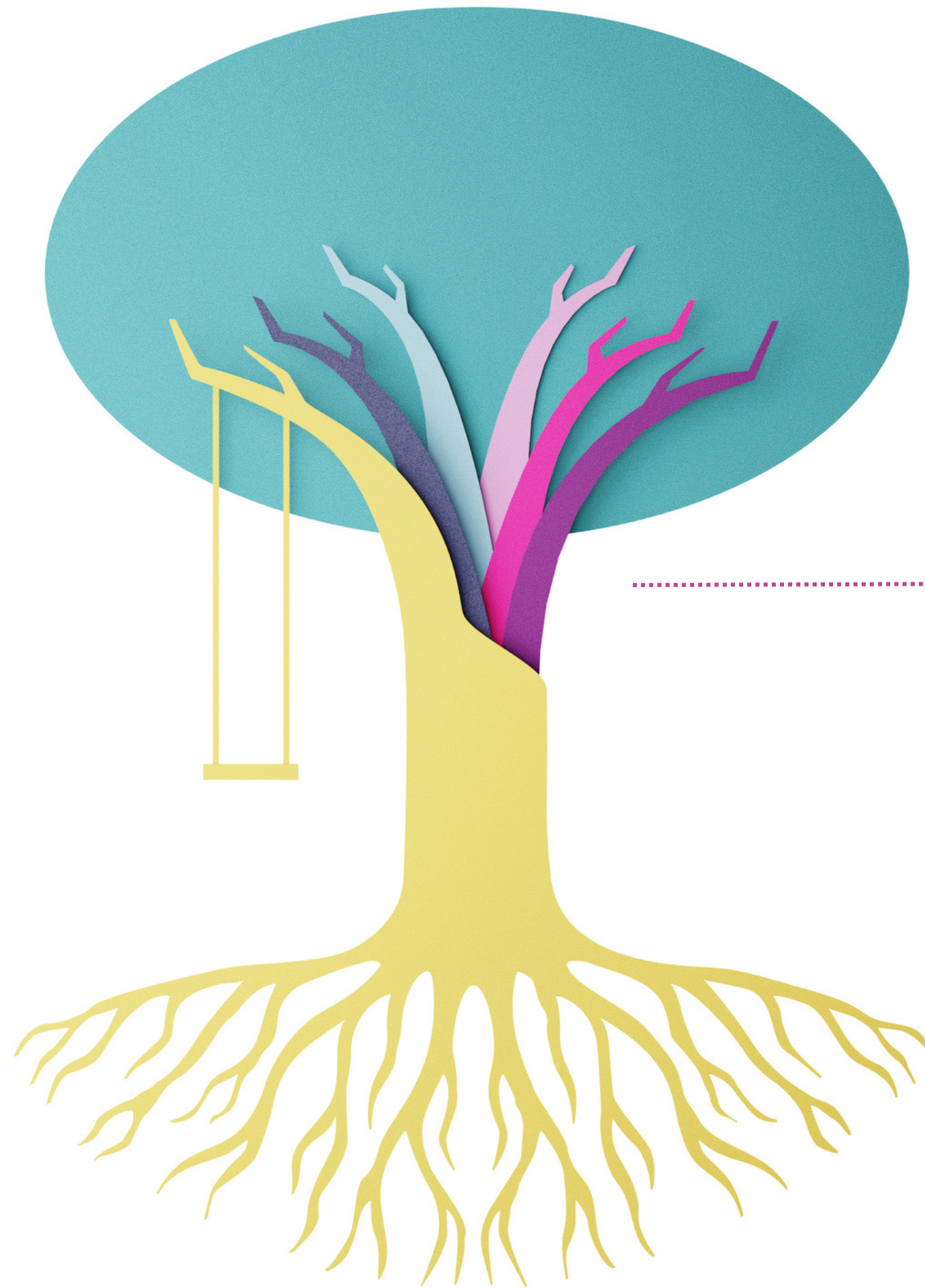


Story Blocks

System Blocks

Problems in your approach to or support around your writing

Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



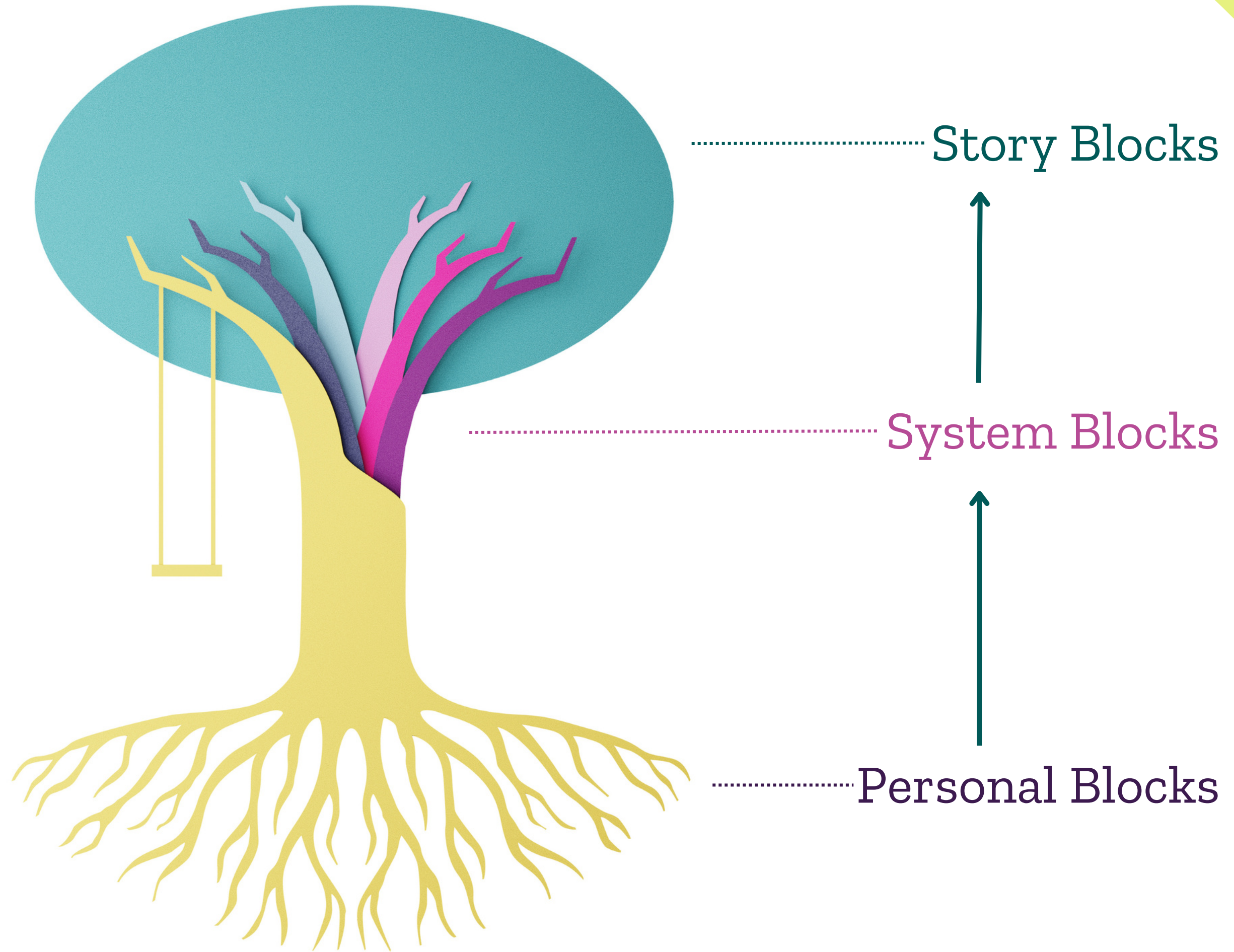
..... Story Blocks

..... System Blocks

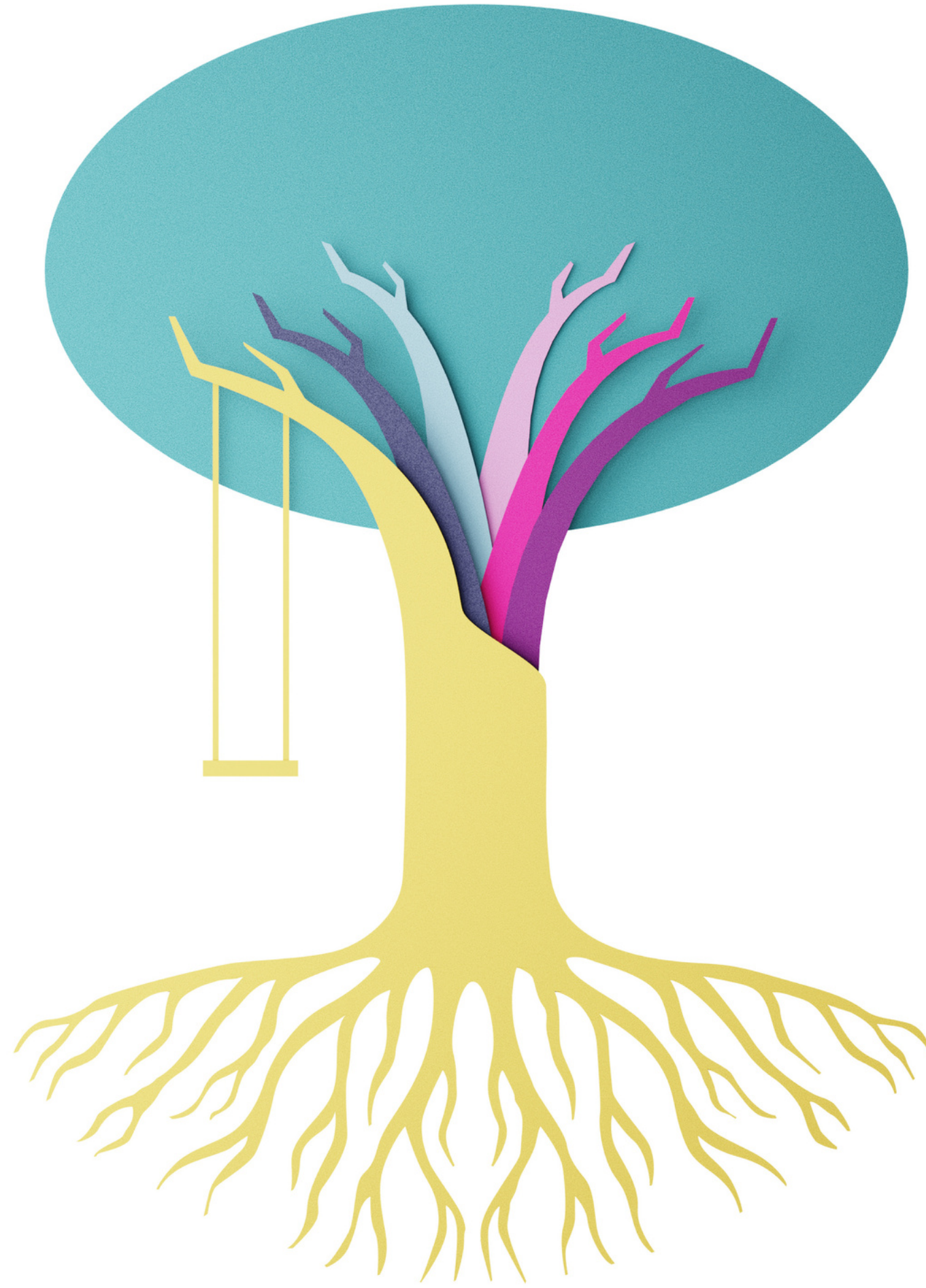
..... Personal Blocks

Writing problems that stem from to your life—traumas, fears, circumstances

Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



..... Story Blocks

What are Story Blocks?

Unanswered questions about or underdeveloped elements of your story

Kinds of Story Blocks

- Unclear Intention
- Underdeveloped Story Elements

Story Block: Unclear Intention

When your story isn't focused

- Not sure what you're trying to say or what the story is really about
- Trying to write too many things
- Story isn't meaningful to you
- Uninspired

Story Block: Underdeveloped Story Elements

When you don't know enough about aspects of your book

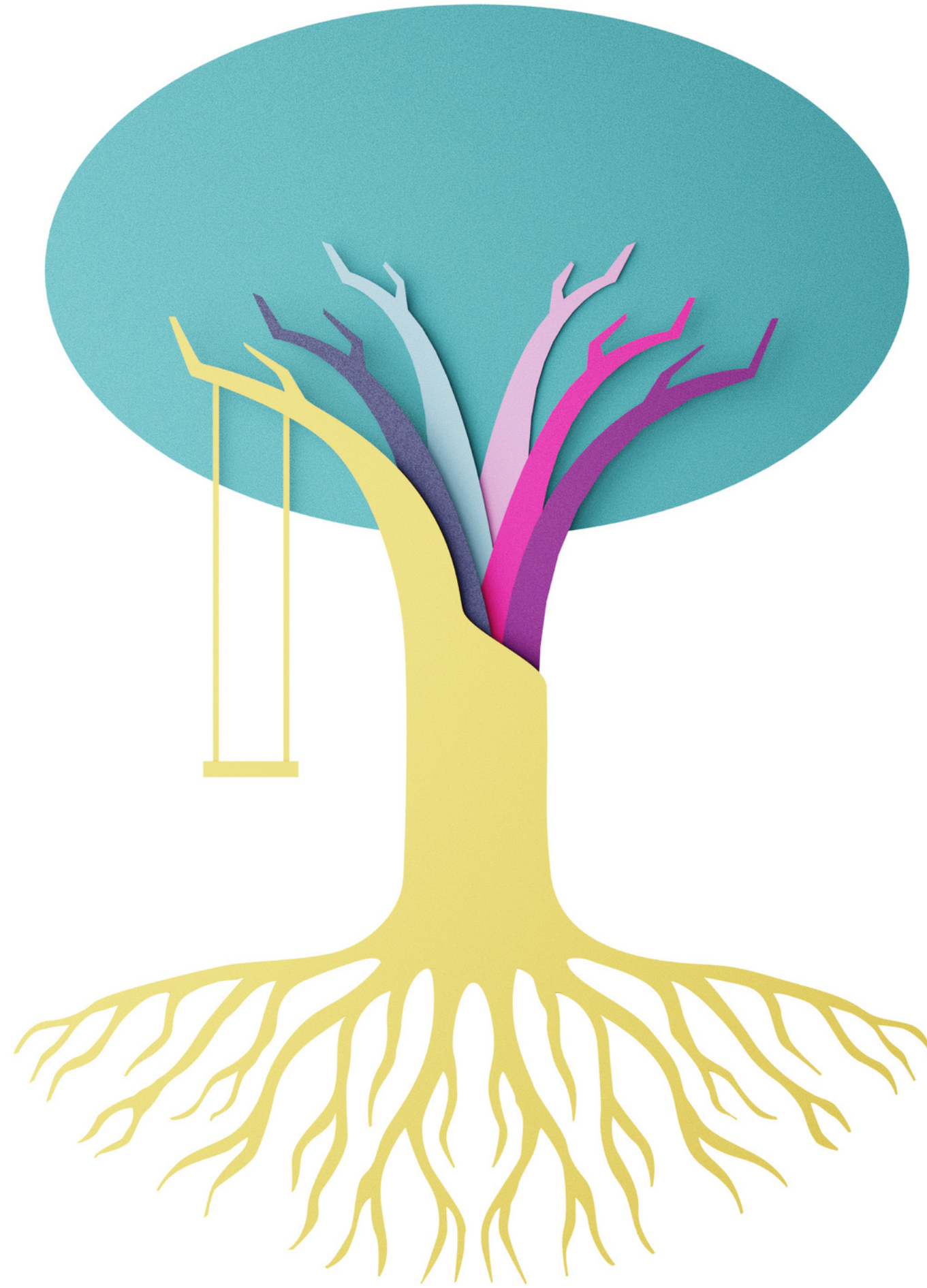
- How the book ends
- What happens in the messy middle
- Where the series is going
- Underwhelming conflict
- Holes in logic
 - Plot holes
 - Character motivation
 - Worldbuilding
- Elements aren't aligned or are working against each other



Are you facing a Story Block?

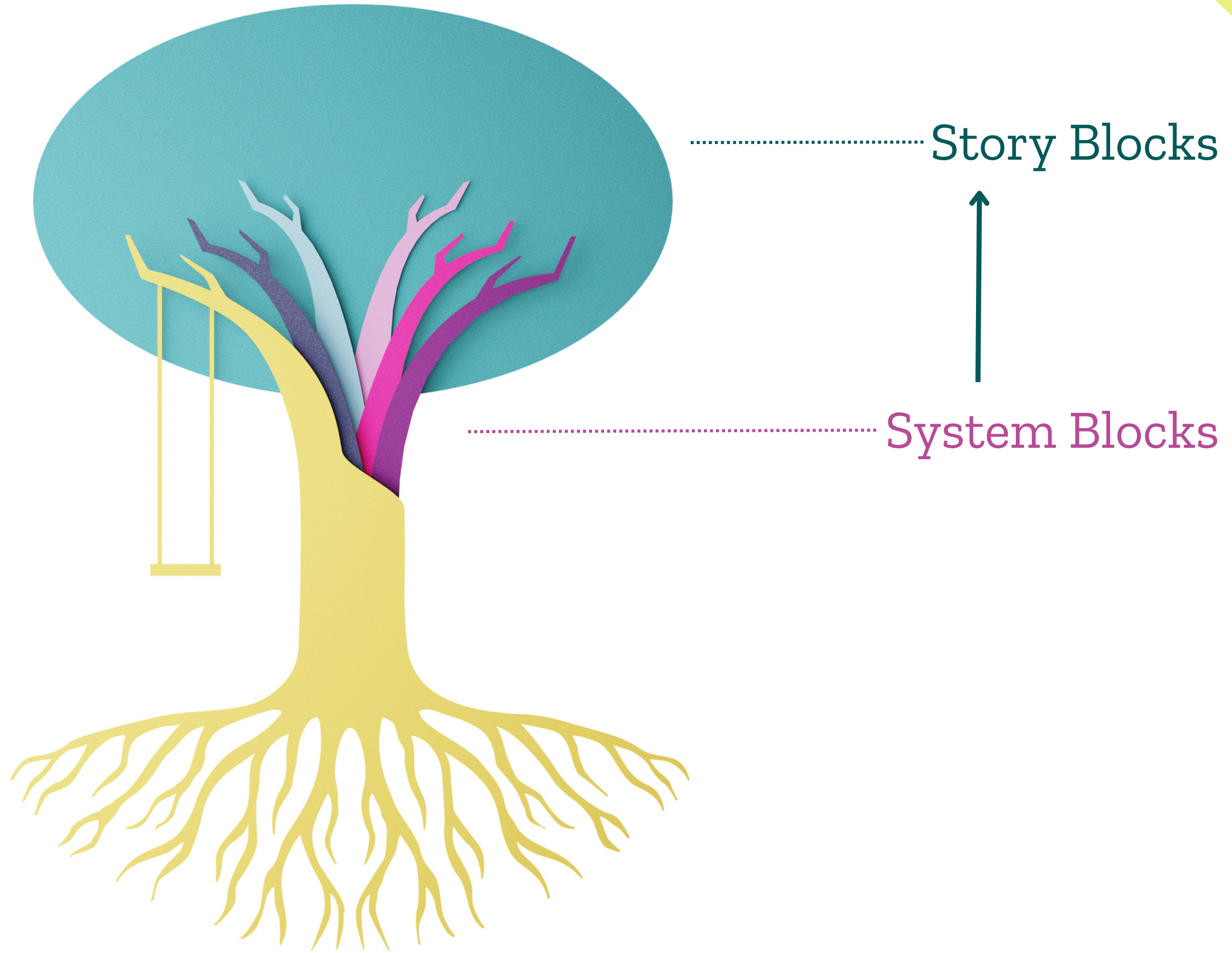
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Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



..... Story Blocks

Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



What are System Blocks?

Problems in your approach to
or support around your writing

Kinds of System Blocks

- Lack of Knowledge
- Lack of a Process
- Isolation



System Block: Lack of Knowledge

When you don't have the information you need to develop your story

- Don't understand a concept or how to apply it
- Unable to capture what's in your head
- Writing Craft Issues
 - Grammar
 - Show don't tell
 - Scene Structure



System Block: Lack of a Process

You have no writing system or a system that doesn't work for you

- Not sure what to do next
- Overwhelmed because there's too many elements to keep in mind
- Too many story options
- Afraid of picking the wrong option
- Misaligned system



System Block: Isolation

You don't have the community necessary to move forward

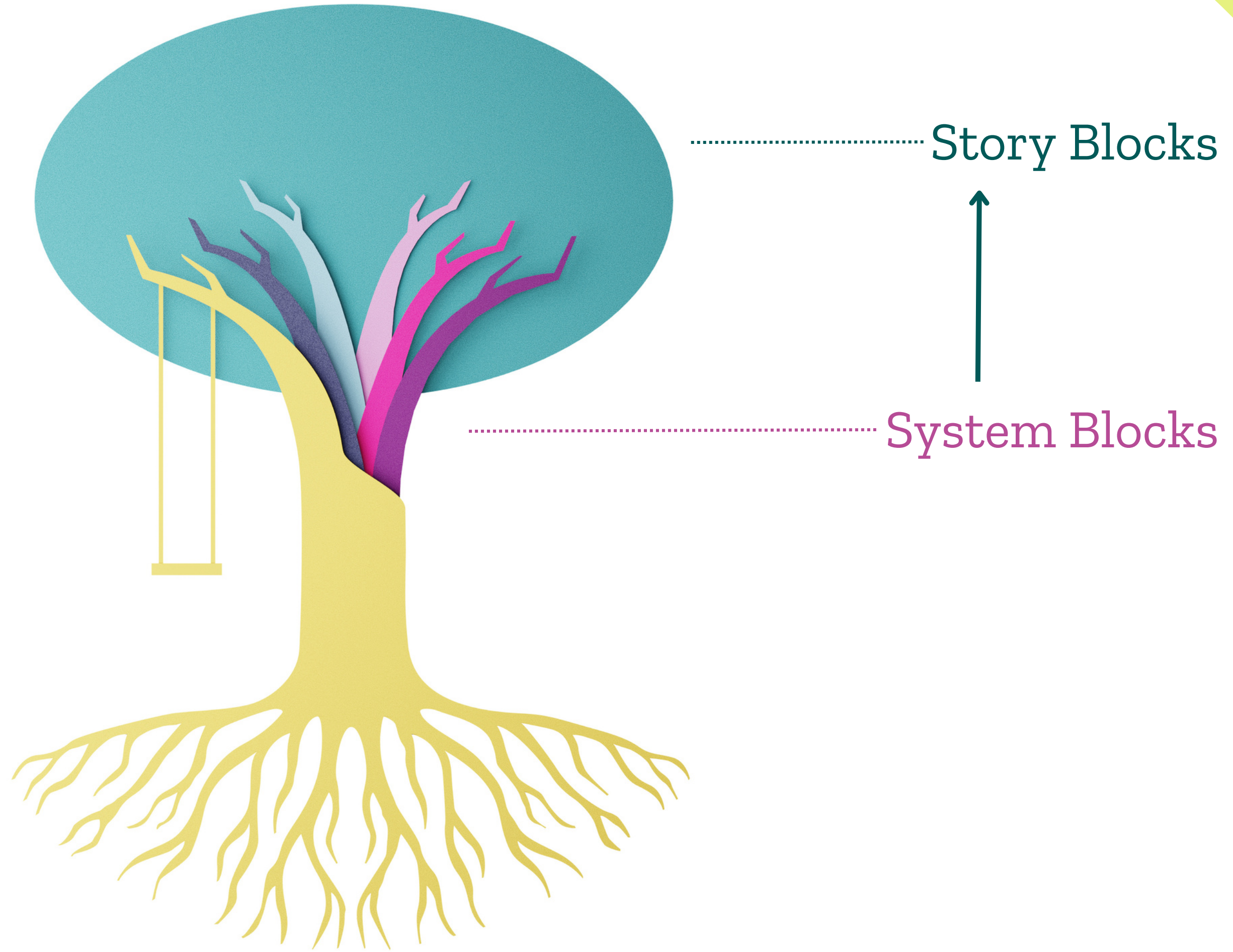
- No support, feedback, accountability, camaraderie
- Think you're the only one with this struggle
- No one to help you solve story problems
- Feel like no one cares
- Lack of support in your real life



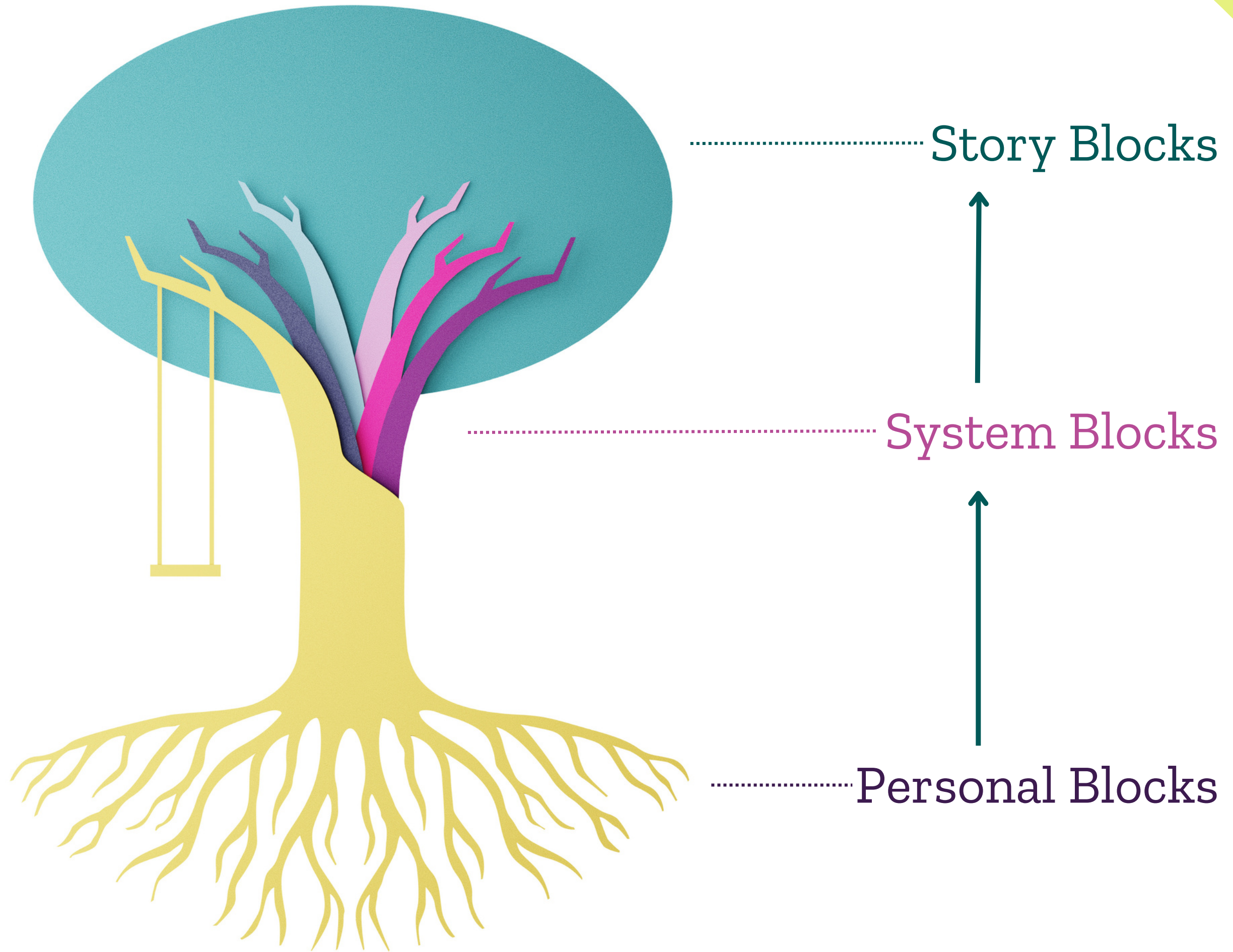
Are you facing a System Block?

- Lack of Knowledge
- Lack of a Process
- Isolation

Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



What are Personal Blocks?

Writing problems that stem from your life—
traumas, fears, circumstances

Kinds of Personal Blocks

- Fear
- Trauma
- Hopelessness
- Life
- Seasonality



Personal Block: Fear

The content or process of writing is scary

- Fear of failure



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- Fear of judgment



Personal Block: Fear

The content or process of writing is scary

- Fear of failure
- Fear of judgment
- Fear of the unknown

Personal Block: Trauma

Your book touches your wounds

- What your story is asking of you is hard
- You haven't healed enough to write what the story requires
- You haven't shared the experience before
- Critical voices in your head are LOUD
 - Not smart enough
 - Not a good writer
 - Shouldn't talk about this



Personal Block: Hopelessness

Writing seems pointless

- Can't find an agent or publisher
- Negative reviews or feedback
- What's the point?
- "I'm not good enough"



Personal Block: Life

Personal circumstance impede progress

- Busy, obligations, finances
- Physical and mental health
- Loss, transition, healing
- Oppression or world events
- Burned out

Personal Block: Seasonality

The book no longer serves you

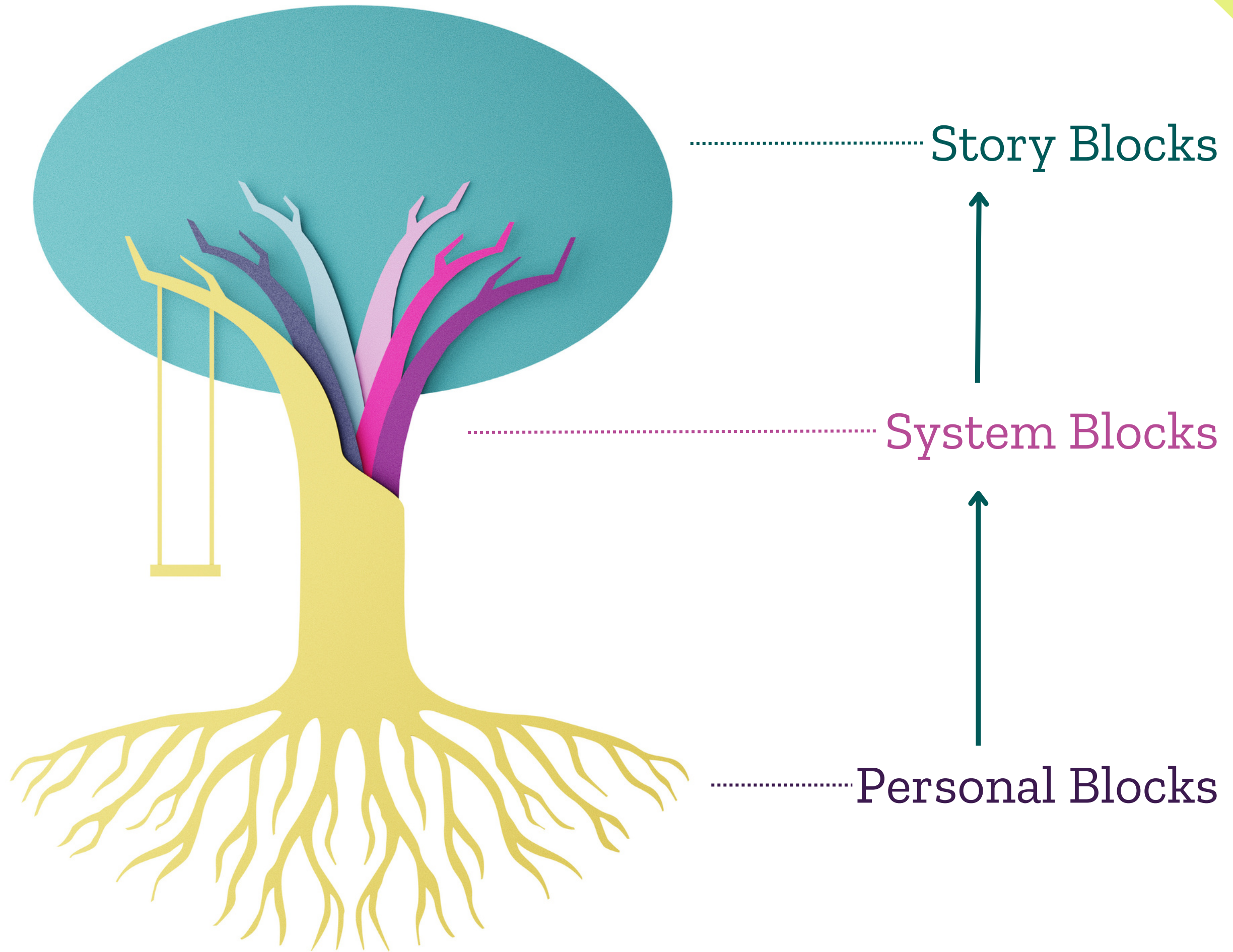
- Season of life has changed
- Answered the question you were writing about
- Learned what you needed to
- Happy with how far you've taken this story
- Want to focus on another project



Are you facing a Personal Block?

- Fear
- Trauma
- Hopelessness
- Life
- Seasonality

Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



Getting Unblocked

Get the Guide

www.daniabernathy.com/pwablock





Step One:
Assess Your Blocks

Checklist to Find Your Level:

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Story Level • I need to know more about one or more elements of my story.

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• I need to invite someone else into my story.
• I need a plan for moving forward.

Checklist to Find Your Level:

Story Level • I need to know more about one or more elements of my story.

System Level • I need to learn more about an aspect of writing or story.
• I need to invite someone else into my story.
• I need a plan for moving forward.

Personal Level • I'm afraid of doing what my story is asking.
• My story is connecting to something painful in me
• Life is making it difficult to show up for my story.
• I feel like my writing will never make it into the world. It feels pointless.
• This story has served its purpose in my life.

Start with the lowest block.

There is no shame in having blocks.

Step Two:
Find the Path Forward



What do you need to move forward?

Story Blocks: Stop Writing and Start Planning

1. What are you trying to say through this book?
2. What's the conflict?
3. How does the book end?
4. What do your characters believe at the beginning and end?
5. What are the rules of your world, tech, and magic?

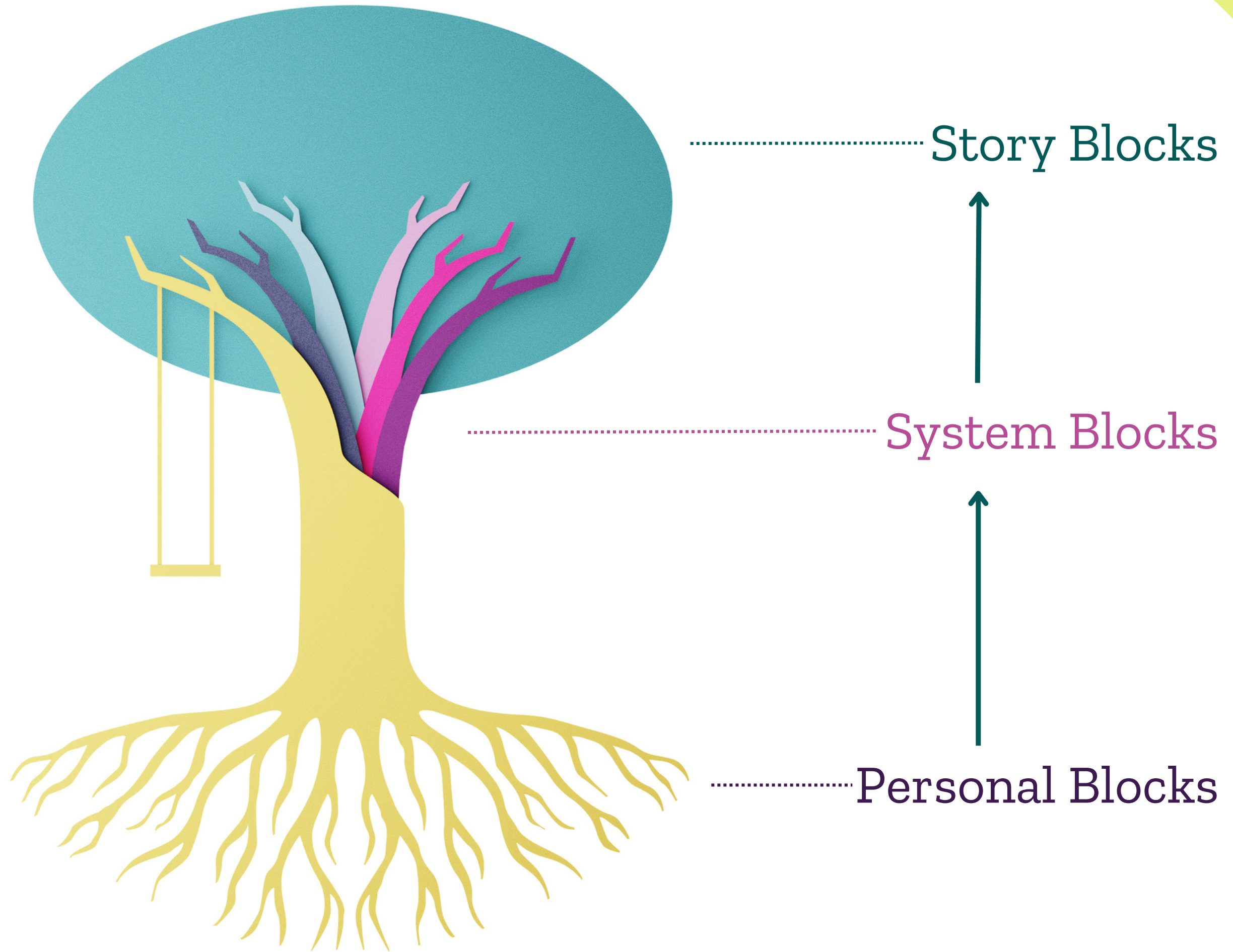
System Blocks: Get Help

1. Resources – Books, podcasts, workshops, course
 - a. Be watchful for procrastilearning
2. Community – Beta readers, critique partners, writing group
3. Experts – Editor, coach, publishing consultant
4. Support people – Friends, family, therapist

Personal Blocks: Go Inward

1. What am I afraid of? What do I need to move past that fear?
2. Am I able to engage with this topic right now?
3. How can I support myself moving forward?
4. Can I approach the story with curiosity and a sense of playfulness or experimentation?
5. What do I need to give myself permission to do?

Heirarchy of Writer's Blocks



The Rooted Writer's Mentorship offers support for all levels of Writer's Block: story, system, and personal.

What's one step you will take to address your writer's block?

Let's Stay Connected

- Untapped Superpower Quiz: www.daniabernathy.com/quiz
- Instagram: [DaniAbernathyAuthor](https://www.instagram.com/DaniAbernathyAuthor)
- Check out the [Rooted Writer's Mentorship](#) on my website

Questions