



WRITING TRUTH, WITH GRACE • *A Writing Workshop*

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WRITING TRUTH, WITH GRACE • *Things to be mindful of:*

1. Fear and self doubt:

There are so many things that can hinder us from writing. Fear and self-doubt are rather common ones. While it is journey to work through these things, it is not impossible. One of the ways I work through these things on a daily basis is by starting with what is **true**. One of the challenges I regularly face in writing is that there is no way of knowing exactly what the “right thing” is to say, even when it comes to people that I know very well...even when it comes to myself. However, one thing is for sure: **no matter what you are writing or who you are writing for, the truth always matters** **And there is always a way to tell to the truth, with grace.**

2. What “consistency” actually means

Consistency: that which is necessary for the sake of logic, accuracy, or fairness.

Writing on a consistent basis is a great way to continue to exercise your creative muscles. However, **there is no single “right” way to be consistent.** Consistency does not only mean writing everyday, all day. Some people write every morning, others write every Saturday morning. Some people write all day everyday, and some write every other night. It’s up to you how you create space and make time to write. Here are some ideas on how to get into the rhythm of writing on a regular basis....

Time / location based

- Every Saturday morning for 30 minutes
- At my favorite local coffee shop, at least once a week
- When everyone else in the house is sleep at night, twice a week
- At the beginning of the week and the end of the week
- For five minutes during my alone time each day

Moment / experience based

- After I have watched a movie or documentary that made me think
- After I have spent quality time or had a meaningful conversation with someone I care about
- When I want to post something on social media, but I am not sure if I should share it publicly
- When I want to send a text message or call someone in particular, but I can't
- When something happens in the world that is troubling to me
- Whenever I notice something good that others seem to overlook
- Whenever I remember a childhood memory that I don't want to forget
- Whenever I take a photo of something beautiful (a sunrise, a mountainscape, etc.) and the picture doesn't seem to do it justice

3. Journaling

I truly believe there is no “right way” to journal. My personal journal is filled with everything from grocery lists to doodles to letters for other people to the way I am feeling that day. You can choose to keep different journals for different things, or keep it all in one book. It’s up to you! Here are some ideas on things to journal about:

Journaling Ideas

- ❑ Make lists of small, yet beautiful things you notice throughout the week
- ❑ Write letters to people without worrying about if/when you are going to deliver them until later on
- ❑ If you like to cook and find recipes, write out recipes you enjoy by hand
- ❑ If you like to travel and see new places, write out directions to those places
- ❑ Keep a daily log of everywhere you went and everyone you interacted with in a day
- ❑ Whenever you read an encouraging quote, write it down (some people have journals just for quotes!)
- ❑ Make a creative bucket list: different project ideas and things you'd like to try to make

4. Finding your “writing voice”

I believe that **finding your writing voice is a lifelong journey**. And not just a lifelong journey of finding some big, grand voice of yours out in the distance somewhere, but I believe it is finding out how to get in touch with the voice that is already inside of you. **No matter where you are on your writing journey, your voice is already there. It's woven into the tapestry of your story, everywhere you have been and everything you have learned up until now.** Here are some places you can go to start finding, connecting, or reconnecting with your voice:

Finding your writing voice:

1. Go back and read old social media posts, emails, and text messages from long ago. Yes, some of them may be embarrassing or even cringeworthy, but **when you go looking, don't go looking for all that is wrong.** Go looking for patterns. Do you see any words or phrases that you still use today? Do you see anything that stands out to you in a positive way, and you still resonate with it? Whether you find patterns or not, make note of the old posts and messages that still speak to you in a positive way (even if it's a lesson learned!). Write it down. Hold onto it. **This is a part of who you are. This is part of your voice.**

Finding your writing voice:

2. Go deeper. If there are certain words or themes or ideas that you always seem to go to, **don't judge yourself for redundancy or repetitiveness and force yourself to change them.** Instead, go deeper. For instance, if the idea of “being brave” often appears in what you are writing, you don't have to change that. Instead, you can dig deeper into the meaning of the word “brave.” What is the origin of that word? What is the word for “brave” in another language? How are you “being brave” this week, and how was that different than last week? How can you encourage a twelve-year-old girl dealing with problems at school to be brave? **The possibilities are endless when we allow ourselves to go deeper.**

Finding your writing voice:

3. Go outside of what comes easy. Perhaps a major career shift can teach you that you have more skills that you realize. Maybe an unexpected season of loss or disappointment has taught you that you are so much stronger than you thought you were. The same applies to writing. **You are allowed to step out of your comfort zone and write about something you have never written before.** However, keep in mind that this does not only apply to heavy topics. You can also choose to learn and write about nocturnal bees. You can also choose to have lunch with an elderly person in your life and down some of their stories so they can pass them on to their children and grandchildren. Don't be afraid to think outside the box. Don't hesitate to at least try to write about what is true but it isn't easy to write about, all while knowing there is grace for you, no matter how it turns out. And in doing this, **you are certain to learn something about your writing voice, and maybe even yourself as a whole.**

5. Putting it into practice

PLACES TO SHARE

- Community
- Social Media
- Letter writing
- An email list
- A blog
- A book

THINGS TO CREATE

- Poetry
- Prose
- Song lyrics
- Devotionals
- Speeches/Talks/Monologues
- Lesson plans
- And whatever else you're curious or passionate about!

5. Putting it into practice:

Guided Writing Instructions (Exercise 1):

Think of a place that holds a lot of meaning and/or positive memories for you that you haven't been to in a very long time. It could be a certain room in your childhood home, a sunrise you saw on a road trip in high school, or a hole-in-the-wall restaurant you once visited with loved ones. Don't write down the name of the place. Instead, hold the image of it in your mind and answer the following questions in your journal.

Guided Writing Exercise 1

1. If the place that comes to mind was *indoors*, what was the color on the walls? / If the place that comes to mind was *outdoors*, what was the color of the sky?
(try to use at least 2 words to describe the color)
2. Use at least 2-3 words to describe what this place sounded like.
3. Use at least 2-3 words to describe what you smelled when you were in that place.
4. Now think about light, the literal sunlight or where the light was pouring into the room. Where was the light coming from? Try to describe the lighting of this place in one full sentence.
- 5.. If you were with people, how did you feel when you were with those people?
If you were alone, how did you feel about yourself in that place?
6. Why do you think this place came to mind?
7. What do you hope to remember about this place forever, even if you were never able to return?

5. Putting it into practice:

Guided Writing Instructions (Exercise 2):

Instructions: Think of someone you know or care about. It could be a friend, coworker, sibling, an imaginary person, or even yourself. Close your eyes and think about that person for a moment. What is her daily life like? What challenges is she currently facing? What little things does she need to be reminded of on a daily basis? Answer each question separately in your journal.

Guided Writing Exercise 2

1. On her best days, what does she know to be true? List 1-3 statements.
(Examples: The little things really do matter. There are people in my life that I care about and that care about me. Everyday is an opportunity to learn something new.)
2. Write the words “Even when...”
3. What happens in life that makes the true things hard to remember? List 1-3 reasons.
(Example: Life get busy and I run out of time to slow down and reflect. Other people seem to be moving faster me. When plans fall through I start to doubt myself. Sometimes things happen that make me feel that I am not smart/good/strong enough.)
4. Write the words “This is still true:”
5. Imagine the statements you listed at Step 1 was something she would say to her 5 year old self -OR- her 85 year old self. How would you say these statements to someone that age? Write it out.



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