



About Writing It Out: The Journal as a Tool for Personal Growth and Lasting Change

Anyone can keep a journal. This practice doesn't require any particular level of writing talent. We bar the doors to the critics and judges (especially those in our own minds) and have playtime with writing. That leads to some serious insight.

There are endless options and styles of journal writing. Write It Out Journal Workshops employ kinesthetic, sensory, and other methods in combination to access multiple sources of creativity and self-knowledge.

While it may seem counterintuitive to engage in private writing with other people, we find that the writing community helps all participants go more deeply into a journal-writing practice.

The central focus of our work involves the Big Questions in our lives. We develop habits of observation, reflection, meditation, movement, and playfully creating artwork in our process of inquiry. We ultimately meet our own wisdom and develop habits to access it more often and more deeply.

Objectives:

During and After a Write It Out Journal Workshop, participants will:

- Honor one's writing practice with the gift of time, energy, focus and risk-taking.
- Access deeper wells of creativity through play, using a multisensory approach to the writing experience.
- Access the deep wisdom of the Self.
- Begin to ask some Big Questions about our lives and share some answers, insights, or new perspectives with companions on the journey.
- Establish a journal-writing practice that gently holds the writer accountable for achieving specific, measurable goals over time.
- Experiment with writing as a kinesthetic exercise, or Writing with the Body.
- Learn methods for "harvesting" old journals for text that will continue to sustain the writer.
- Meet other reflective writers.
- Use private writing in community, as contradictory as that may seem, to propel one's practice.
- Explore the possibility of sharing one's writing, from reading aloud in the warmth and safety of the Journal Workshop to Mining Journal Gems for publication.
- Gather resources to support the transformation from private journal writing to writing for publication.
- Establish a comfortable continuity in the practice of journal writing in an Ongoing Journal-Writing Group.
- Enter into a place filled with laughter, tears, silence, challenges, epiphanies and exuberance.
- Engage in fantastic fun.
- Enjoy the good food that is an integral part of our mission.

Essential Condition for Participation: Confidentiality

By participating in this Journal Workshop, each writer explicitly and implicitly agrees to honor the CONFIDENTIALITY of all other participants. If you disagree with this essential condition of participation, we can provide suggestions for other writing and journaling experiences you might want to investigate instead of this Workshop.

Caveat about dealing with emotionally difficult material

Write It Out Journal Workshop Facilitators are very sensitive and caring people who have thought a lot about matters of the mind and heart, but they are not necessarily licensed mental health professionals. Strong emotions frequently come up during Journal Workshops; indeed, those are just what some of us are most fervently seeking. However, if you find it to be too much, simply and literally "close the book." Gently move on to a lighter subject, or take a break. Practice self-care.

Caveat about dealing with physical activities

We may engage in some kinesthetic activities for physical comfort and in support of "play." Please feel free to refrain from or modify any suggested creative activity or movement exercise to take best care of your own physical and emotional needs.

Workshop I: Write It Out Journals

Time frame: 15 hours. 5 3-hour sessions.



Exercise 1-2 Big Question Introduction [SAMPLE]

1. Stillness. Silent Meditation.
2. Write down your most pressing concern(s) at this time. What would you like to gain insight on during the course of this workshop?
3. Please write down your question/concern; write down more than one if you need to, but if you feel inundated by a huge list, go to the Housekeeping File (Exercise 1-1) to dump them there to come back to at a later time. Select up to three Big Questions to tackle this time.
4. After you have selected your questions, please rewrite the question on these index cards. Write one question per card, and place them in this basket. Do not put your name or any identifying information on the card. These are your anonymous contributions to the inquiry of this gathering.
5. After we collect the Big Questions we will write a little benediction to begin the work at hand. Write down your personal blessing upon these questions: your hopes, good wishes, good vibes, prayers, approval, eagerness, willingness, acceptance, or whatever you would like to say to open our work here—your own work and our collective work.
6. Feel free to read your benediction out loud. If you'd prefer, simply read it in your mind and know that it is ENOUGH to contribute to the momentum of our activities here.
7. Please reserve reading or discussing your Big Questions for now; we will revisit these later.
8. The Facilitator will write each Big Question on a piece of paper to stick on the wall so that throughout the retreat, writers can make notes, observations, clarifying questions, paste collage images, recommend resources, or whatever they want to do to contribute to the collective examination of your question. Naturally, some people will become invested in your question. While the “owner” of the Question will ultimately take possession of this artifact of our work, others can be assured that photographs will be taken of the finished product and made available for all interested parties.
9. Writers may make copies of their own journal entries that may touch on the Question and leave them in the basket near the Question as a gift for the Asker.

Arizona Art Standards

Participants will:

- Create artworks to communicate ideas, meanings, and/or purposes. (Create)
- Analyze and interpret contextual ideas, meanings and purposes of art from diverse cultures and time periods. (Relate)
- Draw thoughtful conclusions about the significance of art. (Evaluate)

Common Core English Language Arts Anchor Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.