

MODULE ONE WRITING PROMPTS: ALIGN YOUR STORY

You can think of the writing exercises this week as warming up the spine, becoming more flexible as a writer, and getting in touch with your own energetic system as a writer.

*1) Where does your writing come from?
Is it coming from your reading? If so, what reading?
From your body? If so, what parts of your body?
From your responses to the people in your life?
From your silence? From your anger? Your fear?
Your discomfort? Your joy? From your inner
songbird?

These, of course, are impossible questions to answer, but try to answer them anyway; listen deeply, be curious and also be playful, if you want. Write from your responses—turn your response into a poem, a short prose reflection or a short story. Being aware of your responses to this question will help your writing for the rest of this course and for the long term.

*2) I encourage you to try to find a regular time for a regular writing practice, but each person is different and the routines that work best for you will also

change over time. So this week see what happens when you experiment with writing after and during different experiences:

write after yoga

write after meditation

write when you first wake up

write just before sleep

write after a bath

write after a walk/ run

write when you are angry

write when you are happy

write while listening to a variety of different kinds of music

dictate *while* walking—see what happens

write after doing something unusual—you choose what...

3) Use one (or more) of the following collections of six words to write from:

a) winter, instruments, body, gift, survive, mouth

b) earth, poetry, eye, rejoice, curse, dog

c) bronze, swan, summon, wind, ask, hurt

d) secrets, doorway, sleep, awake, people, walk

4) Write an elegy, either in the form of a poem, a reflection or a short story, for someone who was important to you and who had an influence on you who has died. This person can be a person that you knew personally or not.

5) Open the dictionary at random and write a poem or a short story or an essay or a reflection about the first simple noun you see.

Write an ode (a poem of praise) to:

your socks,

the piano

x...

(see Neruda's Odes in the suggested readings as an example)

6) Take two things that you think have nothing to do with each other and connect them somehow in a piece of writing—see what happens.

monkeys and the piano oranges and hammers

balloons and beards

7) JUST WRITE without any agenda.

8) Write your WORST WORK—just see what happens—this can be a fun exercise.

9) Write in response to these quotations—feel free to argue, be humorous, irreverent or reverent. Find your own quotation and write in response to that.

“Life is about fulfillment. If your life isn’t fulfilled, your stomach can never supply what’s missing.” —

Deepak Chopra

“Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it.” —Hannah Arendt

“There is no way to happiness. Happiness is the way” —Thich Nhat Hanh

10) Take a line from one of the suggested readings or from Auden’s *Elegy for Yeats* and write a poem, nonfiction piece or short story that responds in some way to that line.

11) Have a good time. DON’T WORRY. DON’T JUDGE. Just write!

We’ll work on revision in upcoming weeks. This first week, just explore. And write as much as you can.