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Creative Writing for the Soul

Like a dream, writing can open windows and doors of the psyche providing various images for healing, growth, and wholeness. There are many types of writing and the dream like kind is the spontaneous and imaginative self that allows the light to come through the openings to reveal the shadows and unseen potential stirring within. In this experience there can be many ways to crack ajar the space for revelation. Below are a few suggestions for inviting this to happen. As you try them out remember to focus on the present experience, rather than some sense of expected outcome. Be curious, forgiving, gentle, kind, and adventurous as you embark on a journey with your inner self. Acknowledge, affirm, and allow for all truths that your soul wishes to speak to yourself. With every stroke of the pen or keyboard, may you discover and recover the essence of who you are.

- **Free writing:** This is basically writing whatever comes to mind, even if it doesn't make sense. Pen to paper, never lifting the tip and writing every word without censoring it. Julia Cameron encourages this form of writing in her book The Artist's Way with the morning pages activity. It encourages a different kind of discipline because it encourages us to reveal all that we think to ourselves.
- **Lists:** Pick a topic and for 15 minutes write as many items as you can without reflecting on them. It's ok to repeat items. Example list topics are: dreams I have; things I'm grateful for; lessons I've learned; places I'd like to go; people I miss and why; what I avoid; feelings I've had during the day; people that have been important in my life; smells from childhood; favorite memories; memories I wish to create; goals I'd like to set; fears I have; and things I believe in. These are just a few!
- **Questions:** Ask yourself an open-ended question and then for 10-15 minutes write whatever answers come even if they contradict each other. Examples: how am I feeling right now? what makes me feel successful? what makes me feel like a failure? what do I want most in my life right now? what is my greatest strength? what is my greatest weakness? how can I heal (myself, my relationship with, ...)? what turns me on? what turns me off? what am I reluctant to share? what am I willing to change about myself?
- **Responses:** Listen to music, read a poem, look at a piece of art that engages you and then respond to it. What are the visceral reactions you have? What are the free associations you make? How does it impact your sense of feeling? Does it inspire you? Are there points of discomfort? Stretch into this a bit more by imagining your response as a dialogue with the music or poem or art.
- **Write a Letter:** to yourself; to another living person; to a person that has died; to a historical or famous person; to a part of yourself (child or adult); to a spiritual being (God, a Higher Power, an angel, totem animal, Goddess); an attachment or addiction (being right, alcohol, food); a member of your family; yourself in the future.