

The Memoir Writing Workbook

Memories into Memoir

Learning to Navigate

The Well of Memory

Our task as memoir writers is to embrace our well of memory to find the stories that affected our path in life.

These paths were influenced not only by our personal decisions but by the communities we belonged to.

Stored within each of us are our memories – what I refer to as the “well of memory” – that collection of experiences made up of people and events in a given society that shaped our lives. We are seeking to sort those life incidents that had a particularly great impact upon us, and the decisions we did or did not make. Those significant moments that changed our present and altered our future. In reflecting upon our past we can see patterns in our history that, once ordered, can become the focus of our memoir.

As you progress through this workbook you will discover the subject and theme of your memoir. You will engage in exercises that enhance your memories and develop your life stories in easy stages. You will connect to your writing voice and the core of your life journey as you learn how to creatively express your life story through memoir.

Each exercise in the workbook has been created to help you evoke your well of memory and recall details from your past.

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Your well of memory provides the source material for your memoir.

You will engage in many right-brain exercises that will enhance your writing while developing and strengthening your writing voice. There are no correct answers to any of the exercises. It is important that you try them all. In time you will come to notice which exercises stimulate your creativity and enhance your work.

Some of the exercises you may like, some you may find more difficult. That's OK. You may find that your writing flows more easily with some of the exercises than with others. This is normal, and happens because some exercises will appeal to your particular way of thinking, to your individual brain. It is therefore useful to put more effort into the exercises that you find more difficult. These challenging exercises will not only strengthen your thinking patterns but will also enliven your writing.

There are no rules when you write creatively, but there are some guidelines that will enhance what you have to say as you progress through the workbook.

***Note:** To make your journey easier and maximise your ability to navigate, it is very important to complete the exercises in the order in which they are presented in the workbook. The exercises are structured so that you will find it easy to complete your memoir and have fun while doing it. If you leave exercises out or do them in a different order you will find it more difficult to tap into your well of memory, nourish your creativity and complete the memoir you are seeking to write.*