



Healing the Wounded Writer

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Has anyone ever read your journal without your permission? Have you ever been mocked or criticized or teased or embarrassed because your handwriting was deemed illegible, or you spelled some words wrong?

If so, it's possible you've got "writing wounds" – pockets of shame, intimidation or humiliation that you associate with the act of writing. Here's a six-part write designed to help you heal them.

Write 1: The Two-Column List

In the left-hand space below, list everything you can think of that might be a trauma – large or small – associated with writing. Don't judge whether or not it's "important." If you're thinking of it, it's important. Use more space if needed.

Memories/Images/Recollections	Messages Received
Ex: My brother snooped in my diary – age 14	Ex: It's not safe to write a diary!
Ex: I got Cs and Ds on English papers	Ex: I'm a lousy writer

Write 2: Note Themes and Patterns

Review your list and see if there are themes or patterns. If so, write them below. In the example, the theme might be "Writing isn't safe – I can't trust others, and I can't trust myself to do it well."

Write 3: Explore One Incident

Choose the one incident from your list that was the most disruptive, or that feels the most unresolved. Write for 5-7 minutes about the incident, exploring both thoughts and feelings.

Write 4: Reclaim Your Writing

Write an Unsent Letter to whoever or whatever represents the writing wound. Start out your letter, "What I really want you to know is ---" Deliver your core message to the person (the person who snooped) or institution (the English class you flunked) or entity (the blogosphere/social media culture that requires constant wit, smarts, and talent). Announce what you are reclaiming. Take it back.

Dear _____,

What I really want you to know is

And from here on out I plan to

Write 5: Synthesize the Learning

Re-read everything you have written so far. What do you notice?

As I read this, I am aware of.... (or: I notice.... I feel.... I am surprised by....)

Write 6: Acknowledge Yourself

Now write a little note of appreciation to yourself, thanking yourself for doing this work.

Dear Me,

*Love,
Me*