

Write to the Heart of Motherhood
connecting to our true voice in the middle of our messy lives

Week 1. 'WHAT and HOW'



1) Assignment + Artistic Prompts

2) A Technique to Practice

3) Methods for the Mother-Writer

Hello, wonder Mama :)

Welcome to your 'What and How' toolkit for week one! Every week I'll add to each list, so by the end of the course you'll have a nice plump bundle of tools to carry forward. I wish you tenderness and tenacity as you set forth on your unique adventure of experimentation and play, and a warm reminder of this week's theme: **Start Here, Wholehearted**. When all else fails, just look around and tune to this very moment, from your heart. Enjoy!

1) ASSIGNMENT + ARTISTIC PROMPTS:

Your first assignment this week is to go digging for, and carve to your liking, an INTENTION for this course. An intention is an enduring, targeting mechanism, a pulse, a touchstone, for all the many moments we become distracted or disoriented. Most importantly, **intention guides attention**, so having a potent, pithy intention can make all the difference in shaping our experience.

Try these simple steps to form your intention:

- **Start big.** What is most important to give your attention and life force to? Aka, what do you need to do, and who do you need to become, before you die? Start your writing adventure here with these heart-opening, heartbreaking inquires, by simply journaling or free writing for 5-10 minutes without stopping.
- **Bring focus.** Highlight what was most enlivening or surprising in what you wrote and continue writing about how to translate this realization into something attainable in our six weeks together. By “attainable,” I mean something you can achieve by doing, OR remind yourself to remember about your being.
- **Craft your intention.** In my experience, intentions are most effective when they are a combination of doing and being injunctions, when they are framed in the positive (instead of something I “won’t” do or be), when they are VERY short (i.e. a couple words, or phrases), and when I allow myself to think, breathe, feel, and move them, so they are full-bodied, rather than just a concept in my head. For example: “Six poems written from gratitude, devotion and play” – and I speak this intention to myself internally or out loud, breath and feel the impact of the intention in my heart, belly, and whole body, and then I walk out into my next task moving from that feeling. Sharing an intention in conversation is also a very helpful way to bring it to life, so try speaking it to a friend, and by all means, share it in our private Facebook group so we can all hold it with you! It’s very grounding and energizing to speak, feel and move your intention at the start of each day. But, of course, be gentle with yourself if you forget! And, let your intention evolve and change as it needs to, in order to remain relevant and invigorating as your journey unfolds.

Additional Artistic Prompts:

After writing your way to your intention for the course, here are some additional artistic prompts and contemplations to spur your writing:

- Tuning to this moment, what is here that you haven't noticed before?
- What do you feel that you maybe don't want to acknowledge, or feel fully?
- What do you love most right now?
- What is in your refrigerator right now?
- What is something funny or touching your child has said recently?
- What can you praise in yourself, your immediate environment, or the world, right now?

2) A TECHNIQUE TO PRACTICE:

Our technical prompts will always be relatively simple and fun to engage. You can practice them on their own, like practicing scales on the piano, simply to develop the skill, or you can include it as a cue and prompt within whatever writing you are exploring.

This week's technique is showing versus telling. Telling what happened or is happening is great, and necessary much of the time, but when we show our story or feelings, through images, active description, or metaphor, it gives a visceral transmission of experience to our reader. They feel directly, in their own nervous system and imagination, what we are conveying.

Here's an example: In one of my poems, instead of saying, "I like to write early in the morning," I tried to show more evocatively by saying, "I love to wake early, and sip strong coffee, and sit like a queen in the dark, and ask my death to reach back and teach me, so I can write down what I hear."

or

Instead of saying, “There are piles of dishes in the sink,” we could say, “The mountain of plates from last night’s dinner send a mean glance in my direction,” or something like that :) The trick is to play around, and experiment with what images and sensory descriptions (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell) make the experience come alive for you.

3) METHODS FOR THE MOTHER-WRITER:

These are sneaky tricks for connecting to your writing in the middle of your mothering, which I’ve discovered work for me, and I hope might work for you. I’ll add two per week for you to experiment with – I hope they help!

- 1) If you have an idea, or say something poetic, or hear your child say something inspiring to your writing, and you’re in the middle of daily life, **record yourself an audio message** on your phone or device, instead of trying to hunt down your writing document or pen and paper. You can come back later during focus time, and transcribe what you recorded. This has helped me to not lose so many ideas or lines!
- 2) **Write during sleep times.** Get up early and write when everyone’s still asleep. Write during naptime. Write after they’ve gone to bed. Write in the middle of the night after getting him or her back to sleep. Your sessions can be very brief or long, but there is something about the time around sleep, or when others are sleeping, that can drop us down into a very relaxed and focused state, fueled by imagery and feelings from the subconscious.