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The Writer's Mind
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It's Not Just Scribble!

I think writers are brave. Whether they admit it or not, writing is one of the most private acts of sharing one can commit. Writing is a tedious process in which someone gathers up thoughts, thinks about how they are going to say it, and then tries to put it down on paper for others' eyes to read. It's basically like putting yourself into a room filled with an infinite amount of people. You can't see everyone that is listening to you, but your thoughts are affecting them regardless of the fact that they aren't visible to you.

My first memory of writing was from when I was very young, maybe about three years old. I watched my mother write a note in script and I was so curious on how to write in a "pretty way." I thought that I could imitate her by simply scribbling all over my children's story books. Although this did not please her, she wasn't angered because she knew I was curious and anxious to begin writing myself.

My curiosity about writing continued to grow. Shortly after the previous incident, I began first grade and one of my first assignments was to write a report about an animal. I was assigned the horse. The project consisted of a paragraph written on an index card and a 3-D diagram. I remember constructing the horses out of clay and molding them onto a square piece of lime green Styrofoam. The legs were super skinny and they had bulging bellies almost dragging along the bottom of the box. I used Popsicle sticks to

construct a fence lining the perimeter of the stable. I remember using some other kind of material for hay but I can't quite remember what it was.

At the time I thought this was one of my greatest accomplishments. It was one of the first projects I actually sat down, planned out how to execute it best, and shared ideas with the class. I was a quiet little girl. Speaking in front of the class was never an action that brought feelings of comfort and security. Presenting my horse project was a challenge for me but I did it. That was one of my very first memories of sharing my own ideas, putting them down on paper and having someone give me feedback on everything I was saying and writing.

One of the lessons I learned from having to complete the horse project is that when you're writing academically, it isn't always going to be about the subject you would prefer to write about. However, if you're not writing about something that is meaningful to you, your writing is going to be awful. I don't remember exactly what I focused on in my horse report, but I believe it had to do with a special bonding that takes place between a mother and baby horse because I remember making the mother and baby horse out of clay. I remember this because my classmates made fun of them because they couldn't tell who the mother was and who the baby was.

This is another piece of that first writing assignment that has stayed with me all these years. When you're presenting material to other people, you're surrendering a part of yourself. You're basically saying it's okay for the world to critique me, and it's okay for me to be wrong in another person's eyes. In first grade, I wasn't ready for these types of responses. Looking back on that whole situation, I have a different outlook.

Good writing is a hard definition to create. What standards are there to go by? Why should someone else's opinion affect the way I feel about my writing? I think before a writer can show their work to the eyes of others they must get to a point where they are proud and confident about their work. Writing is a process, and for some writers maybe that point won't ever come, but if it doesn't come then they shouldn't go public with their writing. In first grade, I was proud of that horse project but I wasn't at the point where I had an attachment to that project where I had the ability to defend it. If it was me now presenting the horse project, I guarantee the molded horses would still look the same. I just have the ability to use better words to convey my ideas rather than images.

If a writer puts their heart and soul into a piece and they have reviewed it, and re-written parts of it and the words of others are not going to affect how they feel about their creation, then they are ready to put their thoughts out there to the world. I just think that writing is such a personal action because of the fact that it is basically thinking out loud. I am thinking of thoughts in my head, and my hands are typing them onto paper, making them take their most tangible form.

Writers have the ultimate freedom when they are ready to surrender their work. They can write anything they want. Some people may disagree but as long as the author can defend their position, they can affect infinite people without ever knowing exactly how many people read their thoughts and were personally affected. Writing has the power to change circumstances, preserve history, or serve as comfort.

I have many different writing places depending on the reason for my writing at a particular time. My academic writing takes place at my desk at Rowan. I sit at a fairly

uncomfortable chair, with a comfy cushion to come to a happy medium that makes my seat tolerable. There are minimal distractions in my room at Rowan, but there is just enough noise to keep me focused on my writing. If I'm upset, my writing will take place in my bedroom at home in North Jersey. I'm usually curled up in a blanket, probably lying on my side balancing my Winnie the Pooh journal on the mattress of my bed. I feel like the majority of the time it's either raining or at night right before I go to bed because that is when I do the most thinking and evaluating of my life.

One point I would like to make is that I rarely do any kind of writing at my desk in my room at home. My mother would probably be disappointed to hear that, but it's the truth. It's this very large, off-white desk that takes up the entire side of my one wall to the right of my door. It has three drawers on the left side, and two large drawers on the right side, along with a shelf that slides out for my keyboard. The reason why I wanted this desk was because of the beautiful handles. They finish off the piece of the furniture with dainty floral accents. It's pretty, but not functional. I think I'm intimidated by the size of the desk. It feels like an executive should be going over expensive business deals instead of me writing for school, or in my journal.

Writing is like a sandwich. You have to start with a foundation; bread; maybe a roll, a bagel, wheat toast. Then, depending on the type of writing piece, it may be a more complicated or bold tasting sandwich. Instead of peanut butter and jelly on white bread, this sandwich is made on French bread spread evenly with honey mustard served open faced with melted fontina cheese. If too many components go into a writing piece it can get too confusing; too hard to understand. The flavors of a sandwich can become too

overpowering and take away from the sandwich. Too big of a sandwich may be too hard to swallow.

Writing is all about finding the middle ground. What is a topic that you feel enough personal connection to in order to have passion to write about it, but won't cross the line when the public is evaluating and judging you? The desk that writing takes place at can't be too big or too small and the chair can't be too comfortable or too uncomfortable. Maybe you want to share your writing with some people, but not with everyone. You're at that middle point.

I think I have reached the middle point of my writing career. I have crossed the river flowing of curiosity, and I have overcome the mountains of fear in sharing personal ideas with others, but I am not yet ready to show myself to the world and let everyone in. Ultimately, I write for myself. I write to get thoughts out of my head and tuck them away on paper for a while because I'm exhausted of pondering them over and over. I write to express my feelings in response to someone else's writing. I write for me. I can handle other people reading my thoughts, but I am not ready for the world to respond to them.

I want to inspire, I want to lead, and I want to encourage my future students. Maybe someday I will share with them my philosophy on writing, or maybe my philosophy will remain on this paper for only certain eyes to see. I wrote this paper to surrender a piece of me- my writing, my passion.