

Writing your Spiritual Journey

A Creative Reading and Writing Course

*In the middle of my life I found myself in a dark wood .
The way was wholly lost and gone ...My will and desire were revolved, as a wheel that
is equally turned, by the Love which moves the sun and stars.
(Dante- beginning and end of Divine Comedy)*

This course offers you a safe place to explore whatever you need to explore, irrespective of your beliefs. As Rumi reminds us, "there are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground." In this *word and story* course we invoke the image of the pilgrim, path and journey. This one-on-one apprenticeship aims to take you further up the writing mountain and offer you a deeper engagement with your beliefs, yearning, craft and calling. Our approach is a holistic one where a meeting of reader and writer takes place in and through the text.

The word 'spirit' touches every aspect of our lives. We journal about our changing beliefs and find the stories around those moments of insight. When like the snake we shed a dead skin ...lived through that dark night... opened the prison door to a larger world... stepped into the great unknown. We ask many questions as we travel.

You will explore how to

- align yourself with the one inside who knows how to write
- start and sustain that conversation
- be thrilled by words and find your joy
- breathe life into the words and let words breathe life into you
- explore the symbols and images relevant to you
- find your voice and be present in your writing
- engage the reader as a creative partner

The course lasts for four months. It begins when you are ready. There are 8 'assignments' (A1 –A8) – roughly 2 pr month

Structure

This course is structured in the nature of an ongoing conversation with a few chosen writers, (ancestral or alive) with me and with yourself. We work though email, phone/skype or face to face. I encourage you to keep a journal to record your observations, dreams, ideas and reflections. The journal is vital to the process.

We begin with two months of reading (for reading teaches us how to write) and journaling . You meditate, and reflect on writers or poets that you are passionate about (from the syllabus or you can come up with your own sources) You engage closely with these texts. You write in your journal. We enter this conversation. All along the way I share my writing process with you and, as part of the learning, invite you to respond to my work if you wish. Then you move into your creative writing.

Month One – reading

Read the texts with your body ... become aware of sensations as you read.

A1: Copy out by hand passages that move you. Learn a passage/poem by heart. It's about getting inside the skin of a writer. Feeling their rhythms.

A2: Draw your personal tree – the tree of your spiritual life. The roots of influence... the strength and flexibility of the trunk.... the branches of belief ... the leaves of faith and fruits of the spirit... visit your journal

Month Two – more reading

A3 : Create a collage of images that speak of your spiritual Journey ... record in your journal

A4: Write about a place (interior /exterior) that inspires the sacred in you

A5: Music... respond to music – write while you are listening to it - e.g. a mass, a chant a whale cry....

Month Three – creative writing

A6: respond to a creation myth ...

A7: go for a walk then create art in nature... write the story

Month Four - more creative writing

A8. design your own ritual /celebration

For this assignment work on a presentation/celebration of your understanding of the selected writers, your own creative texts and journal entries. You can offer this to a group of friends as an informal oral presentation. I can guide you with questions so it could be a dialogue if you prefer it. You will be putting on the mantle of the seeker/ writer.

Recommended Texts

Frederick and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spiritual Literacy, reading the sacred in everyday life* – (foreword by Thomas Moore) 1996

Marc Ian Barasch, *Field Notes on the Compassionate Life, a Search for the soul of kindness*, 2006

I also supply a set of readings

Dorian Haarhoff - writer, poet, story-teller, mentor and speaker. Passionate about developing innate creativity and imagination, he believes in the power of stories to create new realities and free us from mental prisons. To inspire...and surprise...bring healing. To build our belonging. A former Prof of English (Namibia), has also taught in a Canadian creative writing faculty. Dorian's workshops are based on his texts, *The Writer's Voice* and *The Halo and the Noose*, (co- authored) His eclectic spirituality draws on many mythologies ,many faiths, many mystics

Your far reaching and profound knowledge and your generosity and calm clarity of spirit makes you a superb teacher. Not only do you share your rich knowledge and insights. You emanate a field of creativity in which we are inspired and gladly participate. (Evette Weyers, sculptor)

There is such a strong spiritual presence in your workshops and in your work. I am astounded by how you are always absolutely present, how you always allow yourself to be touched by other people's stories. (Mari Pete, poet)

The course includes my book *The Writer's Voice a workbook for Writer's in Africa* (If you have the book deduct R150 from the course fee)

Cost R3980

payable in two instalments - beginning of month 1 and 3

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