



Resources

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[NAMW Website](#)

13 Reasons to Write Memoir

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Hi, this is Linda Joy, the President of the National Association of Memoir Writers. I'd like to welcome new subscribers to our newsletter and all our new members this month!

[Read Stories in the NAMW Cafe](#)

As we settle into fall routines, it seems like a good time to review some of the basics, to get to the heart of why we write memoir. While it's not all inclusive, I'm passionate about these 13 reasons everyone should consider writing a memoir.

[Links to Free Memoir Writing Resources](#)

[Become a Member](#)

1. Writing your deep truths frees you from the past and creates meaning out of chaos.
2. Re-membling brings all parts of you together again.
3. Writing with your own voice is empowering, story by story.
4. Telling your truth frees you from shame and guilt.
5. Your stories on the page will be different from the ones in your head.
6. Writing a memoir is a transformational and spiritual path.
7. Your story can help change others' lives.
8. Research proves that writing heals both body and mind.
9. Creating a narrative where you are the "I" character and the narrator integrates the past and the present.
10. Integrating who you are and bringing memories out of the darkness changes your brain.
11. Writing and sharing your story breaks you out of isolation and connects you more deeply with the larger world.
12. Becoming an author is empowering and inspiring, and frees you from the shadows.
13. Getting published online, in an anthology or in your own book, are ways to get witnessed and move from victim to leader—showing others the way to healing and greater self-esteem.

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I'm happy about the new content and features that have recently been added to the NAMW website, as well as some of the exciting events that are coming up in the

writing world locally and nationally.

In this newsletter, we present NAMW Advisory Board Member Sharon Lippincott's second featured article on the use of Dialogue in Memoir writing. Please be sure to scroll down to the bottom of the newsletter to read this enlightening article.

New Memoir Writing Resources on the NAMW website

Members can now access the audio for Kim Pearson's free preview workshop that took place just a few weeks ago. This audio recording dives into [*Your Memoir and History—What Part Did You Play in 1984?*](#).

Members can also find the audio for the NAMW September member-only teleseminar hosted by Becky Levine, [*Critiquing Memoir: Being Professional with the Personal*](#).



We are pleased to highlight our Featured NAMW Member for the month of October, Robin Brooks. Robin is a book designer, artist & writer. You can read all about Robin on her [NAMW Featured Member page](#).

We honor Robin for the courage and passion she demonstrates through her writing. Congratulations, Robin!

Upcoming Events at NAMW

We have several events and new workshops that are being planned for the coming months at NAMW that will be helpful to the development of your skills as writers, memoirists, or personal historians. You can find all the finalized events outlined below, but please be sure to [check out the NAMW website for new additions](#).

November 6th through 8th--*Only a Few Spaces Left*

[Harvesting Our Wisdom: Napa Valley Writing Retreat](#) with Linda Joy Myers

November 13, 2009--*Free for NAMW Members*

[Tap Into Your Creativity](#) with Mary E. Knippel

December 11, 2009--*Free for NAMW Members*

[Planning and Publishing In Spite of Ourselves](#) with Rebecca Lawton

Stories from the Heart V



**Story Circle Network
Fifth National Women's Memoir Conference
February 5-7, 2010
Wyndham Hotel, Austin, Texas**

Stories from the Heart V will bring women from around the country to celebrate our stories and our lives. Through writing, reading, listening, and sharing, we will discover how personal narrative is a healing art, how we can gather our memories, how we can tell our stories. We welcome readers, writers, storytellers, and any woman with a past, present, and future. There will be opportunities to explore difficult or hidden issues, expand our relationships with other women, and discover different modes and media—such as art, dance, and drama—for sharing our stories. Come, learn, share, celebrate with us as we honor our stories! [Click here to learn more.](#)

Writing Exercises: The Seasons



We all have memories of the different seasons. Thinking about seasons gives us rich sensual data that can help us write stories with all the sensual details that help us take ourselves back into a place and time, and to invite our readers to remember their own experiences of the seasons.

1. Write about fall smells, colors, and sounds.

Use sensual details of all four senses: color, sound, smell, texture.

2. What rituals did your family partake of in the fall? Raking leaves, the start of school, or getting ready for the holidays. Show through action these rituals, and how you felt about them.
3. How did you feel when you were alone on an autumn day? What did you do? Where would you be? Be sure to include details of place and setting in your writing.
4. Describe the rituals of your family during certain autumn activities—harvest, canning of food, making clothes, reading books, preparing for long periods of

darkness. What were the routines like for you and your parents? What do you know about grandparents and how they prepared for winter?

5. Write about teachers—did you look forward to school or dislike it? What were your favorite subjects and teachers, and why.

6. How was being at school different for you than being at home? Did you have a different sense of freedom, or a persona that you could not show at home?

7. What is the spirituality of this time of year for you?



California Writers Club- Marin Branch Special Centennial Event

Sunday October 18, 2009, 1 to 5 p.m.
Book Passage, Corte Madera
Fee: \$45.00*

As the California Writers Club celebrates its 100th Year Anniversary, and Marin branch as a 10 year charter with CWC, join us as we host your favorite authors in an afternoon celebration of music, food and wine, readings and books, agent interviews and more. [Read More.](#)



Overcoming Your Fear of Writing Dialogue in Memoir by Sharon Lippincott

NAMW Advisory Board

"What is the single most effective thing we can do to add zip to our stories?" This question recently came up in a memoir writing class. The answer was simple. "Dialogue! This one tool is a powerful way to show your characters instead of telling about them, add variety and zest, and get readers involved in the action -- all this and more at the same time."

Many memoir writers avoid dialogue altogether or tiptoe around it, using it sparingly and with great caution. Some believe the myth that you have to be born with a gift or ear for it. Others are uncertain about the technicalities. Rest assured, the myth is false. While it is true that richly colorful dialogue does come more easily to some than others, with a little research on technique and lots of practice this skill can be learned.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle for memoir writers is the fear of a memory slip that

puts the wrong words in someone else's mouth. "How on earth can I possibly remember what Aunt Jessie actually said on a specific day when I was seven?" one woman asked. "That was fifty-eight years ago. Nobody would believe me."

In three words: don't worry about it. Make it up. Write what you think she probably said. The reasoning behind this advice is three-fold:

1. If you don't recall the exact words, nobody else will either.
2. If you write dialogue with confidence and conviction, expressing the truth of the occasion to the best of your recollection, the power of your personal truth will overshadow reader doubts.
3. Memoir is about what you remember, and your memories are what shape your life and who you are far more than "what really happened." Things like dates and places can be verified, but the literal transcript of a conversation is not one of them. Research shows that within hours, memory begins to fade.
4. This is your story. Claim it and defend it. If others disagree with what you've written, gently suggest they write their own versions.

So much for the Truth in Memoir objections. Now, grab your favorite pen or keyboard and get those fingers moving. Write a story that involves some interaction and fill it with dialogue. Use slang, colloquialisms, and all the other things you generally edit out of narrative, but do skip the uhms, ers, likes, well, sand other ear clutter. Write it real, write it true to the characters as you remember them, and immortalize them on the page.

To find resources to polish your skills, Google around. Answers abound. Join a writing group, in your hometown or on the web. And closely study the way your favorite authors use dialogue. Your stories will soon be bursting at the seams with zip and vitality.

I hope you all are settling into your fall routine. Just remember to keep writing! If you have any questions, or would like to suggest a workshop topic please let us know. Email us at: info@namw.org.

Warm regards,
Linda Joy Myers
National Association of Memoir Writers
Be Brave. Write Your Story.