

The Joy of Writing

by Joanna M Leone

I can still remember my teacher's voice as she said, "Class, please take out your writing journals." I jumped with excitement as I reached into my desk for my light blue journal. Since my family knew that I loved to write, they always bought me sparkly pink and silver pencils. It really made writing more fun! However, some of my friends groaned in agony when they realized that math class was over and it was time to write! I always smiled at my friends and I said, "Just think about something you love or something that makes you smile.



Writing is easy if you think with your heart." I'd always remind others that it's important to capture the reader's attention and make them feel as though they were in the story. Also, make the reader wonder, "Wow, what will happen next?"

As soon as my teacher picked up her new piece of yellow chalk, I knew that she was getting ready to write the topics for our writing class. I sat up straight, took out my glitter pencil and opened to a fresh, new page. I was ready to take another writing journey and I felt so free with my sparkly pencil. I wondered where my heart and pencil would take me during my writing class.

My eyes were glued to the board as my teacher wrote our writing choices. Oh, I loved it when the teacher gave us choices. After my teacher wrote choices A, B and C, my eyes always travelled down to choice D. There was something special about the words, "Choice D: Write about anything you would like". That's the topic I usually chose.



While some students curled the corner of their journal or scribbled, I instantly started to write. I thought to myself, "What can I teach my teacher today?" I know that sounds odd, but I wanted my teacher to smile, learn something new from me and take a journey with me. After all, I didn't want my writing to simply be words on a page. That would make my teacher's day boring. I always wanted my teacher to feel as though she was actually in the story. It was important for me to awaken my teachers' senses with guided imagery, adjectives, sights and sounds. I wanted my teacher to grab a bag of popcorn, sit on the edge of her chair and wonder, "Wow, where is Joanna going to take me next?"

It always eased my mind when the teacher said, "Don't worry if you don't finish today. You can do it for homework." I smiled each time the teacher allowed us to finish our stories for homework because it meant that I got to sit in my favorite writing spot at home! The sparks would fly from my pencil as I sat on the fireplace in the living room or as I sat on the stairwell in my hallway. If it was a Spring evening, my third favorite spot was on my front porch, not far from the tulips and flowers that were

in bloom. Adults need their favorite writing spots as well! We need to detach from our busy lives and leave room in our schedules to write. My favorite writing spot as an adult is still near my fireplace or any fireplace. However, I no longer write on my stairwell or front porch. It's usually on a hiking trail, during a train ride, or near the ocean. Also, I've returned to my alma mater, Sacred Heart University, to write. Sometimes it's in front of the library, in the same spot where I had written as a student. Other times, it's inside the Sacred Heart University Library, not far from the aroma of coffee.

My heart always led me to write about real experiences. I had a hard time writing about things that did not exist. There was always a lot of activity and commotion at my house. Therefore, it never took me long to figure out what to write about as I went to my favorite writing spot. I always made time to sit in my favorite writing spot each day. I was able to focus on choosing the right adjectives, metaphors, similes and all of the other important ingredients for my story. I believe that writers always need their favorite spot so that stories can flow from the brain and to the heart and fingers.



By the time I was in college, I had written stories in several journals. My love of writing then led me to become the Editor of the student magazine at Sacred Heart University. I had the honor of writing a story and selecting the other student work that would be included in the literary magazine.

I had always kept a journal throughout my adult life. Sometimes I would pull out my journal and write about something beautiful that had caught my eye and my heart. Other times, I found it enjoyable to write about family gatherings, celebrations, traditions and romance.

During a hike on a beautiful fall day, I had decided to take my friends' advice and write a book. I didn't want the book to be solely about my experiences, but I wanted to learn about others' experiences as well. It is with the encouragement of my teachers, professors, family and friends that I was able to publish my first book, "Slices of Life Italian-American Stories."

Writing and the literary world will always be at the core of my life and locked in my heart. My advice to anyone who enjoys writing is as follows:

It brings me joy when I see children and adults writing. It's a special gift that you can develop. Your creative work is a gift that never fades.

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