

Living Words Creative Writing Workshop Exercise

"Words of Wisdom"

By Dr. Kara Bopp

Introductions (5 minutes)

Have the workshop mediator introduce the writer. The writer should tell participants a little bit about himself and his interests. Have him or her give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Everyone enjoys, yet also despises, giving and receiving advice from family and friends. We usually do so verbally, but today we will write down our words of wisdom. We will start with the theme of words of wisdom by sharing one piece of advice that you are happy you received sometime in your life OR a piece of advice that you wish you had received.

Icebreakers (5-10 minutes)

For the icebreaker, participants should discuss one piece of advice that they are happy they have received during their lifetime or a piece of advice that they wish they had received but did not.

Writer introduces the topic (3-4 minutes)

Have the writer tell participants that each of them should choose a topic that they want to give advice about, such as friendship, marriage, parenting, etc.) and a particular person to whom they want to give that advice.

Have the writer or mediator tell the participants that this writing exercise requires them to write sentences rather than extended prose. So, they will be working to find the correct words that you want to use in order to express your advice and to find ways to summarize their ideas.

Writing

Use the following order for the activity:

1. Choose a person for whom you want to give advice. Write down his or her name, a
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little bit of information about the person, and what type of advice you want to give. Try to be as specific as possible about what type of advice you want to give. For example: "I want to write advice to my niece who is getting married in four weeks. I want to give her advice about how to have a long, successful marriage." Take the time to write a list of people and types of advice then choose one. (5min)

2. What three pieces of advice do you have for that individual? First, jot down as many ideas as possible, and then look at list to see what three themes arise. From these ideas, write your three pieces of advice. (5min)

3. What are three things you do not advise them to do? Again, jot down your ideas, then look at list to find themes, and then work into three things you do not advise them to do. (5min)

4. Re-read your previous responses (advice and what you don't advise). How do they fit together? Is there an overall theme that arises? If so, what is it? What are your "words of wisdom"? (5min)

(Time permitting with #4 the following questions can also be added.)

5. If you have a "motto" or "words to live by" what are they? Is it consistent with your advice? What are some of your favorite sayings?

Take time to allow the group to share responses for each of the parts with the other members of the group. (5min)

Sharing (10-15 minutes)

Take time to allow the group to share responses for each of the parts with the other members of the group.

Thanks/ Goodbye (1-2 minutes)

Have the moderator thank everyone, including the guest writer, and also tell participants what to expect for the next session.

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