

Bereaved Families of Cape Breton

Creative Writing Prompts

- Write freely about your place of pain or sorrow for 15 minutes or more. This is where you must start for healing to take place. Relive the day your life was forever changed. It may be hard. You may cry. Tears are cleansing.
- After having poured out your story in many words, try writing your story in 100 words or less. This exercise shifts the cyclical nature of your thinking pattern to tell your story in a new way. Read more about the trauma healing benefits of this writing to heal exercised that sparked my first grief poem.
- Make a list of things that happened in your life that were not supposed to happen. These are things that were not part of your hopes and dreams for your life. When you feel you have written it all out, take a deep breath and close your eyes. Hold your writing up into the Divine light. What shifts as you reflect on your writing in the light of God? Write about how things shift as you see your list infused with light. (This isn't assuming that this "light" makes it all better. You might be angry with God or not believe there is a God who has anything to do with the pain of your life. The light may be asking you to examine your emotions and assumptions.)
- What is your image of the Divine? How do you view God? Where was God on the day of your greatest sorrow? Imagine the scene. Notice where God is in your story (this is not necessarily where you've been told God should be). Now write about where God is and how you feel about that. You might want to direct your writing to God in a letter.
- Love is a great virtue in life. What stands in the way of your living in deeper love within the world? What do you need in life to have the courage to love more deeply? What do you need in life to have the courage to receive love more deeply?
- Poems or quotes of others make great creative writing prompts. Find grief poems or grief quotes that either draws you or somehow makes you want to push away from it. Write about your reaction to the poem or quote. Where

do you find hope? What makes you angry? What connects with your doubts or fears? Where are you able to trust?

- Have you ever stopped to think about what your deepest desire is? What do you long for more than anything else in your life? These are not usually things or events. Many people say they want meaningful relationships, but what need is below the longing for relationships? Write about your responses to these questions.
- This writing idea comes from *Writing to Heal the Soul* by Susan Zimmermann. In the book she talks about healing places. These are places that “allow us to stand back and view our lives more broadly. (76)” They remove us from our ordinary, chaotic lives and soothe our hearts. Write about your healing place. Write about the lessons it teaches you.
- Have you been avoiding something for weeks on end? Write about it. Look at it from all angles. Write about what may be causing your avoidance. Write about what you need in order to face the thing you’ve been avoiding.
- Go through your family photo albums. Notice your reaction to various photos. When you find a photo where you react more strongly (either positively or negatively), write about it. Write about your memories. Write about your feelings. Write about what you wish you could change. Write about how you adjusted to not having the ability to change things.

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