

Northern Neck Regional Jail

Creative Medicine: Healing Through Words Volume 1, Issue 1

What's Creative Medicine?

NNRJ writers featured:

- Child Influential
- Scholar
- Reminisce
- Free Mind
- Trouble
- Bishop

Creative Medicine: Healing Through Words is an expressive writing program that seeks to restore hope and heal old wounds through therapeutic writing. My name is Mr. Sidney (pen name Hindsight) and I am the co-creator and facilitator of the writing program at NNRJ. My vision is to create an experience that is both transformative and redemptive for the participants. This is not a traditional writers' workshop; writers are challenged to think critically, push past complacency and make positive changes in their lives. Everyone is encouraged to respectfully offer and accept constructive feedback in regards to writings and personal viewpoints.

Writers have the opportunity to share their writings privately, with peers in a safe environment or through the newsletter. Each writing prompt and homework assignment will give writers a better understanding of themselves, their peers and society.

Currently, I am running a men's expressive writing group every other Sunday from 2:00 PM until 4:15 PM. I am working with NNRJ on offering a women's group every other Monday from 6:30 PM—8:45 PM. If you're interested in participating, please send a request form to Officer Farrell and let him know you want to join the Creative Medicine writing group.



Inside this issue:

Baited	2
Down But Not Out	2
Daydreamin'	2
Freedom	3
Just One of Those Days	3
Pit to Palace, Dark to Light	3
Who Knew?	4
Attitude Determines Your Altitude	4

Expressive Writing Benefits

Research studies indicate that expressive writing includes many emotional, social, psychological and health benefits. Here are a few:

1. Enhances immune function and reduces blood pressure and heart rate levels
2. Reduces anger, depression and anxiety

3. Increases performance at school and work

4. Improves mood, affect and management of emotions

5. Promotes healthy sleep patterns

6. Enhances the quality of our social lives

7. Improves writing skills, verbal communication, confidence and

listening skills.

8. Helps organize thoughts and give meaning to difficult or traumatic experiences

9. Lowers stress

10. Frees working memory which allows us to deal with more complicated issues in our lives

Baited



Fish on a hook

Hooked, no escape. You tricked me into believing that you can bring me happiness. Nothing about what you make me feel is happy. I need you. You torture me. Each time I try to leave you I can only get so far. The strings tighten and the hook reminds me of my dependence on you. I realize that it was all an illusion. How can something that feels so good hurt so bad? A beautifully despised paradox. One that I hate so much. I hate myself. I hate my life... what

life I have left. Gods blessing has cursed me. I hang here with no oxygen waiting for death to greet me with the breath of a new life after death. It's overwhelming to think of no future.

- Child Influential

Down But Not Out

"I am a survivor, I weathered my storm and won! I may be down but I'm not out."

Although often overlooked and unappreciated, my very existence is to provide life. My colorful nature shines light into a persons dark persona. My large, leafy branches usually provide comfort and protection for the weak and restless. Life would be totally impossible without me around. But as it so happens commonly in life, a storm has

come. As I stand in the midst of destruction surrounded by broken dreams and promises I must remain strong. Although I may appear to be broken and defeated to the unwise, I am as faithful and resilient as ever. I can't fault them because all they can see is what's on the surface and not where it really matters. My roots are strong, my foundation sound, I will be

back to my old previous form once again. Oh yes, not only back again but stronger because where every branch broken during my storm, two will appear. I am a survivor, I weathered my storm and won! I may be down but I'm not out.

- Scholar

Day Dreamin'



In the bed in the back room
Flippin' through the channels on the flat screen
I can smell the cigarette smoke embedded in the room
My daughter climbing on the dresser as I tell her to get down
"Why Daddy?" she replies

"Cause I said so Beautiful."

- Reminisce

I blink my eyes and all I see is bars
My celly asks me, "You good?" because I have a blank stare
I smile and say, "Yea, another day" as I walk out for fresh air.

Freedom

Just sittin' here listenin' to songs
of freedom.

I'm now wishing that I too could
be free,

I know that freedom exists right
beyond these walls,

It's so close yet so far away,

So close that I can almost feel it
but can't touch it.

There has to be a way out of
here,

There just has to be a route,

Please get me outta this box that

I'm locked in.

I want to fly like the eagle that
they sing of in the song,

Not the caged bird that Maya
Angelou wrote of.

Just when I was ready to give up
hope,

I found what I had been looking
for,

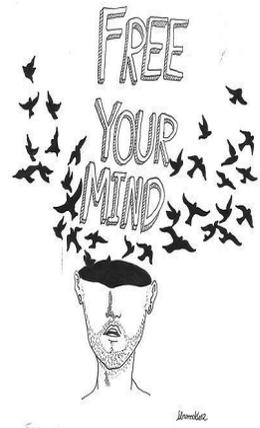
It was the key to the freedom
that I had been longing for,

My freedom was here with me
this whole time.

I can't leave these walls to which
I'm physically confined,

But as long as I free my mind
then I'll always be free!

- Free Mind



Free Your Mind

Just One of Those Days

JUST ONE OF THOSE DAYS/
HEAD DOWN HANDS
RAISED/ KNOWING THE
LORD DESERVES ALL THE
PRAISE/ MUSIC FLOWS
THROUGH THE ROOM LIKE
IT FLOWS THROUGH YOUR
SOUL/ DON'T HOLD ON TO
PAIN, LET GO AND LET
GOD/ PASTER STEPS TO THE
PULPIT, YOU KNOW WHAT

HE'S DOING/ NO LONGER A
SLAVE TO THE DEVIL'S
INFLUENCE/ FEAR DOESN'T
LIVE HERE, ONLY GRACE
AND MERCY/ YOU CAN
BRUISE MY FLESH BUT I
WON'T LET YOU HURT ME/
AS THE SPIRIT BEGINS TO
TOUCH ME, CAN'T SHAKE
THE FEELING/ ON MY
KNEES I ASK FOR

FORGIVENESS AND
HEALING/ THOUGH I
CONTINUE TO SIN, HE
CONTINUES TO LOVE/ LET
THE CHURCH SAY AMEN
TO LORD ABOVE

-TROUBLE

*"NO LONGER A
SLAVE TO THE
DEVIL'S
INFLUENCE/ FEAR
DOESN'T LIVE
HERE, ONLY GRACE
AND MERCY"*

Pit to Palace, Dark to Light

Life has many dimensions, levels
and seasons.

Each one of these require the abil-
ity to make decisions.

Despise not small, humble,
discomforting periods of living.

From your despair, shame and
lowest points are your greatest
springs of opportunity.

The dark, void and empty gives
birth the light of your life.

As the light of life appears, darkness
must and will disappear.

What was planted in fall, the seed
dies in winter season.

But by spring, seed comes to new
life. It is the fruit of the harvest.

Despise not small beginnings. Keep
going to see the winnings.

If you could peek behind your obscure
start,

You might see your true glory, true
purpose and destinies success mark.

-Bishop



Who Knew?



Love & Support

Who Knew?

A gay man, a 70 yr. old alcoholic and a woman I mistreated would teach me strength? The people I would never fathom showed me forgiveness and faith, hope and light when I was in my darkest place. When the people I loved turned their face, they showed me grace. Who knew? A gay man would teach me to keep my head up and no matter what stand tall. The alcoholic taught me unconditional love on her death

bed and the girl I mistreated might not speak to me, but her statement said it all...she didn't want to see me take this fall. The people I love so much...Where are they? I guess they were here all along, Now I realize.

- Reminisce

Attitude Determines My Altitude

"If my attitude determined my altitude than I'm 30,000 feet in the air."

If my attitude determined my altitude than I'm 30,000 feet in the air.

30,000 feet in the air over the negative energy you giving me. Flying high like soul plane with a Kool Aid smile on my face looking out of place.

Yes, that's me!

Mr. Can't nobody take my pride,

Uh-uh, Uh-uh,

Can't nobody hold me down,

Oh no, I got to keep on moving!

- Hindsight

I would like to personally thank Superintendent Hull, Major Back, Officer Farrell, Ms. Lewis, Officer Saunders, NNRJ officers & staff and the brave participants who shared their writings. Without your support, this newsletter or group would not be possible.

Offenders, if you are interested in being featured in the newsletter, please send a request form to Officer Farrell and mention that you want to join the Creative Medicine: Healing Through Words group. I also co-facilitate the InsideOut Dad fatherhood program and we're looking for participants to start our next group. If you're a father and interested in learning new parenting skills or enhancing old ones, please contact Officer Farrell and let him know that you want to join.

