



The Writers' Center of Indiana

I REMEMBER

Write “I remember...” and the first memory that comes to mind. Keep doing this for 3-5 minutes, repeating “I remember” each time, writing no more than two—three, tops—sentences per memory. Write quickly; don’t worry about spelling, punctuation, or the order in which the memories come. (They will be all over the place!) Don’t worry about the memories being silly or inconsequential, either. Just remember. Because the flow of memories comes from your right brain, most if not all of the memories will have a visual, even cinematic quality.

Count the number of memories you have. Consider each one the beginning of a piece of writing you might develop.

Choose one of the memories and repeat the same exercise, dredging up details about that single moment or experience in your life.

Freewrite the first draft, using the details as you need them and feeling free to add new ones as they occur to you. Don’t worry about spelling, punctuation, organization—any of that. But do stay focused on that one memory the whole time you’re writing. If you get stuck, go back and look at your details, choose one, and...go. Remember? Organization doesn’t matter yet.

Look at what you’ve got. Highlight lines that appeal to you, cross out things that aren’t working. Does something in the middle seem like a good beginning? Move it up. In fact, you might even cut the drafts into chunks and fool around, rearranging them.

Decide what you want the piece to be: personal narrative, poem, essay, a short story? Shape it that way. Revise, revise, revise!

Barbara Shoup, Executive Director
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www.indianawriters.org