

Writing as a Way of Healing: How Telling Our Stories Transforms Our Lives

By Louise Desalvo

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In this inspiring book, based on her twenty years of research, highly acclaimed author and teacher Louise DeSalvo reveals the healing power of writing. DeSalvo shows how anyone can use writing as a way to heal the emotional and physical wounds that are an inevitable part of life. Contrary to what most self-help books claim, just writing won't help you; in fact, there's abundant evidence that the wrong kind of writing can be damaging.

DeSalvo's program is based on the best available and most recent scientific studies about the efficacy of using writing as a restorative tool. With insight and wit, she illuminates how writers, from Virginia Woolf to Henry Miller to Audre Lorde to Isabel Allende, have been transformed by the writing process. *Writing as a Way of Healing* includes valuable advice and practical techniques to guide and inspire both experienced and beginning writers.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal
A professor of creative writing at Hunter College and a frequent guest on National Public Radio, DeSalvo (Vertigo: A Memoir, LJ 7/96) brings 20 years of writing experience to this work. She recommends writing in spare moments, uncensored, and asks her students to write five pages per week. She advises writing every detail as a reporter to move beyond a trauma. Writing links feelings of pain, grief, and loss to an event and speeds healing. DeSalvo presents seven stages of writing, from preparation/germination to completion/going public. She suggests writing a process journal so the work flows smoothly and warns against self-sabotage in the form of missed deadlines and last-minute scrambling. When the writing is completed, sharing stories in a group with other empathetic writers will sharpen the narrative. DeSalvos work is similar to Julia Camerons The Right To Write (LJ 1/99), though more academic. Camerons work is recommended for public libraries, while DeSalvos is better for higher-level writing classes.Lisa S. Wise, Broome Cty. P.L., Binghamton, NY
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From Kirkus Reviews
How writing can be used to recover from trauma and as a tool for personal growth: encouragement and suggestions from a professor of literature and creative writing. DeSalvo (Hunter Coll.) is working here from her own experience: a tumultuous childhood, the loss of her mother and sister in adulthood, and severe health problems left her in turmoil that began to calm when she wrote about her experiences (Vertigo: A Memoir, 1996). Years of seeing her students find similar succor has further convinced her of the special value writing holds as a therapeutic tool. It's cheap, doesn't take much time, is self-initiated and flexible, can be private (or public), is easily portable, can be done in sickness or in health; ``writing to heal requires no innate talent, though we become more skilled as we write, especially when we pay careful attention to the process." DeSalvo is careful to caution throughout, howeever, that writing mustn't become a substitute for medical care. DeSalvo refers extensively to James W. Pennebaker's Opening Up; he and colleagues studied in depth the relationship between writing about difficult feelings and improving health, and then specifically what kind of writing led to healing after traumatic experiences. DeSalvo especially cites Virginia Woolf, Isabel Allende, and Alice Walker as practitioners of therapeutic writing. She argues strongly that writing ``is a very sturdy ladder out of the Pit to reach freedom and safety." Her guide is a reasonable starting point for those who hope shes right. -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review
An exquisite gift of grace. It will help you write yourself out of the wilderness of pain and denial into Wholeness. --Sarah Ban Breathnach, author of *Simple Abundance*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gerald Wright:

Reading a guide can be one of a lot of exercise that everyone in the world likes. Do you like reading book so. There are a lot of reasons why people like it. First reading a publication will give you a lot of new information. When you read a guide you will get new information mainly because book is one of a number of ways to share the information or even their idea. Second, examining a book will make a person more

imaginative. When you looking at a book especially fictional works book the author will bring one to imagine the story how the figures do it anything. Third, you are able to share your knowledge to other folks. When you read this Writing as a Way of Healing: How Telling Our Stories Transforms Our Lives, it is possible to tells your family, friends and soon about yours guide. Your knowledge can inspire different ones, make them reading a publication.

Mildred Lyons:

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Carolyn Cook:

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Kimberly Morris:

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