

Introduction for “Writing Your Family Story” Program 3/1/17

Simple way to provide the family story- books like a *show Grandmothers Scrapbook of Memories*, snippets, writing prompts.

The Story of a Lifetime-ideas for topics

Get a group together who write little stories.

Very helpful resource *Your Life As Story- Discovering the New Autobiography and Writing Memoir as Literature*

by Tristine Rainer written in 1998

Following points taken from there and giving full credit to:

Full autobiography- Reasons to write:

1-writing for yourself to discover meaning of your life

2-writing your life story for your offspring so they can know you as a person, not just a parent or grandparent

3-you're are famous and it would be published

Many types of stories-

Autobiographical novel- *The Great Santini, the Prince of Tides, The Bell Jar*

Family History- *Roots, The Glass Castle*

Personal Essay- not like English 101, but exploring how your mind works, realizations you've had in life

Philosophic Memoir -*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

Memoir-can be divided by:

Particular period of your life

Coming of age Particular setting,

Relationship with individual or group Particular theme

Vocational/occupational Adventure, war stories, near death

Historical memoir Dealing with adversity

Finding your voice is more important in autobiographic writing than in any other literary form.

Things can be a starting point for preserving family history and the order/point/theme of your story.

Family Heirlooms- Quilts, recipes, photos, newspaper clippings, documents, military items, china, collectibles, Letters.

Writing totally true as it happened, chained to the circumstances, as accurately as possible, a mere recorder is the equivalent of watching C-span.

You can tell the story with insight and find the meaning within the context of your whole life. Remembering one's suffering and joys from the perspective of acquired wisdom is different from simply replaying it.

Theme is the conceptual string that runs through and holds a work together.

When you're writing about yourself, the problem is what to leave out.

Thornton Wilder said, "A good story is life without the bla bla."

There are two **memoir writing groups** in The Villages, both meet on Tuesdays at Chula Vista. The Memoirs group limits to 12 people as is filled. The other is Memoir Writing and More. I wasn't able to determine if they are taking members, but check the Rec News if interested.

In April we are having a workshop conducted by Patricia Charpentier, author of

"Eating an Elephant Write Your Life One Bite at a Time"

I haven't written my family story yet, but I am starting by putting together a family cookbook of recipes and brief character sketches of the cooks with pictures of family members. It is a work in progress now.

But our two speakers have published their family stories.

Anne Berg

Phil Goldsmith