



## **Writing Your Life with Patricia Charpentier Class and Presentation Descriptions**

### **Write Your Life - Get Started**

Learn some of the many approaches to writing your life stories, how to retrieve long-forgotten memories, painlessly organize your stories, tell an anecdote in an interesting and creative way, and so much more. Sounds like a lot of work? No way! We knock the ninth-grade English teacher with the bloody red pen off our shoulders and learn to have fun with words. Join this exciting workshop and walk out with the beginnings of your life story. No previous writing experience is necessary; the class motto: *The only way to do this wrong is to not do it at all!*

### **Write Your Life—The Next Step**

You've taken the Write Your Life—Get Started class, and you're on your way to writing your life story or family history. Now what? Take the next step and learn to keep your project moving forward, make your stories vibrant, write about people and places, and much more. Build on what you've learned in the Get Started workshop and add stories to your collection. Class combines writing instruction with in-class exercises, sharing of experiences, and a whole lot of fun. It's *recommended* but not required that you take Write Your Life—Get Started before signing up for this session.

### **Life Stories—Read, Write, Review**

Read excerpts from published memoirs and learn how to write your life story. In this class, we use the work of well-known memoirists, discuss their stories, and explore what the authors do to create their compelling tales. We then scour the text and learn techniques to apply to our own writing. You also have the chance to share your stories and obtain helpful feedback. No previous writing experience is required because our motto is: *The only way to do this wrong is to not do it at all!*

### **Read and Write**

Read a published memoir and learn how to write your own life story. In this class, we'll use the work of a well-known memoirist, discuss his/her story, and explore what the author is

doing to create this compelling tale. We'll then use the text as a way to learn writing techniques we can apply to our own life stories. The published memoir will be revealed before the start of class so participants may obtain a copy. No previous writing experience is required to take this class. The motto of the workshop is: *The only way to do this wrong is to not do it at all!*

### **Spiritual Memoir**

Spirituality comes in all shapes, sizes, textures, and hues; it is certainly not one-size-fits-all. Our definitions of spirituality may vary, but we usually agree that these spiritual beliefs add meaning and purpose to our lives. In this class, learn what spiritual memoir is and some of the many approaches to writing it. Discover the power of writing the daily moments of wonder, the dramatic occurrences that forever change lives, and the deep, gradual beliefs formed over time. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class.

**Short description:** Learn what spiritual memoir is and some approaches to writing it. Discover the power of writing the daily moments of wonder, dramatic occurrences that forever change lives, and deep, gradual beliefs formed over time.

### **Raising the Dead**

You have all this wonderful genealogical information, boxes, folders, and binders filled with priceless names, dates, places, and historical details. Add to that the stories you've gleaned from family members, and you have an amazing tale to tell. Bring your family stories to life and learn a variety of approaches to transform genealogical research into interesting and compelling stories. Turn names, dates of births, marriages, and deaths, census data, and historical information into stories of people so alive you'll swear they could walk right off the page. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class.

**Short description:** Turn names, dates of births, marriages, and deaths, census data, and historical information into family history stories. Learn a variety of approaches to transform genealogical research into interesting and compelling reads.

### **Show, Tell, Write**

This class encourages you to bring in mementoes and possessions from your past or present (or photos, if the objects are too large) that hold memories. We spend time allowing you to share the item with the class and tell its story and meaning to you. Then you learn how to write vivid descriptions of the objects, convey the sentiment attached to each, and detail its history and significance. By doing this, the story, which has made this possession so valuable to you, follows the item to your descendants. This class is like show and tell for big people with a twist—we also do our telling on the page. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class.

**Short description:** Show your treasured possessions. Tell all about them. Then learn to write vivid descriptions of the items, convey the sentiment attached to each, and detail its history and significance.

### **Let's Write Your Memories**

Is it difficult for you to write on your own? Do you do better in a group? If so, this workshop is for you. Let's Write is a hands-on class, which includes a writing lesson followed by writing in response to prompts—verbal, visual, sensory, etc. Five to ten minutes of time to begin drafting a related memory follows each prompt. Walk out of class with the beginnings of memories to take home and build upon. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class. Each session utilizes unique prompts, so take the class repeatedly.

### **The Basics of Writing Well**

Our ninth-grade English teacher with her bloody red pen often sits on our shoulders as we write, but you don't have to know the definitions of a comma splice or a dangling participle to be a good writer. Regardless of the type of writing you want to do—fiction, memoir, nonfiction, essays, letters, business, academic—knowing how to write well helps you clearly convey your message. This class provides you with a toolbox of good writing practices to use again and again and enable you to write with confidence. No previous writing experience is required to take this class.

### **Your Journey Story**

The story of how you obtained your genealogical information—the moments of serendipity, the brick walls, the stunning finds, the trips to faraway places—is often as fascinating as the research itself. Learn how to write interesting and informative stories that combine your genealogical search with your amazing data. Take your reader along as you experience the joy of finding that one piece of missing information, as you realize you and your ancestors share a common trait, or as you reach a disappointing dead end. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class.

### **Put Some Meat on 'Dem Bones**

Combine your research with historical information and turn your ancestral data into a compelling story even the non-genealogist will want to read. Learn how to bring life to your ancestors, structure a story line, depict time and place, use general information as a backdrop, and let the tale evolve into a fully developed story. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class.

### **Your Life in Lists**

We write lists all the time—grocery lists, to-do lists, guest lists, wish lists—so why don't we use the simple, everyday tool of list making to tell our life stories? Take list-making to a new level when you learn how to use lists to tell others who you are and how you became your wonderful self. We use thought-provoking and insightful prompts to look at your life from a different perspective. Learn how to use simple lists to write compelling personal and family stories. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class.

## **The Characters of Your Life**

The heart of every life story revolves around the people who tell it and those who live it. Learn how to make these important people live and breathe on the page. Look at several methods of describing characters in your life story, do group and individual exercises to hone your skills, and leave with a new way to look at those who populate your memories. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class.

## **Share Your Life, Share Your Story**

You have lived through a life-changing experience, and your story might help others through similar situations. Maybe yours is a story of survival, overcoming obstacles, rising above life's circumstances, and you want people to know there's a way out. How you survived and what you learned might make all the difference in someone's life. You have a burning desire to share your story, but you don't know how to get started. Learn to clarify your message, choose stories to support your intention, and write in a way that inspires and instructs. No previous writing experience is required.

## **Your Life Story in Photographs**

Remember that box of old photographs under the bed? Don't know what to do with them? Grab a handful of those old black and whites (but they do not have to be old or black and white pictures) and bring them to this class where we'll look at ways to tell your life story by combining images and words. You'll also learn how to look at photographs with an eye for story. No previous writing experience is required for this fun, hands-on class.

## **Moments to Memoir (version one)**

Come with an idea. Leave with a story. Learn the elements of creating a story from your life that's interesting and well-written. Practice a proven, step-by-step method of composing a story that conveys an experience or situation you want to commit to paper. Walk out at the end with the first draft of a story and an approach to writing you can use again and again. Join others who also desire to write in this friendly space where the motto is: *The only way to do this wrong is to not do it at all!* No previous writing experience required.

## **Moments to Memoir (version two)**

Moments shape our lives, and from these moments, memoirs emerge. Often, we turn to broad, sweeping strokes to tell the stories of our lives, but when we do, we choose the general over the specific and lose the powerful impact of well-selected details. In this lively workshop, learn to identify and maximize the moments that tell our stories, practice proven methods of reducing experiences to their smallest parts, and discover the best ways to shape those moments into stories readers will not soon forget. String enough of these

iridescent bits together, and voila, you have a fantastic memoir. No previous writing experience is required to attend this workshop.

### **Moments Make Magic**

The *moments* in our stories produce the biggest impact. Whether we're committed to fiction, nonfiction, or memoir, our writing sings when we turn away from broad, sweeping strokes, choose the specific over the general, and capture the power of well-selected details. In this fun and lively workshop, learn to turn moments into scenes that allow the reader to experience, not just hear about, the event. Discover the elements of well-written scenes and how to make them work for you and your stories.

### **The Writing Process**

Many think of writing as the act of putting words on a page, covering white paper with black marks, but that's only one part. Writing is a process, not a singular event. In this workshop, learn the various components of writing and how to capitalize on each stage to help create a well-developed story. Receive tips and techniques for each part of the process that are sure to enhance the quality of your writing. No previous writing experience required.

### **Editing—Where the Game Is Won or Lost**

“Rewriting is the essence of writing well, where the game is won or lost,” says William Zinsser, noted journalist and professor. Regardless of the type of writing you're doing—fiction, memoir, nonfiction, essays, letters, business, academic—editing well helps you clearly convey your message and improve the reader's experience. In this workshop, learn what editing really is and is not, the tools needed to successfully edit, different types of editing and when to do each, and the necessity of a personal editing process, which you create in the class and can use for all future writing.

### **Editing in the Electronic Age (version one)**

You have written a great story. You described the people, set the stage, electrified the events, accomplished all the tasks necessary to make your manuscript shine. But what about those annoying mistakes that hide in your blind spots? How do you eliminate unconscious habits that leak the life out of your brilliant stories? In this workshop, discover a variety of *free* or inexpensive electronic tools designed to root out typos, overused words and phrases, redundant sentence structures, and a variety of other oversights that dull the shine of your fabulous stories.

### **Editing in the Electronic Age (version two)**

You've written a great story. You described the people, set the stage, electrified the events, accomplished all the tasks you know are necessary to make your manuscript shine. But what about those annoying mistakes that hide in your blind spots? How do you eliminate unconscious habits that leak the life out of your brilliant stories? In this workshop, discover

a variety of *free* or inexpensive electronic tools designed to root out typos, overused words and phrases, redundant sentence structures, and a variety of other oversights that dull the shine of your fabulous stories.

### **Be a Speaking Sensation**

Success in sharing your message and influencing others rests on your ability to speak well and effectively communicate. Speaking is also a way we authors generate interest in our topics and sell our books, so what we say and how we say it is a skill all authors should master. In this workshop, learn the number one secret all successful presentations have and how to achieve it. Explore the business of speaking and how to use talks to touch your audience, sell books, and improve your bottom line.

### **Your Best Marketing Tool—Your Story**

We all have one—a story that explains the *why* behind the book we wrote—but did you ever think it might be the best tool in your marketing toolbox? It is. In this fun and lively presentation, discover how to use details of your story to connect with the audience, create interest in your book, and drive sales. Learn to mine your one-of-a-kind story. Use it correctly and watch people line up with cash in hand to buy your book.

### **Make a Scene**

In fiction, nonfiction, and memoir, we hear the well-worn phrase *show don't tell*, but just how do we do that? How do we place the reader in the shoes of our characters and allow them to experience, not just hear about, important events? The answer is simple—write a scene—but its execution can be challenging. Discover the elements of well-written scenes. Review a scene from a published memoir and use it to fashion your own scene. No previous writing experience is required to attend this workshop.

### **Micro-Memoir: Life Story in 1,000 Words or Less**

In his marvelous way with words, Mark Twain once said, “I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.” Very true! Writing short involves more than one may initially realize. Micro-memoir is a deceptively complex genre because to write long is usually much easier. Yet, at the same time, writing short can be incredibly powerful. Less *can* be more. Writing short forces writers to distill experiences into just a few pages or paragraphs, zeroing in on specifics of conversations, gestures, and action.

In this presentation we examine the micro-memoir genre, review stories of some of the best in the business, and practice writing short in response to a variety of prompts. Embrace the challenge of telling a life-based story—beginning, middle, and end—in 1,000 words or less.

## **Stop Talking, Start Writing**

The start of a new year is the perfect time to begin a life story writing project, and Stop Talking, Start Writing helps you do just that. We love to tell our stories—the funny ones, heartbreaking ones, the unbelievable ones—because in sharing our stories, we connect with others. But we need to stop just *telling* our stories and start *writing* them.

In Stop Talking, Start Writing, you learn:

- how to get started writing your stories
- how to come up with story ideas
- how to painlessly organize your writing
- how to overcome procrastination
- how to conquer perfectionism
- and much, much more

## **Write Your Life Stories**

"I was born a very young child..." Not! Discover new and exciting approaches to writing personal and family history in this fun, hands-on presentation. Each person is unique and different, so why should all life stories look the same? Explore a variety of methods used to pen your stories in ways that reflect your personality, interests, and abilities and learn more about techniques to retrieve memories and painless methods of organizing your material.

## **How to Write Your Life Story**

Everyone has a story to tell. What's yours? Learn ways to recount the tale only you can tell in this fun and lively workshop with Patricia Charpentier, multi-award-winning author of *Eating an Elephant: Write Your Life One Bite at a Time*. Discover ways to put your experiences on paper, retrieve memories, organize your stories, and much more. Knock the ninth-grade English teacher with the bloody red pen off your shoulder and know that *the only way to do this wrong is to not do it at all!*

## **Leave a Legacy**

Who do you write for? What message do you have to share? Why do you write? We all put pen to paper or fingertips to keyboard for a variety of reasons—to earn money, in hopes of publication, for our own pleasure, for fame, maybe just to see if we actually can write a book.

With all the time we spend creating characters and peopling our books, we need to pay attention to the characters of our own lives for it is our personal and family histories that connect us to each other, to ancestors who came before us and to generations yet to come.

This talk focuses on the importance of writing your life story, different approaches to doing so and how to get started.

## **Basics of Writing Well**

What does it mean to write well? Are there tried and true ways to improve your prose, no matter what type of writing you do? You bet!

Join award-winning author, publisher and writing coach Patricia Charpentier at this fun workshop where writers learn how to make their work more engaging and successful. The morning session discusses what makes for effective and vivid writing. The afternoon session gives you the opportunity to write with Patricia. Prompts given are designed to trigger memories you might not otherwise have thought to write about. Participants leave the workshop with a stronger writing foundation as well as the beginnings of several new stories.

## **Be a Speaking Sensation**

Success in sharing your message and influencing others rests on your ability to speak well and effectively communicate. Speaking is also a way we authors generate interest in our topics and sell our books, so what we say and how we say it is a skill all authors should master. In this workshop, learn the number one secret all successful presentations have and how to achieve it. Explore the business of speaking and how to use talks to touch your audience, sell books, and improve your bottom line.

## **Your Best Marketing Tool—Your Story**

We all have one—a story that explains the *why* behind the book we wrote—but did you ever think it might be the best tool in your marketing toolbox? It is. In this fun and lively presentation, discover how to use details of your story to connect with the audience, create interest in your book, and drive sales. Learn to mine your one-of-a-kind story. Use it correctly and watch people line up with cash in hand to buy your book.