

Writing Down The Dark

Part 3



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Welcome!

This is a therapeutic writing process for exploring disenfranchised grief. This e-book contains questions, quotes, prompts and other suggested activities. Spend some time digesting each one and then respond in the way that feels best for you.

Take your time and let each one speak to you. Use them as a launching point for your thoughts and feelings, even if they don't come right away. If you feel stuck, you could try writing about how stuck you feel to get the words flowing. They always flow in the end.

Try not to worry about your grammar or spelling and don't focus on punctuation if you don't want to. Let the words come without censoring or editing. This is a process of exploration and expression, not a writing lesson.

It's a great idea to make a sacred space in your home for this 30 days. You might also set aside regular time to drop deep into this space, a little sanctuary outside your normal day to day routine.

You can light candles or incense, surround yourself with crystals, draw and oracle card or two, take some deep breaths - whatever you need to do to be present inside your body for your writing process.

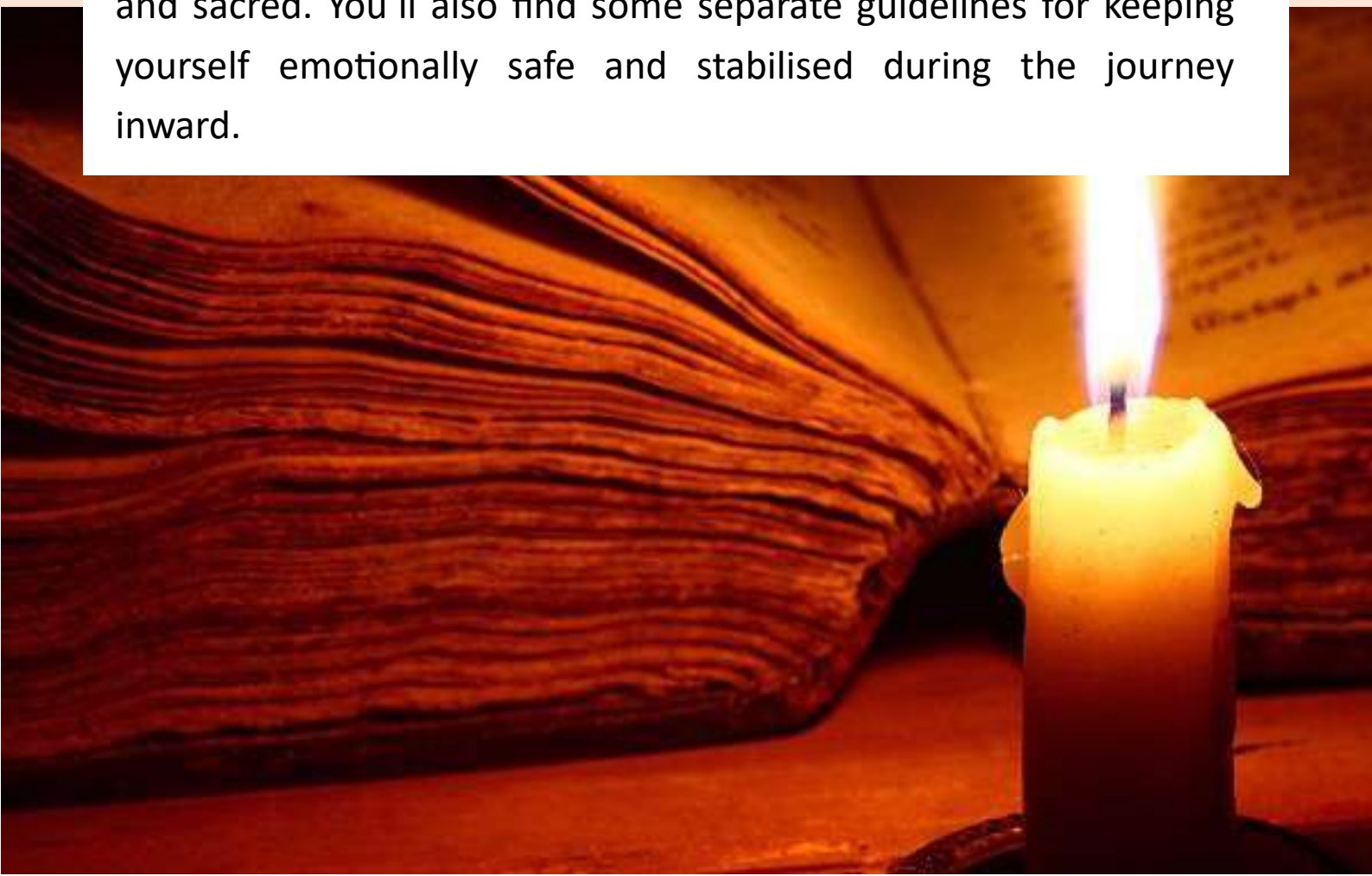
Write for a set amount of time, write a particular number of pages, or write until the words feel finished. Write longhand or type the words into a private document. Write from your heart, write all that is true, write that which has gone unspoken..

Remember that the process of writing is like any skill, it takes practice and consistency to gain the benefits. Keep going even when your voice feels stifled and it all feels too hard.

You might like to include images when you share your words This can add to the meaning and emotion evoked by your writing. You can add quotes or anything else that supports your experience

If you would like to share your writing, or how it felt to write it, you can do this in our [private group](#). If you'd like to post publicly on Instagram, we'll be using the hashtag #darkwriting. You are also welcome to send your writing to me privately by clicking reply to each prompt.

Our private group is a safe space, a place to honour what comes up for each of us. Please hold all that is shared there as private and sacred. You'll also find some separate guidelines for keeping yourself emotionally safe and stabilised during the journey inward.



I urge you to check in regularly. This process is more effective when there is support and encouragement so please, where possible, join in and share at least a few times, either with me or the group, so this becomes a supported process for all.

One of the most effective parts of the healing process is being witnessed, so let others help you as you do the same for them. Every one of your voices is important.

Providing feedback about what others post will further support and inspire you. Feedback is simply a form of saying 'I heart you, I see you, I feel you'.

You can also let us know if you don't want any feedback, that's ok too.

If you haven't already, take a moment to introduce yourself in our private group. Tell us about you, what drew you here, and where you hope this 30 days will take you.

If you have any questions or you need extra support with feelings that come up for you, please contact me. I'll see you in the group and I look forward to reading your explorations.

Leanne x



Prompt 11

BLOWBC TT

self



What is your name?

"I've always just wanted to leave, live another life, start over again, different. Not so much a different person, an unknown person, so that what is written on me is with my own hand."

~

Sara in the movie Denial (1990)

We are named in so many ways. We are told who we are, who we should be, the roles we will play. Our names are given to us by others with agendas and expectations. An identity forms from this, but it may not be the identity we know as true.

Let us shed old names and write new ones on our body with our own hand.

Tell us, what are your names, and how would you unname yourself?

Explore the prompts in whatever way calls to you. We'll be gathering in the private [Facebook](#) group where you can share your journey in ways that suit you best. If you want to Tell us, what are your names, and how would you unname yourself?

I was taken away and my identity changed. Two birth certificates.

My current surname is borrowed. People ask me if I'm related to so and so, but I don't know any of the others with my surname, I am not one of them. This is the surname of the man I married when I was just out of childhood, who I have not seen for decades.

I am long estranged from the family whose name I came to bear with my second birth certificate. I kept my married name after divorce rather than return to reminders of that self.

My birth mother changed her name through marriage, and my birth father discovered the father whose name he bears isn't his birth father. They were strangers to me anyway. There are no names for me that mean anything.

Finding my voice has meant finding my Self and her true names.

My name is freedom – wild horses on the plains and wild wolves on the tundra, running with my tribe, staying up through the night and sleeping till I wake, not when the alarm or the light tells me.

My name is wild – thick curls that can never be tamed, rainbow clothes that will never conform to a grey office, bare feet and grass and outdoors.

My name is mermaid – the ocean, the river, the lake, the underwater, bare arms and legs, hair long, a body that can be weightless and held, a body I can live in and trust.

My name is shadow – all that dwells there hidden coming to the light, glittering, making sound, taking up space and being known, belonging.

My name is broken - my wild is asking to step into the driver's seat to create a life based on authenticity and integrity, my broken is saying yes please and handing her the keys.

My name is rebellion - the rage and sadness of darker days saying here we are, we have so much to say and we will never be silenced again.

Prompt 12

blow of TS

time



A Child In Time

“I was the dandelion amongst roses.
I was never anyone’s first choice.
But nonetheless I still bloomed.
And that was enough for me.”

—

Kelsey Gustafsson

Many of us feel like orphans in one way or another. This is usually because a part of us still holds the trauma and grief of a younger version of ourselves.

It is possible to reclaim that part, to give her what she needed back then but never received. Doing this can make us feel more whole and complete.

Find a photograph of yourself as a child. If you don't have a photo, draw her, or some symbol of her. Spend some time really looking at your child self. What is the child in the image thinking and feeling? What are her wishes and hopes?

What would you like to say to her? If she needs to grieve, how would you support her in this? If she needs to rage, how would you make space for her to do this? What else does she need?

Write a letter to the child you from the current adult you. Let her know you hear her. Write to her about what lies ahead and what you would like to tell her.

Dear 8 year old Leanne

You are going to have to make it alone. There is no-one who will really listen to what's going on in this family, everyone is too afraid to acknowledge it's true or see the full extent of it.

You can tell people but they will let you down if you expect them to step in and rescue you. The truth is everyone knows anyway – your relatives know, they talk about it between themselves.

They'll tell you this one day when you're much older, but in the meantime they'll spend their time trying to convince you it's not as bad as it is. They do this because they honestly believe it helps you, but of course it just makes you feel more alone and more abandoned.

The teachers of the future would be obligated to report the welts on your legs and your falling grades but your teachers turn a blind eye because they don't know what to do and don't want to cause any drama.

The neighbours hear you screaming for help but they just turn the tv up louder, they don't know what to do either, so they just talk about it amongst themselves like the relatives do.

You're on your own, but you ARE going to make it – you know why? Because none of these behaviours are a reflection on you. Everything that goes on around you reflects the shortcomings of others, not you.

People don't deny it's happening because you're worthless, they deny it because they don't know what to do.

She isn't treating you like this because you're bad, she's doing it because she has a black shadow across her heart and she feels threatened by your light.

He isn't taking her side because she's right, he's doing that to spare himself and keep his marriage.

You really are quite invisible in all this, but please don't let that make you think you'll always be invisible or that you don't matter.

You have a great deal to offer this world, God has given you many gifts and talents and they're all just waiting to be expressed one day when you're surrounded by the sort of people who will really see you for who you are and treasure you for it, if you let them.

God will show you the way out – when you're 18 He'll reveal himself to you. There's still a way to go even then, but at least you'll be led out of this darkness

When you leave school, you won't have any social network, any career direction, or any support system. But don't let that make you despair, because you have so much resilience and God will open the door of the cage.

Although you don't believe it now, you will marry, you will live overseas, you will travel extensively, you will go to university and graduate with excellent grades, and eventually you'll start your own successful business doing what you love and making a positive impact on people.

You will learn to play piano, you'll learn to ride horses, you'll rediscover your love of nature and you'll buy your own house by the ocean.

What I want you to keep in mind is that the world wants to hear from you, the world wants you to write your books and draw your animals and speak your wisdom out loud.

Even though you never got to explore these things at school, you ARE an artist, you ARE a writer, you ARE a musician, you ARE a healer. Just don't stay hidden or the world will never know these things about you.

Do not let your early experiences of the world colour your view of it. Don't buy into those stories, don't believe they mean anything about you.

Just learn from those experiences and see them simply as a means of developing a deep compassion for others who have suffered.

You are here to make a difference and bring more love and beauty into this world – but only if you shine your light brightly. I know these people have almost extinguished your light but they will never put it out altogether.

You've just had to shut it down so you don't shine more brightly than those who live in the shadows and feel threatened by your light. This is a temporary measure. God wanted you to be here – you were almost aborted, but you weren't, you almost died at birth, but you didn't. You are here for a reason.

Follow this guidance and you will never feel alone again. You are loved and always have been.

All my love,

Leanne (2019)



Prompt 13

BLOWBLO TR

she said



That's what she said...

Previously we looked at what 'they said'. Now is the time to sit and ground yourself in the blessings you receive from those who love and appreciate you.

'She said' is a prompt from the wonderful Community Grace course I did with Hannah Marcotti.



Think about all the lovely things the people in your life have said to you in the last month or so. Check your text messages, emails, instant messages and social media posts. Remember telephone calls and face to face chats.

You can include 'he said' too if that feels right.

List the words that remind you who you are, words that give you all the feels, that heal you and make you laugh.

Let the magic people who make up your tribe shower you with blessings again.

She said 'I LOVE seeing your adventures, great JOB!'

She said 'I've never had a gift like this, thank you!'

She said 'I think you are taking some wonderful steps!'

She said 'I am so proud of you. You go girl!!!'

She said 'Who better deserves it than YOU!?!'

She said 'You are treasured, valued and loved.'

She said 'I appreciate you and the work you are putting out into the world.'

She said 'Thank you for reigniting a long forgotten childhood love.'

She said 'They are lucky to have you'.

She said 'It instantly made me think of you'.

She said 'It is a HUGE shame we're so far apart'.

She said 'I'd rather come and see you'.

She said 'What pretty mermaid hair you have'.

She said 'You don't have a mean bone in your body'.

She said 'You are a very dear friend'.

She said 'You have rare insight'.

She said 'I should've known you were INFJ'.

She said 'So much beautiful wisdom, I love reading it'.

She said 'You are going to blitz this!'.

Prompt 14

lost



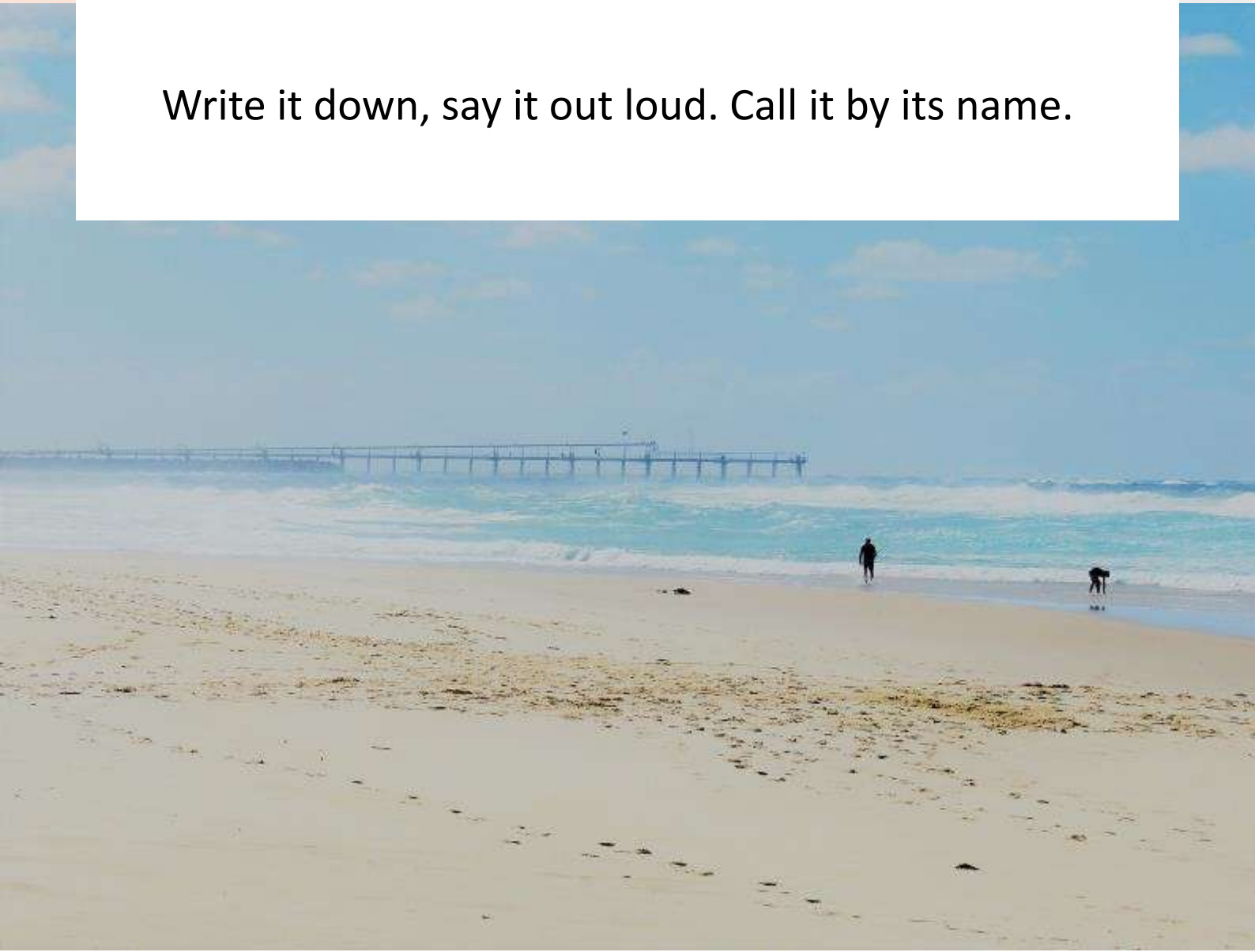
Say Its Name

It's time to write down the losses.

List everything that has been lost, stolen, destroyed.

Everything that you never received. The harm, the pain, the betrayal. No matter how small or how old.

Write it down, say it out loud. Call it by its name.



- I lost the ability to feel safe in the world.
- I lost the experience of feeling protected, of knowing that somebody cared.
- I lost my marriage, my ability to experience love, my ability to create a family of my own.
- I lost my roots, a place to call home, the chance to have lifelong friends.
- I lost my chance to enter adulthood following my dreams, doing what I loved.
- I lost the belief that if I needed help, someone would come.
- I lost connection with my body as the freeze took over, a body that could do the things I wanted to do, a body that would let love in.
- I lost the opportunity to grow up with my siblings, with blood relatives, with people I resembled, my ancestry, my origins.
- I lost trust in others but worse, in myself.
- I lost my voice. I silenced it to stay alive.
- I lost my education, my direction, my reputation.
- I lost friends, parents, siblings, partners, homes, pets.

I lost them all, and now I call them back. I claim my body, my place, my belonging, my past and future, my life. I call them mine. I call them home.

Prompt 15

BLOWING TO

life



Where Does It Live?

'The cure for the pain is the pain.'

~

Rumi

We often mistake the ***discharge of a feeling*** for the feeling itself. When we express a feeling such as anger or sadness, we can be accused of getting stuck in the feeling and dwelling on it, when we are in fact in the very process of letting it go.



'The way out is in.'

~

Thich Nhat Hanh

When strong feelings are not allowed to be discharged, we bottle them up and carry them around inside us. This not only leads to physical illness but it also means we're likely to be triggered more and more often as our blocked emotion looks for another way out.

Grief lives in the body. You cannot think it away. It must be felt and expressed - the ache in our bones, the longing in our heart, the rage in our fists, the frustration in our grinding teeth, the catch in our breath, the tension in our shoulders, We try to escape by numbing, distracting, dissociating, even leaving our bodies for a while.

The pain feels too great, the sensations too overwhelming. But if you were to listen a little, the antidote might be found inside the sensations bottled up inside our bodies. If you were able to look inside these sensations for a moment, grief might have a message for you.

Today, think about where grief lives in your body. How do you know? And if you were to listen for a moment, what would it say?

Thank You



Thank you for doing the work and honouring yourself and the world with the truth of who you are. I hope you'll keep choosing to live from a place of authenticity as you allow the wisdom of your heart, body and spirit to emerge.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Leanne Matton

I'm a registered psychologist and certified art therapist and life coach living and working on Queensland's Gold Coast. I spent years searching for ways to heal from childhood trauma, recover my creativity, and reconnect with my dreams.

Along the way I became a therapist committed to going beyond intellectual processes to a deeper level of nervous system repair and creative and spiritual healing.

For the last 23 years I've been helping people recover from the impact of childhood abuse and neglect. That journey is so filled with wrong turns and dead ends and nobody should have to walk it alone.

