



Writing, part 3, this week. “Are you a writer?” The question came to me from a young man in a coffee shop. I was bent over a composition book, fountain pen in hand, scribing away. “Yes,” the answer came before thought edited my response. Of course, I do write. My livelihood does not depend on it, but it requires it—sermons, devotionals, paragraphs for you, academic writing in the past, and essays and books in process. And, my spiritual well being requires it—prayers, journal entries, and so forth.

And, you are a writer, too. If you scribe emails, postcards, journal entries, reports, you are a writer. You don’t have to be a John Grisham or a Margaret Atwood to identify as a writer.

Julia Cameron, an accomplished writer herself, has expressed eloquently the need to write. Consider her words. May they provoke you to write and to think of yourself as a writer.

“We should write because it is human nature to write. Writing claims our world. It makes it directly and specifically our own. We should write because humans are spiritual beings and writing is a powerful form of prayer and medication, connecting us both to our own insights and to a higher and deeper level of inner guidance as well.

“We should write because writing brings clarity and passion to the act of living. Writing is sensual, experiential, grounding. We should write because writing is good for the soul. We should write because writing yields us a body of work, a felt path through the world we live in.

“We should write, above all, because we are writers whether we call ourselves writers or not. . . . Higher forces speak to us through writing. Call them inspiration, the muses, Angels, God, Hunches, Intuition, Guidance, or simply a good story—whatever you call them, they connect us to something larger than ourselves that allows us to live with greater vigor and optimism.

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“Writing centers us in ourselves and it moves us out from that center into the world around us. The ‘I’ of the beholder, the hand that holds the pen writes to get in touch—and touch is profoundly healing. At its very base, writing may be more about touch than it is about anything else.

“We write because something ‘touches’ us. We write because we want to ‘touch’ someone else. We write to ‘get in touch’ with us. When we try to write honestly, we speak of needing to ‘get in touch with how I really feel.’ We say, ‘I’m more in touch with myself.’”  
(*The Right to Write: An Invitation and Initiation into the Writing Life*. [New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1998], pp. xvi, 146-147.)

God’s peace,

Dan D+