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WRITING to HEAL: 20 Minutes a Day for 4 Days

MY GOAL IS TO SUPPORT YOU IN THIS PROCESS

Helping clients heal difficult emotional experiences is an important focus in my practice.

WRITING TO HEAL is one of several ways that I provide guidance and support for personal healing. I provide this brief process because it has helped so many people to heal a traumatic or other difficult emotional experience and to change their lives in several ways.

WRITING TO HEAL is a brief process based on groundbreaking, scientific studies by research psychologist, James W. Pennebaker, Ph.D., more than two decades ago, and on studies by many others since then. The studies show clearly that expressive writing about a traumatic experience*, or another emotional upheaval, for as little as **20 minutes a day, for 4 days**, can help you acknowledge your deepest emotions openly, write a coherent story, and find your own voice. The disturbing experience can be a single event or a long-term chronic problem.*

WRITING TO HEAL can change people's lives in several ways. It can:

- improve sleep habits
- enhance immune function
- lower blood pressure
- improve work efficiency
- improve how people connect with others
- reduce symptoms in asthma and arthritis sufferers

While some people receive great benefit from expressive writing, others do not. Thus, while the **WRITING TO HEAL** process has been remarkably successful with a large number of individuals, this does not necessarily mean it will work for all individuals.

NOTE: Traumas have the potential to set off a cascade of biological changes that can result in a host of physical and mental problems. If you are currently deeply depressed or disoriented because of a traumatic experience, **WRITING TO HEAL should not be your first course of action. See your physician or a psychiatrist or other licensed mental health specialist. Once your most severe symptoms have been stabilized, expressive writing may be particularly beneficial with a therapist who has experience in using this expressive writing process with their clients.*



YOUR *Writing to Heal* PROCESS

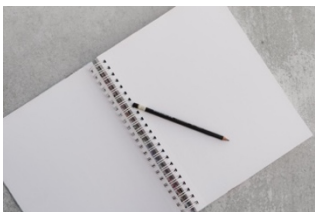
We begin your process by meeting together to **identify** the initial focus of your 4-day process (the focus can change over the 4 days) and **clarify** the writing guidelines. You will **write** for 15-20-minutes in my office or waiting room, and then we will **discuss** your experience and how it was for you.

Before closing our session, we will decide on two phone check-in times with me to discuss your writing process, during the remaining 3 days, and to fine tune it for your specific needs, as needed.

While I honor the research of Dr. Pennebaker and other researchers who have explored the links between writing and health, I also draw on my clinical experience and intuition as I work with you in your **WRITING TO HEAL** process.

OPTIONAL FOLLOWUP SUPPORT: After you have completed your 4-day process, you may choose to work with me to learn ways for looking back at your writing to assess: what made a difference for you? what may have come up that wants your attention for healing? and what challenges you experienced?

It is important to become aware of any challenges you are experiencing. At the same time, by finding out what helped you the most, you can begin to form your own writing exercises.



I am your guide and support person for this brief process.

CONTACT ME about WRITING TO HEAL:

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MarthaElin Mountain, EdD., M.A., LMFT

Writing to Heal

with **Dr. MarthaElin Mountain**

For more detail about Dr. Pennebaker's writing program, the studies that he and others have done, and guidelines, I recommend his book, *Opening Up While Writing It Down*, by Pennebaker and Smyth.