

WRITING MEDICINE FOR CANCER NATION

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WITH LAUREL BRAITMAN, PHD



Key Takeaways



Writing (or storytelling in general) isn't just for fun. It is

- A technology for imagining what is possible.
- An engine for making sense of the senseless, connection, empathy for self/others.
- A way to MEANING when HEALING is unrealistic.

Here are some key things you must remember when you sit down to write.

- Exhaustively analyze your experience before anyone else does.
- Write from an urgent need to share what you've learned thus far.

- Not be afraid of admitting what you don't remember or don't know for sure. Readers like a humble narrator.
- Not try to impress us with your intelligence or fancy language, instead MOVE us by helping us care about you and what you want.

Prompts from the Session



1	Write a wish-list of every single thing you want at the moment. Nothing is too big or too small. Reality or budget are not limiting factors. It can include things you want in/for the world at large as well, your community, etc. Write a prescription for treating despair (for yourself or someone else you know or a group of people). Include at least three specific actions they must take, a concoction of some sort they must ingest or apply, at two sounds they must listen to, at least three smells, a specific kind of place they must visit, something they must touch, and two things they must see/watch/look-at. Please also include list of potential side effects. Write about a time when what you thought was an ending turned out to be the beginning of something else.
2	Write a step-by-step set of instructions for how to survive something you weren't sure you could. Be very specific. Number your instructions. You have been invited back to your junior high or high school graduation. Write a commencement speech for the young people today. Address the graduates directly. Describe a moment you learned a lesson the hard way. Write it as a scene using as much physical detail as possible.
3	Make a list of questions you wish people asked you on a regular basis but don't. Describe a time you surprised yourself. Write it as a scene. Use all of your senses. Write your cancer (or someone else's) a deeply personal letter. Tell it everything you'd like it to know.

Extra Prompts



OPTION 1: Write a list of everything you want to remember that has happened in your life thus far. No detail is too small or too mundane. Use ALL of your senses.

OPTION 2: Describe a moment you witnessed something you can't explain. Write it as a scene in present tense.

Links We Mentioned



Here are some great resources for writers:

- Courtney Maum's "Before and After the Book Club Deal" [Substack](#)
- The "Sub Club" [Substack](#)
- [Interviews](#) in The Paris Review
- Poets & Writers [magazine](#)
- The [Freedom](#) app
- Longform [Podcast](#)

Upcoming Opportunities



Writing Medicine with Dr. Laurel Braitman: Join our next session on September 12 right [here](#).



**FIND RESOURCES FOR
WHERE TO PUBLISH YOUR
WORK** **HERE**

**SIGN UP FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF
WRITING MEDICINE, "WOMEN'S HEALTH
WITH DR. REBECCA THOMPSON" ON 10/10**

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INFO@LAURELBRAITMAN.COM
