

Call for Writings

Women's Perspectives

A Journal of Writings and Artwork by Adult Learners

Issue #7



Women's Perspectives #7: Women and Communication

will feature original writings by adult literacy/basic education students. Writings are accepted from ALL adult literacy learners. Student writers are encouraged to think and share your ideas on this theme.

- What does it mean to communicate?
- How do we communicate?
- What is technology?
- How does technology affect our communication?
- Do you have access to various types of technology? What supports do you need? How do you learn how to use them? How do you actually use them? (e.g., How I first started using Facebook.)
- How does technology help you to communicate in a way you feel satisfied? What limitations do you think there are or have you experienced with it? What is the downside of using technology to communicate?
- How does technology affect our family structures and communications with extended family?
- Does faster technology make for better communication?
- How do we communicate through storytelling?
- How do we tell or communicate our family stories?
- How does writing our memoirs communicate our life stories to others? What memoirs have meant the most to you?
- What are some challenges to communication, and how do you overcome them?

For more ideas about this theme, see PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES located at www.litwomen.org/perspectives.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

- Students have an opportunity to share their creativity, opinions, thoughts, and courage with an international audience (U.S. and Canada).
- Student writings make a significant contribution to supporting student leadership and learning from others.
- Students, whose writing is selected for publication, and their teachers, will receive a printed copy of Women's Perspectives.
- Some writings will be selected to receive Honors or Honorable Mention Awards. (Awards will include partial scholarships to attend the WE LEARN Conference on March 8-10, 2012 and/or cash prize.)
- All students who send writing will receive a certificate of participation.

Deadline to send writings: December 22, 2011

All submissions must be original writing or artwork by adult learners attending classes or working with a tutor in one of these areas:

- ESOL
- Literacy
- pre/GED
- Developmental
- Upgrading
- Workplace Training

All resources developed by WE LEARN

For information contact: Mev Miller, 401-383-4374, welearn@litwomen.org, visit: www.litwomen.org/perspectives

How to send your writing

1. Please be sure your work is original and finished. We do not edit any writing. We recommend that you use the Writer's Checklist included with the "How to submit your writings" document. You may also want to have your peers comment on your work.
2. Students may submit several writings. However, we generally will choose no more than two writings from any one student.
3. Your writing must be typed. Please use a 12-point font. We prefer Times New Roman or Arial.
4. Each piece of writing you send must have this information included on each page:
 - a. Full Name
 - b. Title of Piece
 - c. Name of your program and what you are studying (such as GED, ESOL, etc.)
5. Electronical submissions, which are strongly encouraged can either be submitted by email or mailed on CD-ROM.
6. Be sure to save your writing as a word document. Save it as .doc or .rtf. Do not save it as .wps (Wordperfect). We can't open those!

PLEASE NOTE

The Women's Perspectives Selection Committee does not edit the writings we receive (though we may make corrections of simple typos).

Writers must send finished work.

Writings accepted from ALL adult literacy learners.

All writing forms accepted

- Fiction including prose and poetry
- Journals
- Non-fiction including essay and personal letter
- Oral history including interviewing (must be written in your own words)
- Storytelling including communicating with your kids and even gossip
- Opinion essays
- Advice
- Class or group-created writings are also accepted.

Criteria for Selection

- Originality
- Creativity
- Clarity
- Use of the theme

Deadline to send writings: December 22, 2011

We MUST have a Student Contributor Information Sheet signed by the student for all writing. We cannot publish accepted work unless we have this signed permission. Please MAIL the sheet to us.

Electronic submissions are preferred & strongly encouraged.

Email to:

welearn@litwomen.org

Or

Mail (on CD-ROM) to:

WE LEARN

182 Riverside Ave.

Cranston, RI 02910 USA



We do NOT have a fax machine!

All resources developed by WE LEARN

For information contact: Mev Miller, 401-383-4374, welearn@litwomen.org, visit: www.litwomen.org/perspectives

Women's Perspectives #7

A Journal of Writings and Artwork by
Adult Learners



Pre-writing Activities

The Women's Perspectives Production Team developed these pre-writing activities.

Exploring the Theme:

The Seeds of Story Telling, Communication, and Women

Consider these questions as ways to get started.

- What is "story telling?"
- What can you learn from telling your own story?
- What can you learn from hearing stories of others?
- Some stories are true; others are made up. Why would a storyteller choose one over another?
- How does your past life affect your present life?
- What is communication?
- What does this mean: a story about women and communication?
- What would be a good story about women and communication?
- How do you make a story?
- How is a story like a garden?
- What are the seeds that need to be planted before a story can fully bloom?
- How can story telling change your personal world?
- What can women learn about themselves from storytelling?
- What would you want to teach your children and their friends about communication?
- How does story telling help us to be better communicators?
- How do good communicators become leaders?
- How would the world be different if we communicated better?

What Would You Tell? Creative Ideas for Communication and Story Telling

Resources to explore communication:

- How to tell a story
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiX_WNdJu6w
- The history and long tradition of Native American story telling
<http://www.pbs.org/circleofstories/>
- How and why story telling improves health
<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/10/healing-through-storytelling/>
- How digital technology brings women’s stories to life
<http://www.adra.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=9791>
- What story might the horse in this video tell?
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeAOe3Lu3IU>

Consider these statements and complete them with your ideas.

- Communication means _____
- Story telling means _____
- When I hear the word “communication,” I think about _____
- The reason I want to improve my communication and tell a story is _____
- The skills or tools or resources that I would need to get involved in my community to be a potential leader and communicator are _____

Pressing Issues: Issues Regarding Women and Communication

Consider these questions.

- What are the most pressing issues affecting women and communication today?
- What would you do to address them?
- How might more effective communication be needed in these areas of society?
 - Technology
 - "Social" Media
 - Sexuality and Gender Differences
 - Relationships (romantic, family, friends)
 - Cultural Differences
 - Financial literacy
 - Access to literacy education or schools
 - Education (especially access for women) - The right to equal opportunity learning
 - Food safety
 - Racism
 - Poverty, class, economics
 - Work and employment
 - Others?

Select one of these issues and describe a personal experience or "story" that relates to it. Remember: these are very big issues. Sometimes it's best to take small, manageable steps. Many small efforts by individuals can add to larger community solutions. Many people doing small things together can sometimes have more positive effect than one person doing one huge thing.

More questions to consider:

- Given your experience, what parts of it are most important to communicate to other people? Why?
- What would it mean to have your voice heard about these issues? Who should know?
- What would it mean for the betterment of the world if your story were well known to others?
- What do you want to convey most and to whom?
- What does it mean to "listen" to the voice in other stories? What might you hear?
- Is your voice there too? Is there a shared story either untold or very obvious?

What Inspires Us:

Using the Voices of Others to Make Our Own Voices Heard

This section includes articles, quotes, and videos of inspiring communicators/leaders.

Inspirational Quotes

- “Being a woman makes you a leader of yourself, families, and communities. Your voices need to be heard by everyone...especially to those people who are able to read and write, because many of them don’t know about or understand anything about people like ourselves who have difficulty with literacy skills.” – *Donna Jones Student Leader and Keynote Speaker at WE LEARN Conference 2009. You can read Donna’s full speech as inspiration for describing what you would do as a leader. Download from: <http://www.litwomen.org/conferences/2009/keynote.pdf>*
- "Those who doubt the power of one individual to make a difference have never been alone in a tent with one mosquito!" –*Kathryn Ssedoga, Women’s Perspectives Committee*
- “Give light and people will find the way.” – *Ella Baker*
Who was Ella Baker? <http://www.ellabakercenter.org/page.php?pageid=19&contentid=9>
- “The only thing that is really worthwhile is change—and it’s coming.” – *Septima P. Clark, Literacy activist*; Septima Clark created "citizenship schools" as part of the US civil right movement for adult education and voters' rights in 1950s American South. To learn more about her see: <http://www.safero.org/articles/septima.html>
- “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” – *Mahatma Gandhi*
Who was Gandhi? <http://tinyurl.com/qphceh> or http://mlkkpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/home/pages?page=http://mlkkpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/about_king/encyclopedia/gandhi.htm

Inspiring Stories, Songs, and Speeches to Get Us Thinking – Read & Listen

- <http://www.values.com/radio>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe751kMBwms>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJkxf4qPRI>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8mzCDrE1ds>

Next Steps – What Would YOU Tell?

1. Read “General Tips for Student Writers” by Donna Jones in “How to Submit Your Writings.”
2. Consider the questions below.
 - If you were in a position of authority or a key decision-maker, what would you feel is most important to tell others about women and communication? How would your ideas help improve the world and the lives of other people?
 - What would you do to remedy, transform, understand, unlearn what keeps you from telling your story, from communicating what you think is most important?
 - If I were _____ [Queen, Government Official, School Principle, Labor Union rep, Tribal Chief, Student Council President,etc....], then I would _____.
 - If I were _____ (a mother, grandmother, wife, sister, partner, or single woman) then I would _____.
 - Who would be your allies or helping hands? What do you need from them? What connections do you need to make (like bridges over obstacles? Or tunnels through problems? Or paths around difficult areas?)

or

With your classmates or friends, name some important communication issues and experiences in your life that you feel are worth telling others about. Make a poster board map of your life. Put an area that needs your attention the most in the center.

Keep writing and send your finished piece to WE LEARN by **December 22, 2011**.

** Remember to include the Student Contributor Information Sheet. **

Email to

welearn@litwomen.org

or

Mail on CD-Rom to:

WE LEARN

182 Riverside Ave.

Cranston, RI 02910, USA



General Tips for Student Writers

By Donna Jones

Donna Jones is a student leader who also loves to write. She has developed a workshop by students for students called "Writer to Writer." Donna was an Honors Award winner for *Women's Perspectives* #1 for her essay "Better Self Esteem Can Create Better Health." She has participated on the Selection Committee since 2006. These are her suggestions for student writers who want to participate in *Women's Perspectives*.

There are 3 parts to writing.

Prewriting: a stage for collecting everything together

1. A good thing to think about before even getting started is to make a list of reasons for sending your writing to *Women's Perspectives*.
 - a. List the type of things that will stop you from sending in your entry. Sometimes when things get hard or people get upset with a project, they quit. I don't want to see this happen to you.
 - b. Now list what you will do if one of these problems does happen.
 - c. You can keep adding to these lists. Please don't let anything get in your way.
2. Pick the right time of day and place to do your writing.
3. Your brain is a muscle and it needs to get warmed up. This exercise will loosen it up: Just write whatever pops into your head. You can use a computer or paper. Remember your writing doesn't have to make sense or be correct. You can write, "I can't think of anything to write or I hate this exercise." Just keep the words flowing for 3 - 5 minutes.
4. Keep a notebook & pen handy during the day to write down ideas and thoughts. Also keep it by your bed at night.
5. Get all the things together that you will need for this project before you start to write (paper, pens, erasers, dictionary, thesaurus). So you won't have an excuse to stop.

Writing: a stage of organizing things and putting them down on paper

1. Review your notes. Remember you don't have to use all of them.
2. Always have a good opening sentence or paragraph. Something that will get your readers to want to read more of your writing.
3. Write from your heart. BE HONEST! Write how you feel. If you feel like crying then make your readers want to cry. Get your readers to react to your story.
4. Your last paragraph is as important as your first paragraph. You want your readers walking away remembering what you wrote. Don't leave them guessing. Remember how a good ending makes the movie good and a bad ending can ruin it.

Editing: a stage for making sentences stronger through tidying grammar and providing additional details to engage readers' attention

1. Put your story away for at least 24 hours. Then take it out, stand in front of a mirror and read it aloud. While reading it, ask yourself: does sound clear, does it make sense, did I put a comma where I took a breath? These spots are not always where commas go.
2. Give it to your teacher or tutor to correct it.
3. Give it to a different person to read. Someone, who you haven't talked to about this writing. Also, give her the call to write from WE LEARN. Ask her, "Does my writing make sense, does it fit the topic?" Ask: "How did you react when you were reading it?"
4. It may take several rewriting sessions before you get it the right way.
5. Most Importantly: Don't give up!!!!!!
6. Be sure to make a copy of what you wrote and file it away. It is something you should be proud of.

Finishing Your Work for Publication

Each year, WE LEARN receives many writings to consider for publication in *Women's Perspectives*. It is not possible for us to print them all, so the selection committee reads each writing very carefully. We make our selections based on the finished quality of the work (grammar, spelling, etc). More importantly, though, we consider the "voice" of the student writers.

- Has the student writer told us something from her/his unique perspective or experience?
- Has the writer clearly expressed an opinion or told an interesting story or helped the reader to come to some new ideas or understanding?
- Has the writer thoughtfully addressed the theme?

We provide this checklist to assist writers in creating quality writing worthy of publishing. In addition to the categories on grammar, there is a section for interest. While writing may be technically correct, it is important to note that the *Women's Perspectives* Committee must evaluate the "publish-ability" of a work. Consider these questions:

- Is it interesting or original?
- Would someone want to read this?

The hope of the committee is that students will use these checklists (one for essays, stories, and memoir, the other for poetry) to edit and prepare their writing for publication. Students may also want to ask a teacher or tutor about other kinds of writing rubrics* they could use (like the one used for the GED Writing test).

In addition to using the checklist, we also suggest that students share their writing with student colleagues. Perhaps students can create a peer-writing and editing group. Here are some steps to take in such a group.

1. Read your writing to your peer group.
2. "Interview" the listeners (students in the peer group). The writer should ask the listeners the questions, but not respond. The listeners should answer as full as they can in the moment. Here are some sample questions:
 - a. What words or phrases stood out to you? (Just the words, not the meanings)
 - b. What message did you hear?
 - c. What were you thinking or feeling when you heard this writing?
3. The writer can then listen to these ideas and make changes or re-write the piece according to the comments in order to make it closer to what the writer wants to say.

You can find other suggestions for peer editing work in Peter Elbow's book *Writing with Power* or Louise Dunlap's book *Undoing the Silence*.

* *Rubric: In education, a rubric is a grid or set of guidelines used to rate goals or accomplishments.*

2012 Women's Perspectives Writer's Checklist: Essay/Memoir

Please use this checklist for Essays or other Memoir writings only.

INTEREST

1. Does the writing address one of the themes for *Women's Perspectives #5*? YES/ NO
2. Is the topic interesting? YES/ NO
3. Is the topic original? YES/ NO
4. Has the writer expressed something unique about the topic? YES/ NO
5. Are there enough details to paint a picture for the reader? YES/ NO
6. Are descriptive or rich words and vocabulary used to express thoughts? YES/ NO
7. Is the reader encouraged towards reflection? YES/ NO
8. *If applicable to the writing*, can the reader identify or feel the writer's emotions? YES/ NO
9. *If this is expository writing*, can the reader understand or be challenged by the writer's opinion or point of view? YES/NO

STRUCTURE/GRAMMAR

1. Are sentences complete? YES/ NO
2. Are words spelled correctly? YES/ NO
3. *If applicable*, are paragraphs clearly defined? YES/ NO
4. Are the thoughts organized clearly and in a logical manner? YES/ NO
5. Is there sentence variety? YES/ NO
6. Is the correct punctuation used? YES/ NO

2012 Women's Perspectives Writer's Checklist: Poetry

Please use this checklist for poetry only.

INTEREST

1. Does the writing address one of the themes for *Women's Perspectives #5*? YES/ NO
2. Is the topic interesting? YES/ NO
3. Is the topic original? YES/ NO
4. Has the writer expressed something unique about the topic? YES/ NO
5. Are there enough details to paint a picture for the reader? YES/ NO
6. Are descriptive or rich words and vocabulary used to express thoughts? YES/ NO
7. Can the reader identify or feel the writer's emotions? YES/ NO
8. Is the reader encouraged towards reflection? YES/NO

FORM/FORMAT

1. Can the writing be identified as a poem? YES/ NO
2. *If applicable*, does the poem properly use the stated form (e.g., Haiku) YES/ NO
3. Are words spelled correctly? YES/ NO
4. Are the thoughts organized clearly and in a meaningful manner? YES/ NO
5. Does the poem flow? YES/ NO

Student Contributor Information Sheet - 2012

Women's Perspectives #7: Women and Communication

Name: _____

Street Address: _____ Apt # _____

City: _____ State or Province _____ Country _____

Zip Code _____ Preferred Telephone _____

Email Address: _____

Name of the Program you attend: _____

Address of the Program: _____

Telephone of the Program: _____

Name of your teacher/tutor: _____

Email of your teacher or program: _____

I attend: ESOL Literacy pre/GED Developmental Upgrading Workplace Other

Title of Your Writing / Artwork: _____

How would you like your name to appear? as printed above other

Print alternative name here: _____

WE LEARN must have your signed permission in order to consider your submission for this project.

This is my own original writing. If it is selected, I agree to allow WE LEARN to publish this writing on the WE LEARN website and to print it in the 2012 publication of *Women's Perspectives #7: Women and Communication*.

Signature _____ Date _____

Email to welearn@litwomen.org

or

Mail on CD-Rom to:

WE LEARN
182 Riverside Ave.
Cranston, RI 02910, USA

