



# UU Writers

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## The Gift of Transformation



Participant Packet

March 2024

## Personal Warm Up Prompts

Ease your way into this month's theme with one or more of these prompts. Use them as a free association exercise. Don't try to create a full or finished piece of writing. Simply take around 5 minutes to jot down bullet point thoughts, a short intuitive response, idea fragments or maybe even sketch some images. Have fun getting your creative juices going!

**Option A:** What part of you no longer exists? How are you truly and radically different from your younger self?

**Option B:** Of all the ways your life partner has transformed you, which is your favorite?

**Option C:** If you could change/transform one thing about your past, what would it be?

**Option D:** Often the way to make it through a transformation is to toughen up, but sometimes the key is to soften in some way. Has this ever been true for you?

**Option E:** Listen to and reflect on one of these songs on *The Gift of Transformation*:

### **New Light – Mega**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L74Cx\\_PjFfE&list=PLvXOKgQQVYP5SqWXtMPjrb7eQqaFKOv9n&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L74Cx_PjFfE&list=PLvXOKgQQVYP5SqWXtMPjrb7eQqaFKOv9n&index=4)

### **One Day - Christa Wells**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5ltg534VGU&list=PLvXOKgQQVYP5SqWXtMPjrb7eQqaFKOv9n&index=3>

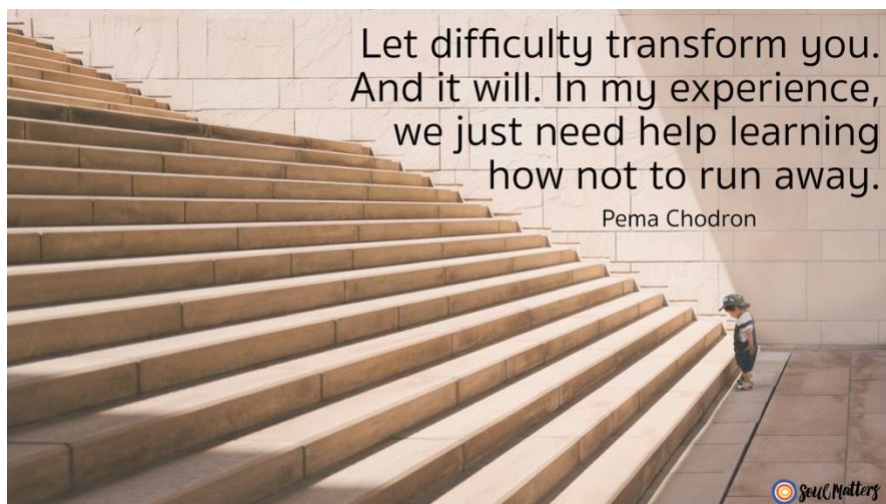
### **Maybe It's Time - Troy Ramey**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpedVQTLURE&list=PLvXOKgQQVYP5SqWXtMPjrb7eQqaFKOv9n&index=1>

*p.s. If music is your writing muse, you might want to check out our entire **Soul Matters music playlist** on *The Gift of Transformations*:*

Click [here](#) for the **Spotify** playlist on [Transformation](#)

Click [here](#) for the **YouTube** playlist on [Transformation](#)



# Writing Project Exercises

## Suggested Steps:

### Step 1: Which project exercise/prompt is yours and why?

Spend some time reflecting on the options below. Treat it as a spiritual discernment exercise, in which you try to discern which option seems to be emotionally pulling you towards it. For those who are comfortable, you might think of it as asking, “Which exercise is my inner voice inviting me to explore?” Or to put it another way, the goal is to figure out which exercise is “yours” and why that is so.

### Step 2: First thoughts

Write whatever comes to mind in response to the exercise you selected. Free associate using words, sentence fragments, images.

### Step 3: Write your piece

Write your reflection, poem, story, song, or story inspired by your writing.

Take your time. For some, their piece will spill out whole cloth in a matter of moments. For others of us, it will be a journey of twists and turns, with us writing and rewriting as first drafts open us to new insights, inspiring second drafts, and even thirds.

## Option A: Stillness & Leaving Space for the Unknown

*Let mystery have its place in you; do not be always turning up your whole soil with the plowshare of self-examination but leave a little fallow corner in your heart ready for any seed the winds may bring, and reserve a nook of shadow for the passing bird; keep a place in your heart for the unexpected guests, an altar for an unknown God.*

*-Henri-Frederic Ariel*

What do you know of leaving a little fallow corner in your heart for unexpected guests?

Henri-Frederic Ariel seems correct; our first instinct when it comes to self-transformation is to dive into the work of aggressively tilling and turning up the soil of who we currently are. We leap into hero mode and lean heavily into striving and struggling toward our imagined perfect selves.

And so, when Ariel instead advises stillness, listening and waiting to be led, what happens in your mind, and gut? Does Ariel’s urging seem naïve or wise? True to your experience or foreign? Does something deep inside say, “Don’t trust it!” or does it longingly respond, “Yes, can we just be still and trust life to come to us, for once?”

Use your writing to wrestle with Ariel’s call to quiet and trustful waiting. And if fallow corners and unexpected guests have regularly showed up and helped you travel the path of transformation, then tell us that story.

## Option B: How Home Transforms Us

Moving to a new home is not just a transformation of place but also a transformation of our personhood. A new surrounding shapes us into new people. With this in mind, use your writing to explore how exactly your many homes have shaped and created your many selves.

If it's helpful, expand your reflection to focus on the town and land surrounding your physical homes. And for many of us, the transformational quality of our homes will be represented in a smaller object within those homes, such as a bike from the garage that represents the gift of freedom or the dog house out back that represents our first experience of connection with an animal.

## Option C: Our Inner World Bucket List

Bucket lists transform us. By purposely placing what we dream of *doing* on the horizon, we are better able to hold on to the person we dream of *becoming*. Bucket lists keep our transformation on track.

So, have you created a bucket list? If so, odds are that you focused on adventures in the world *outside* us. After all that's just the way it's done.

Well, [Andrea Gibson](#) disagrees. They are the Poet Laureate of Colorado. And [their bucket list](#) is all about how they long to heal and transform their *inner* world.

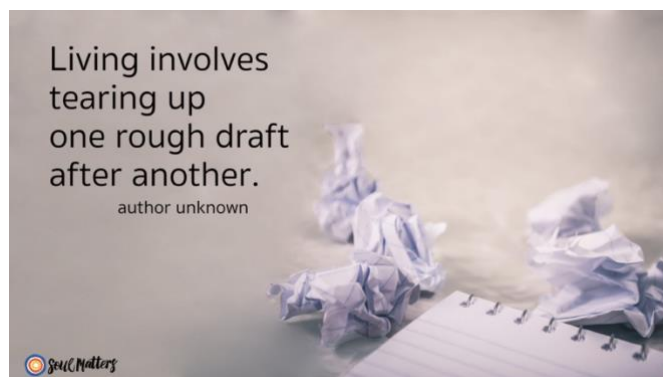
So with [Andrea's inner bucket](#) as inspiration, write your own inner world bucket list this month. Come to your group ready not only to read it but to share which of your inner bucket items surprises you the most and which scares you the most.

## Option D: No Transformation Without Fire

*No transmutation without fire... the self must lose to find and die to live.*  
- [Evelyn Underhill](#)

Is Evelyn correct? Have you had to lose to find and die to live?

If so, tell us your story.



## Option E: Your Transformations Already Underway?

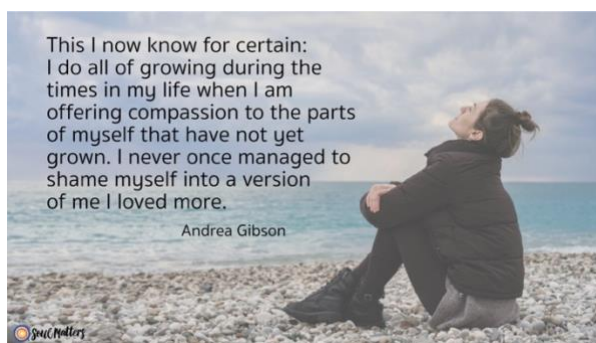
We are regularly told that transformation is about birthing something new. But often, transformation is about building on or continuing what has already begun. It's about sticking with it, more than starting anew.

The poet, Amy Lloyd understands this. Her poem, [I am Learning](#), is all about embracing who she is right now and celebrating the unfolding she is in the midst of.

With [her poem](#) as your guide, write your own *I am Learning* poem.

And don't be intimidated if you've not written poetry before. All you have to do is complete the sentence "I am learning..." 5-10 times. Just like Lloyd did!

After you've written your own version, spend some time reading it aloud and notice how you feel. Did identifying what you are in the midst of learning leave you proud? Surprised? Did it help you perceive yourself anew? Did it make you even more committed to continuing the transformation of yourself that is underway?



## Option F: Transformation in the Liminal Space

*Change is the only constant in life. - Heraclitus*  
*Honor the space between no longer and not yet -Nancy Levin*

Have you recently gone through an important threshold/transition, or are you in the middle of one right now? Sometimes, we rush through the space in between transitions, as it tends to be filled with unknowns and discomfort, sometimes even pain. But in doing so, we can miss a lot that could make the journey easier or richer.

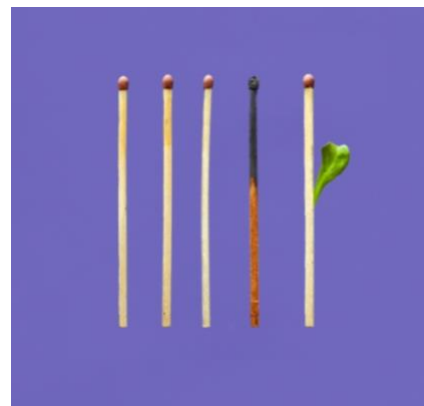
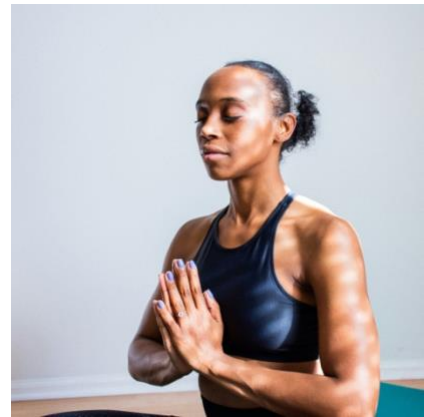
So use your writing this month to slow down and notice what you might be overlooking in your current transition. Or return to a previous transition and try to notice or imagine what you might have overlooked.

How might this in between time be inviting you to rest? Even if you feel sad or depressed, are you sure that isn't your body's way of forcing you to stop and find renewal? How does this in between time feel different than "regular time"? How is this transitory space offering you a chance to try on a new self before you fully commit? Many people report a richer dream life during these in between times. Has that been true for you? And if so, how might those dreams be trying to companion you through this period of "no longer but not yet"?

## Option G: Visual Prompts

This prompt is all about letting an image spark your writing. Below are a handful of pictures related to our theme of *the gift of transformations*. Look them over until one reaches out and asks you to write about it!

For some of us, the image that stands out will take us back in time to a memory we want to write about. For others, our chosen image might inspire us to write a fictional short story based on it. For still others, a picture will evoke a new perspective about the theme that we will then tease out in our writing. *(Or maybe these pictures remind you of a favorite picture you took recently or have treasured for a while. If so, great! Write about those pictures instead.)*



## Option H: Time to Blossom

*And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud  
was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. - Anais Nin*

*I am in search of my life.  
Not the one I was dealt,  
but the one I want to have...  
- [Sue Ludwig](#)*

Do you remember when you stopped living the hand that you were dealt? Do you remember what it felt like to be trapped tight in a bud? What did you learn from that time in your life? What enabled you to bravely blossom? And what would you say to others who have convinced themselves that the life they want is not worth the risk?

## Option I: The Courage to Let Go

*That broken thing you keep trying to put back together  
is keeping your life from that beautiful thing that is waiting to be built.  
- [Trent Shelton](#)*

It's not easy to let a beloved broken thing fall apart. What was it that kept you at it? Did you believe that repair was right around the corner, if only you waited just a little longer? Was your effort to fix it really a way of avoiding feeling like a failure? Was the familiarity of the broken path just too seductive?

Whatever your reason, you are not alone. Leaving what's been and leaping into the unknown feels like a death to all of us.

And yet... there is that beautiful thing waiting for us. How did you finally make your way to it? How did you keep listening for its call? And what did you learn along the way?



## Option J: Make Your Own Way

Our prompts are here to support you. So, if none of the above prompts speak to you this month, feel free to find inspiration on the theme from wherever it comes.

Whatever it is, let the gravitational pull of memory, reflection and the pulse of your personal imagination be your guide. Let love take you where it will.

# Closing & Companions Words

Choose one of the pieces below that speaks to you. Read it after completing your writing projects as a way of celebrating your writing journey this month. Or read the words regularly while working on your project prompt to keep you grounded and inspired. It sometimes helps to write them out and tape them above your desk or on your bathroom mirror, living with them during the month

*Change is never painful. Only resistance to change is painful.*

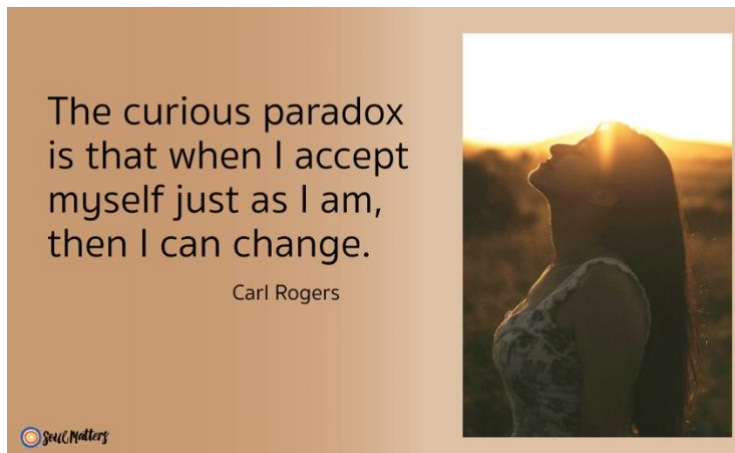
[Author Unknown](#)

*This I now know for certain: I do all of growing during the times in my life when I am offering compassion to the parts of myself that have not yet grown. I never once managed to shame myself into a version of me I loved more*

[Andrea Gibson](#)

*All that you touch you change.  
All that you change changes you.  
The only lasting truth is change...  
God is change.*

[Octavia Butler](#)



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