

Worthwhile Story Prompt

We are excited that you've chosen to join us for *Worthwhile: A Weekend to Engage Your Worth Through Story, Soul, and Body*. We look forward to our time with you in September.

To prepare for the retreat, we ask that you write a story to share with a story group during the weekend. For some of you, this assignment will feel familiar since you have engaged storywork in some context already. For others, this assignment may be the first time you've written a story like this, which can feel intimidating. However you come to this assignment, let us offer you the assurance that your writing will not be critiqued or compared.

1. Content: Write a story (600-800 words) in response to the following prompt:

Consider any moments, encounters, or events from your childhood (ages 0-18) when someone spoke through word or deed something impactful about your identity. Perhaps it was a role you were expected to play in your family of origin; a criticism or judgment offered by a teacher or coach; a "calling" named by a family patriarch, matriarch, or spiritual leader; or an expectation set for you by your family or church. Then, consider any moments, encounters, or events when you felt missed, misunderstood, or minimized. List any memories that come to you as you ponder these prompts.

Review the memories that you listed, and choose one that stands out to you—perhaps you feel strong emotions when you remember it; perhaps you feel a physical response that surprises you; perhaps you're aware of its lingering impact; or perhaps you don't know why, but it's jumping off the page as the story to tell. Trust your instincts. Remember, even seemingly insignificant events, especially those that linger with you over the years, can be indicators of a story that needs further exploration. Write a 600-800 word story about this moment, encounter, or event.

2. How: Write the story of what happened, and describe with as much detail as you can about the context (setting), the people involved, words that were spoken, and the emotions of how you felt during the interaction or experience. Get as close to the story as you can through your description of what happened. There is a common saying writers use to guide them: "Show, don't tell." Engage your five senses—what could you see, hear, smell, taste, and/or touch? As you write, please notice any emotions that surface for you: anger, tears, anxiety, shame, etc. Allow these emotions to help you connect with your younger self.

3. Reflect: When you have completed the story, reflect on how the story impacted you. How did life change for you afterward? How did you engage or relate to others afterward? How did your younger self adapt to life after the story took place? Are you aware of how this story continues to play out in your life?

4. Submit: Send a copy of your story to stuckerathome@redtentliving.com by Monday, September 8. Also, please bring a printed copy of your story to the retreat. You will read your story to a small story group during the weekend.