

## Writing Sample #1

Context:

- I wrote this piece during my time as Social Media Manager at the Sabbatical Project, using an interview conducted with Winston by the company's founder. In collaboration with the company's founder, I helped develop a narrative strategy for the Sabbatical Project across our website and social media platforms.
- This article, along with the others I wrote, was sent out to the 6,000+ followers of the Sabbatical Project via LinkedIn and Mailchimp.
- The purpose of these sabbatical testimonials was to inspire other professionals who had taken sabbaticals to contribute their stories to the project, with the ultimate goal being to inspire companies to implement sabbatical policies.

It is available digitally [here](#).

### Winston's Family Sabbatical

Winston set out on a year-long family sabbatical after ten years at the same data management company to think about what he wanted to do next, pick up some hobbies, and spend more quality time with his children. He was able to use this time to build not only his relationships with his children and self, but also the app that would become his post-sabbatical career. When he left the small Norwegian island where spent this year, Winston had gained not only a new job, but a new outlook on the relationship between life and work, risk-taking, and financial stability.

### Opportunity Arises for a Family Sabbatical

While Winston had taken short breaks before, including a month-long trip to Norway where he met his wife, none of them had been a "proper sabbatical." Once he was certain that he wanted to leave his company, Winston started bouncing around ideas about what to do next. He was intrigued by a [Ted Talk](#) he had listened to by Stefan Sagmeister, who discussed "borrowing" 5 years of time off from your retirement and sprinkling them into your life.

Because his children were young (3 and 4) and his wife was looking for a transition back into the workforce, this seemed like the perfect time for a year away. After explaining these desires to a Norwegian friend, she suggested moving to Rødøy, an island above the Arctic Circle and working as a teacher. This aligned with the desires Winston and his wife had for their sabbatical, including their personal goal of having their kids be fluent in Norwegian.

### Goals

*"Taking a year off forces you to be more intentional about how you spend your time."*

To achieve his goals, Winston developed a three-part weekly schedule for himself that included family time, free time for himself, and professional time. Having this segmentation gave him this

necessary focused time, while also ensuring that he didn't constantly feel like he needed to be doing something else.

For hobbies, Winston's plans included learning how to catch and prepare fish, and to play ukulele.

One of his most treasured memories from his sabbatical was the tradition of "daddy days," which was time he spent doing projects one-on-one with each of his children. While he was working back in Boston, Winston worried that he wasn't spending enough time with his children. Taking this sabbatical allowed him to foster these relationships without the external pressures and demands of his full time job.

### **Financing a Family Sabbatical**

*"It's empowering to know that, if our income suddenly drops significantly, we can live pretty happily on a very limited income."*

To finance the sabbatical, Winston and his wife decided that they would live off of his wife's salary from teaching on the island. Despite this only being a fraction of his earnings as a tech exec, they were able to follow this plan and avoid dipping into their savings. They had to live more frugally than they did in Boston, but learned that their family could live pretty happily on a limited income.

### **Creativity During the Arctic Winter**

*"Going on sabbatical increases your chance of being creative because you're not surrounded by distractions."*

As the days got shorter and the temperature got colder, Winston found himself spending more and more time indoors. This prompted him to return to an old skill of his—coding. He came up with the idea for a text-to-speech smartphone app and spent the rest of the winter developing it, publishing it on the app store come spring under the name Voice Dream.

*"Finding meaning in your work often times requires a close connection to the people that you're helping"*

One major difference between his regular work and this new project was that it allowed him to get much closer to customers. After launching the product by himself during sabbatical, Winston would read each email, giving him a sense of how his customers are using the product and info about any bugs to fix. He found this experience exhilarating.

It showed Winston that his product was meeting a need in the market, affirming his programming skills and addressing the problem of collaborative work while living far away. Before working on the app, Winston had attempted to start other ventures, but found the

mechanics of starting a business difficult from his remote location. His app, while starting as a passion project, let him overcome this problem due to his ability to work on it alone.

## **Going Forward**

*“The ultimate byproduct of my sabbatical is that I no longer need to compartmentalize work from having fun and making a difference.”*

When Winston and his family returned to Boston, he became an entrepreneur in residence for Matrix Partners, intending to launch his own venture-backed startup, but continued spending half of his time working on Voice Dream. As app sales steadily increased, Winston and his wife decided that he was going to make the app his work and stop doing anything additional.

Post-sabbatical, Winston instituted a “summers off” policy in his company, to both align with his wife’s teaching schedule and to offer his employees significantly more vacation than traditional office jobs. His sabbatical also helped him redefine the relationship between work and play, allowing him to be creative and take the risk to develop [\*Voice Dream\*](#).

*“I hope we seek these experiences out in life, not because of the memories, but how it changes you as a person.”*

## Writing Sample #2

### Context:

- This newsletter excerpt and article are an example of the donor-facing communications that were a core part of my job at Marquette University's Center for Peacemaking. I was responsible for interviewing student fellows and writing articles to show donors how the fellowships they helped fund impact students and the Milwaukee community, in collaboration with the Director of Communications and Center Director.
- The intended audience for these articles was current and prospective donors to the Center for Peacemaking.
- The purpose of the piece was to inspire donors to continue supporting the mission of the Center for Peacemaking and to motivate students to become involved with the Center through fellowships, volunteering, or the Peace Studies academic program.

The newsletter is available [here](#) and the online version of the article is available [here](#).

### Newsletter Excerpt:

#### Student Spotlight

##### **How Anatheia developed a passion for environmental justice**

With graduation approaching, Anatheia Kordosky shared how her involvement with the Center for Peacemaking helped her learn about explore ways to work for environmental justice. In particular she discusses the impact of being a Peace Studies major and summer peacemaking fellow.

The video vignette included at the end of the article is the second of the series produced through our partnership with the Carl Collective.

### Full Article Text:

#### **Inspired to work for environmental justice**

*Anatheia discerned her passion through Peace Studies coursework and a summer fellowship*

Anatheia Kordosky (Arts '23) received a summer fellowship from the Center for Peacemaking to explore her interest in environmental justice in Milwaukee. She credits her involvement at the Center for Peacemaking with igniting her passion for environmental justice and grassroots social change. This led her to design a unique, multiple-component fellowship.

One component was volunteering at Alice's Garden, an urban community garden in Milwaukee. Through weeding, watering, and talking with Venice Williams, the garden's director, Anatheia was able to learn about the importance of community gardens and how they address a lack of access to fresh and affordable produce, as well as a lack of access to urban green spaces.

Anathea shared a memory from her time at Alice's Garden: "When a volunteer group was in the garden, and we went around introducing ourselves. After Venice and the garden staff introduced themselves, I said, 'my name is Anathea, I'm just a returning volunteer' to which Venice replied, 'you are not just a returning volunteer, you are part of our family.'"

Through fostering a loving and welcoming atmosphere, Alice's Garden is a place for everyone and everyone to learn, grow, and love. This was one of Anathea's favorite parts of volunteering here. For her it modeled the importance of building community when engaged in peacemaking projects.

Another component of Anathea's fellowship included helping run the Vliet Street Oasis farmer's market. Her responsibilities included creating and distributing promotional materials for the market, as well as engaging with the local farmers and vendors. One of her favorite parts of her work with the Vliet Street Oasis was interacting with the shoppers who visited the market about the importance to them of having access to fresh produce in an area like Milwaukee's Near West Side.

Other activities that Anathea coordinated through the fellowship were interviews with local activists and visits to community gardens in the area. She particularly enjoyed the opportunity to discuss environmental activism with long-time activists Julie Enslow and George Martin, as well as visiting Cherry Street Community Garden.

The fellowship also complemented Anathea's coursework in her sociology and Peace Studies majors. One course she took for Peace Studies was titled "Water is Life, Indigenous Art and Activism in Changing Climates." Here, she says she learned how Indigenous communities are the original stewards of the land and how environmental injustice is a means of ongoing genocide. She is grateful to the Center for Peacemaking and fellowship donors for making this experience possible. It is through working at the Center for Peacemaking that she learned about the fellowship program and was first introduced to Alice's Garden, The Vliet Street Oasis, and activists like Julie and George.

Citing the ways the fellowship impacted her, Anathea shared: "My fellowship has helped me because it allowed me to realize I'm interested in pursuing this work in my career. I am now looking at ways I can combine my love of nature and being outside with my passion for environmental justice and social change."