

Practical Guide to THERAPEUTIC WRITING

for Immigrants

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Psicoinmigrantes

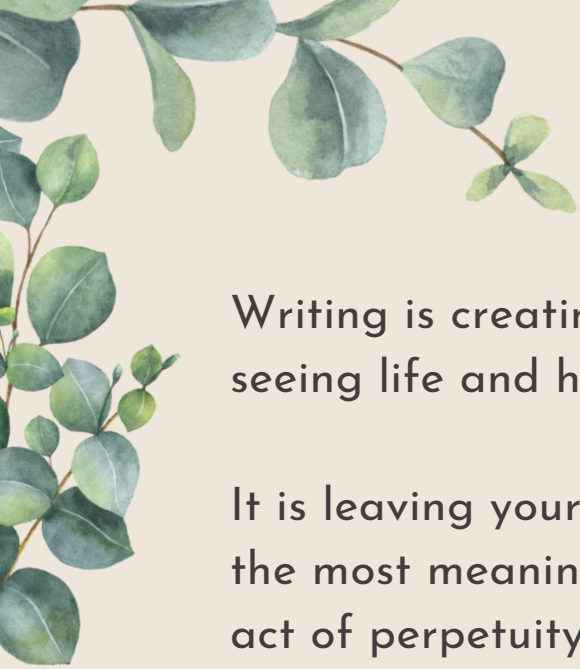


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MARIA ALEJANDRA
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MIND AND FEELINGS

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THERAPEUTIC WRITING FOR IMMIGRANTS
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Writing is creating, understanding,
seeing life and humanizing it.

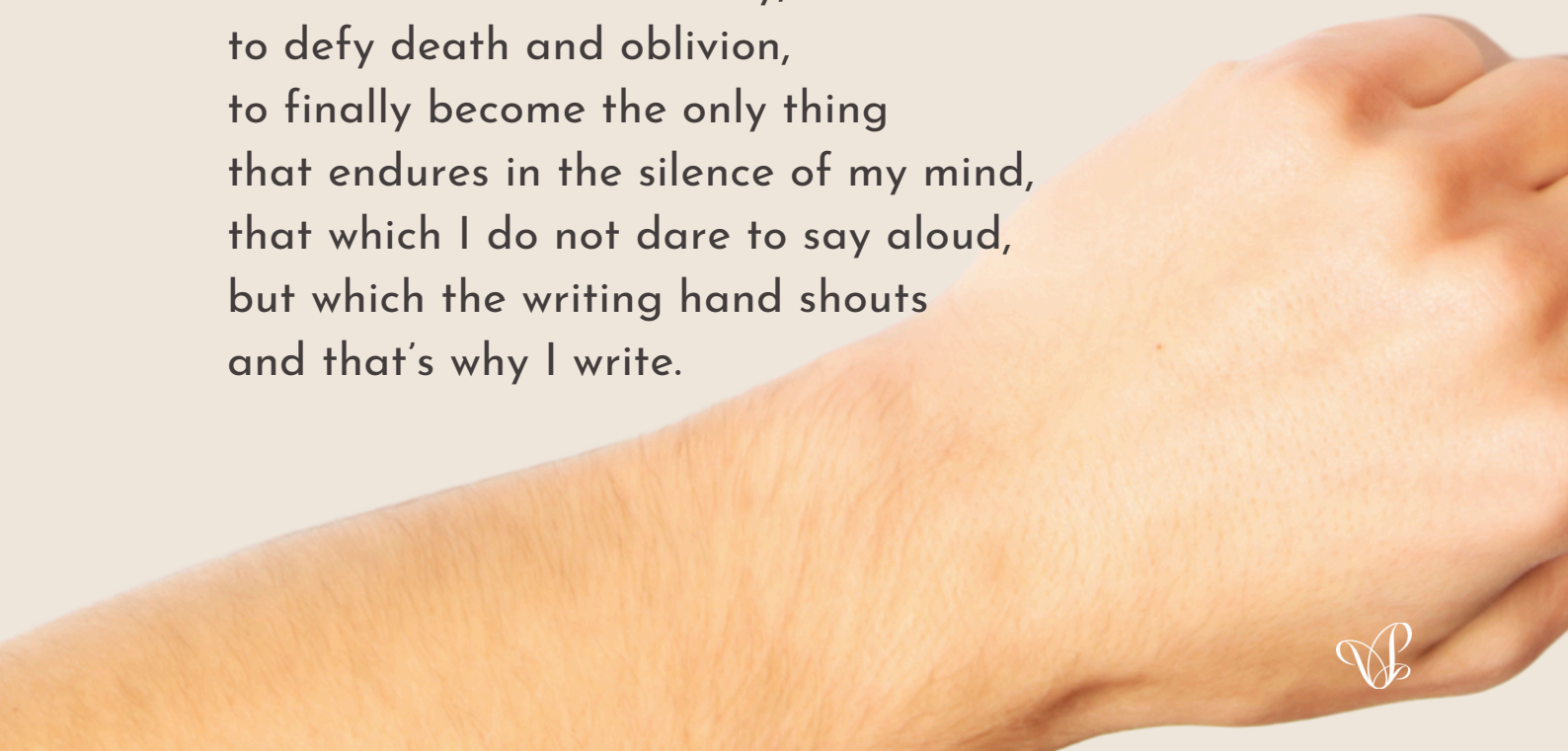
It is leaving your soul on a page,
the most meaningful and sublime
act of perpetuity.

When I write...

I drop every pose and I am only myself,
finally listening
to the rhythm of my heart,
turned into a song.

I write to be immortal and unforgettable,
to look inside myself with kindness,
to heal the incurable,
to conquer the impossible.

I write to transcend reality,
to defy death and oblivion,
to finally become the only thing
that endures in the silence of my mind,
that which I do not dare to say aloud,
but which the writing hand shouts
and that's why I write.



INTRODUCTION

Hello,

I'm *María Alejandra Ocando*,
therapist, writer, and literary
coach with more than 20 years
of experience.



🌿 This manual presents a selection of fundamental exercises, many of which are based on cognitive behavioural therapy. It also incorporates my personal experiences as an immigrant and my extensive background as a writer, therapist, and literary coach. This combination gives this practical guide a unique approach in its field.

Over the years, I have used therapeutic writing as an intervention strategy in my work with spanish-speaking immigrants, achieving remarkable results.

🌿 Likewise, other writers have used my services to overcome their own barriers through therapeutic writing, which has allowed them to grow both personally and in their development as writers.

And if you long to weave your own story and turn it into a book (because we all have a story to tell), this guide is also a foundation for you to begin in the art of creative writing.

*May every word written here be a light
on your path. With love,*

María Alejandra

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Therapeutic writing has the power to express
that which we cannot even bring ourselves to say aloud...



Every day comes with
but my love for you is
tant. Thank you for being
reason to smile. I can't explain
my love for you, but I feel
how strong it is inside me.
Seeing you around me is a
blessing I will always appreciate.
I've been waiti

I love you madly, from your
glance into my eyes...

I will always remember this moment
in our relationship.

You are the one who gave me the best
feelings. I didn't have such feelings,
but I was waiting, looking for...
and now the moment has come...
you appeared!
I love you more than life!

Sometimes it seems that my love is so
great that your love is not even ne-
cessary. But I know that your
love me. You are my boy and I'll
my life with you.

"Writing is trying to understand,
and trying to reproduce the unreproducible,
it is feeling deeply the feeling
that otherwise would remain vague
or suffocating.

Writing is also blessing a life
that was not blessed."

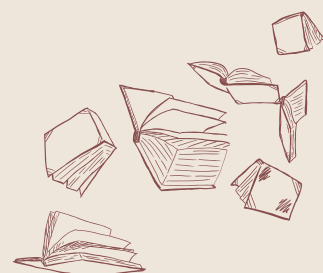
Clarice Lispector



Benefits of Writing

- Relief from mental storms and restlessness
- Revelation of the inner self
- Identification, recognition, and balancing of emotions, feelings, and thoughts
- Helps in exploring fears, phobias, obsessions, traumas, and judgments
- Expansion of self-awareness and personal understanding
- Emotional balance
- Amplification of the inner voice
- Discovering new ways to face challenges
- Igniting and nurturing the creative flame

It is essential never to underestimate your own talent and creative potential.





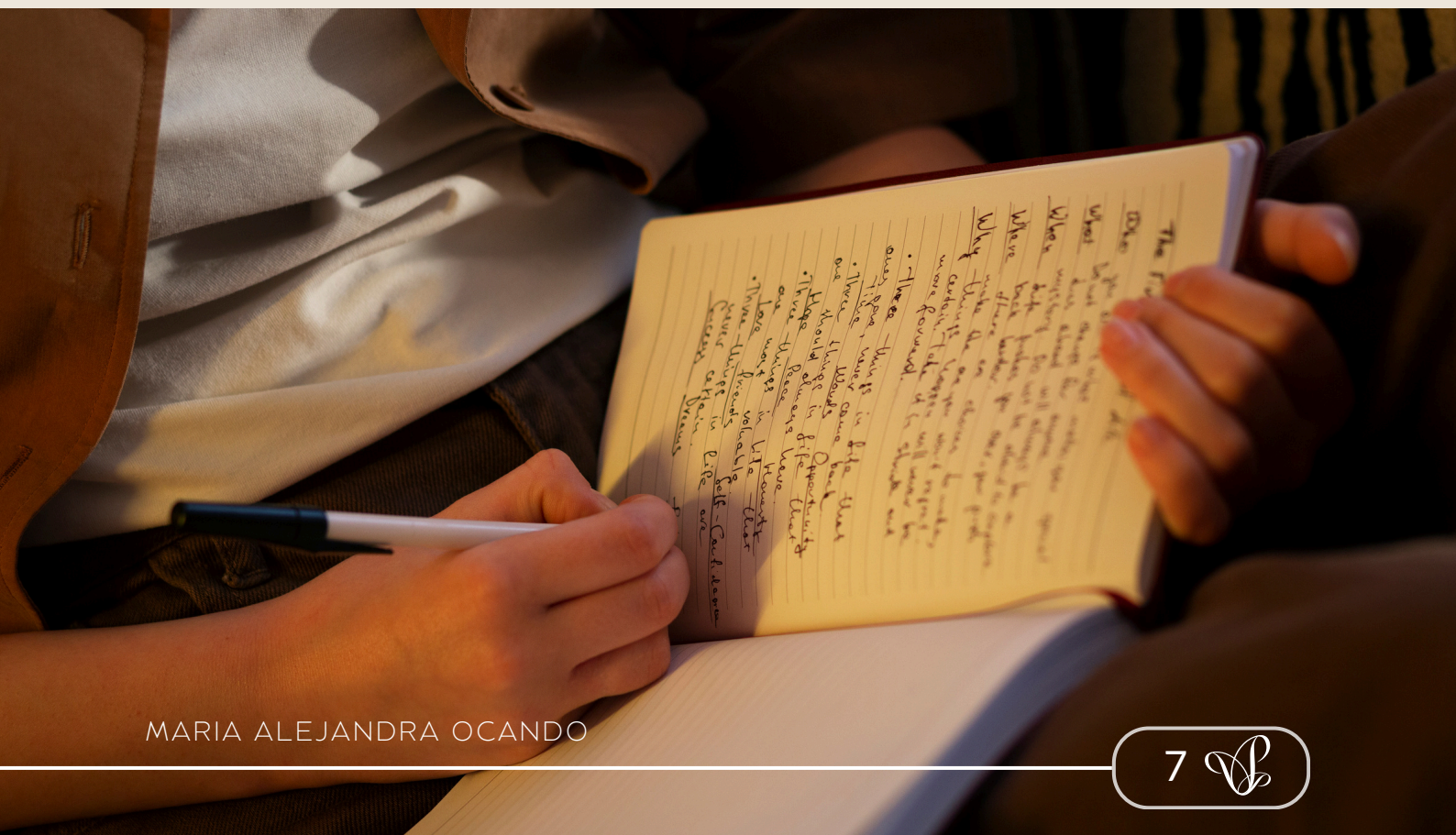
BENEFITS OF THERAPEUTIC WRITING FOR IMMIGRANTS

Processing Traumatic Experiences

The opportunity to give a detailed account of challenging life events, such as migration or adapting to a new environment, facilitates reflection and the search for meaning in these experiences. In this way, immigrants can take control of their own personal stories, expressing their longings, fears, and aspirations.

Fostering Resilience

Putting stories and experiences of adversity, achievements, and victories on paper cultivates resilience and personal strength. This process also enables individuals to recognize their coping mechanisms and, in turn, value both their own strengths and those found in their communities. It nurtures self-esteem and self-compassion.





Promoting Communication

Writing provides a personal and relevant way to practice communication, encouraging both internal and external dialogue by making it possible to express emotions and thoughts that may be difficult to articulate otherwise.

Adaptation and Social Integration

Through writing, immigrants can explore and reflect on culture shock while considering how to integrate into a new society without giving up their own identity. This process can lead to a better understanding of and adaptation to their new environment.



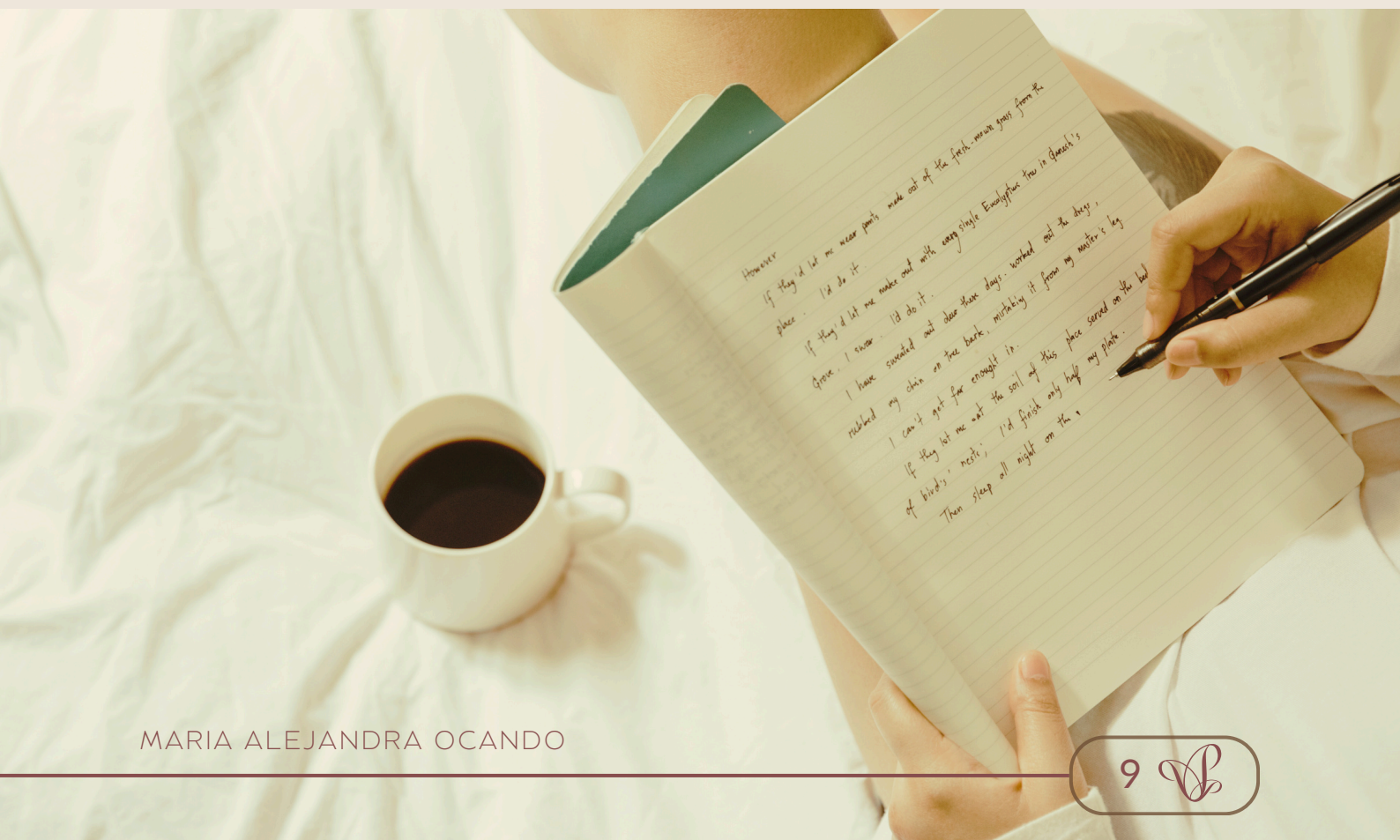
*"Writing is the deepest
way to read life"*

Francisco Umbral



General Recommendations

- Dedicate between 10 and 30 minutes of your day to this practice. Identify, according to your own biorhythm, the moment when your mind is most open and receptive to inspiration.
- Ensure there are no distractions that could disrupt your concentration.
- Enjoy a soft melody in the background, one that envelops you in serenity and allows you to listen to the voice of your soul.
- Set aside a notebook exclusively for this purpose. Keep a journal; let's return to the practice of journaling.
- Write by hand to strengthen neural connections, stimulate memory, and spark creativity. Allow your hand to become an instrument of understanding.



*“I write to discover what
I know.”*

— Flannery O'Connor



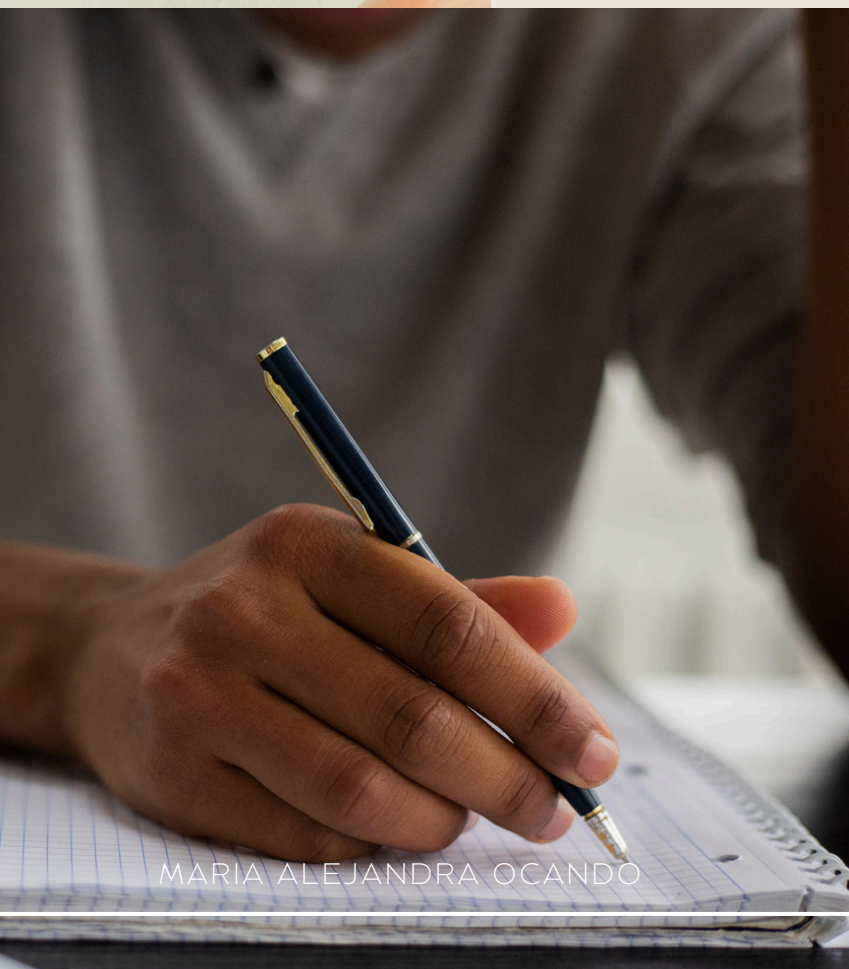
STRATEGIES TO GET STARTED

Oh, begin, write!

Sit down with a sense of fullness and let the words flow about any longing. If the muse is hiding, search through beloved pages, in verses that caress your soul, in melodies and songs. Simply trust your hand, tell your hand: Write, for you are free! Let the truth unfold itself on the page.



*And write, keep writing
even though nothing has
been easy
leaving your soul
on the page,
so that when you return
from that journey,
you are a little lighter...
as if all that weight that
burdened you
has been transformed
into letters
letters that took flight
on the wind.*



MARIA ALEJANDRA OCANDO



EXERCISE NO. 1

Automatic Writing Guidelines

- Let your hand flow for a few moments without stopping, let the words come out, regardless of coherence.
- Don't nest your thoughts; let your emotions guide your journey a voyage to feel and release your soul, beyond thoughts and ideas.
- How do you feel right now?
Ask your heart and allow your hand to become its echo.
- Don't rush, take as much time as you need. And when you feel that your being has poured out its longing, then pause and read aloud what you have written.
- Listen to your voice; let your emotions resonate in the music of your words.



Put this book
aside and
immerse yourself
in this exercise



EXERCISE NO. 2

Letter to fear

Fear is a common experience, and although it's inevitable, it is possible to learn to face it differently and manage it in a more adaptive and healthy way.

Mental mantra:
"Behind fear, life awaits."

Guidelines

To begin this letter, address it with the words "Dear Fear:" with the intention of embracing it—of turning fear into an ally that allows you to act with wisdom, to help you see through it, and to understand that it is there to protect you, not to paralyze you or distance you from your desire to live.

This letter is an opportunity to share your experiences with fear, and you can choose to write about one significant experience or several.

Describe how you felt in that moment of fear: alone, vulnerable, confused, speechless, paralyzed, and how that sensation impacted you at the time.

Also, describe how, despite the intense fear, you managed to emigrate a remarkable achievement that should not be underestimated.

Reflect on what you think today about the event you selected, where you experienced great fear and felt overwhelmed.



EXERCISE NO. 3

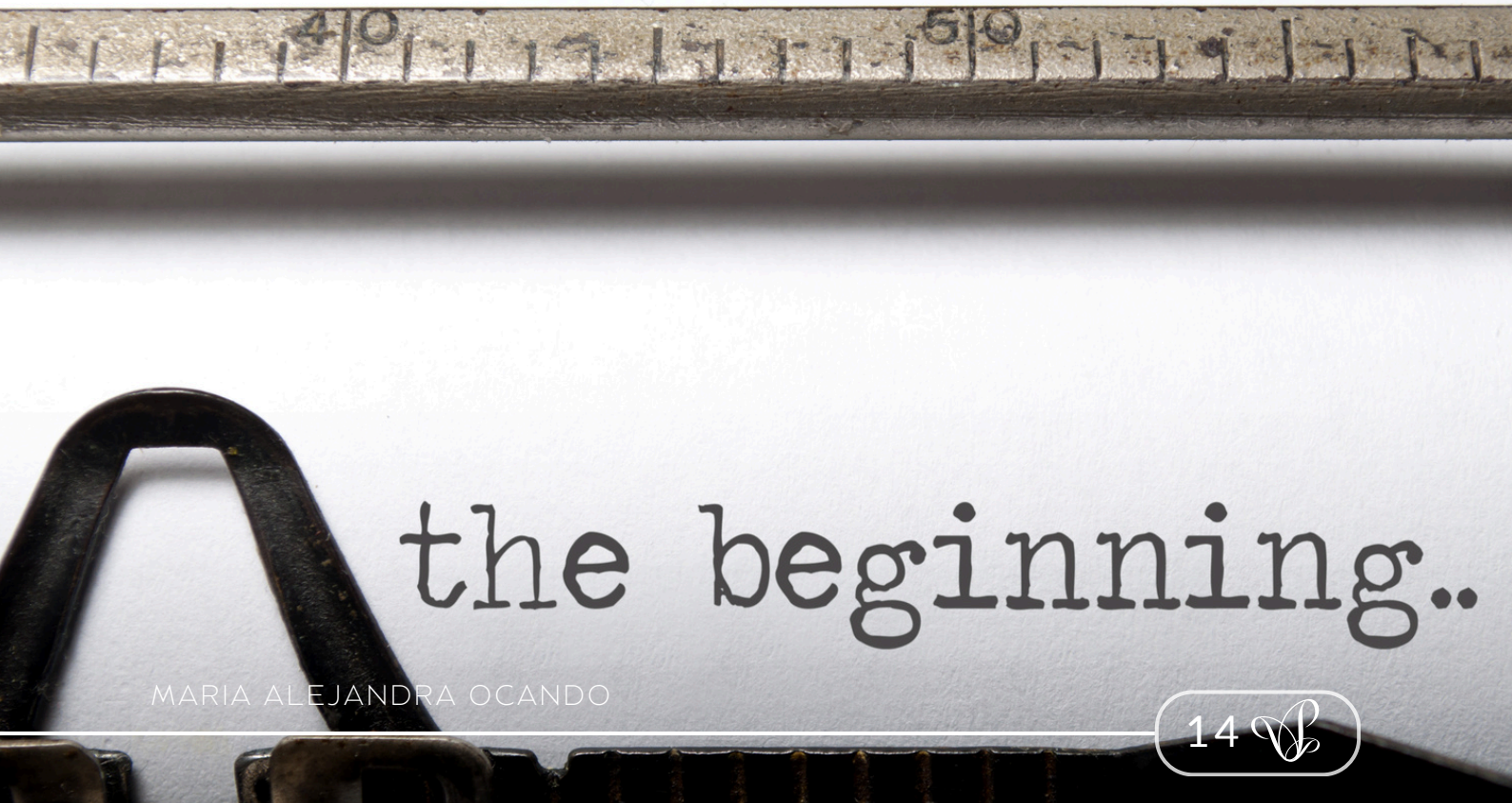
Inspiration through others

Guidelines

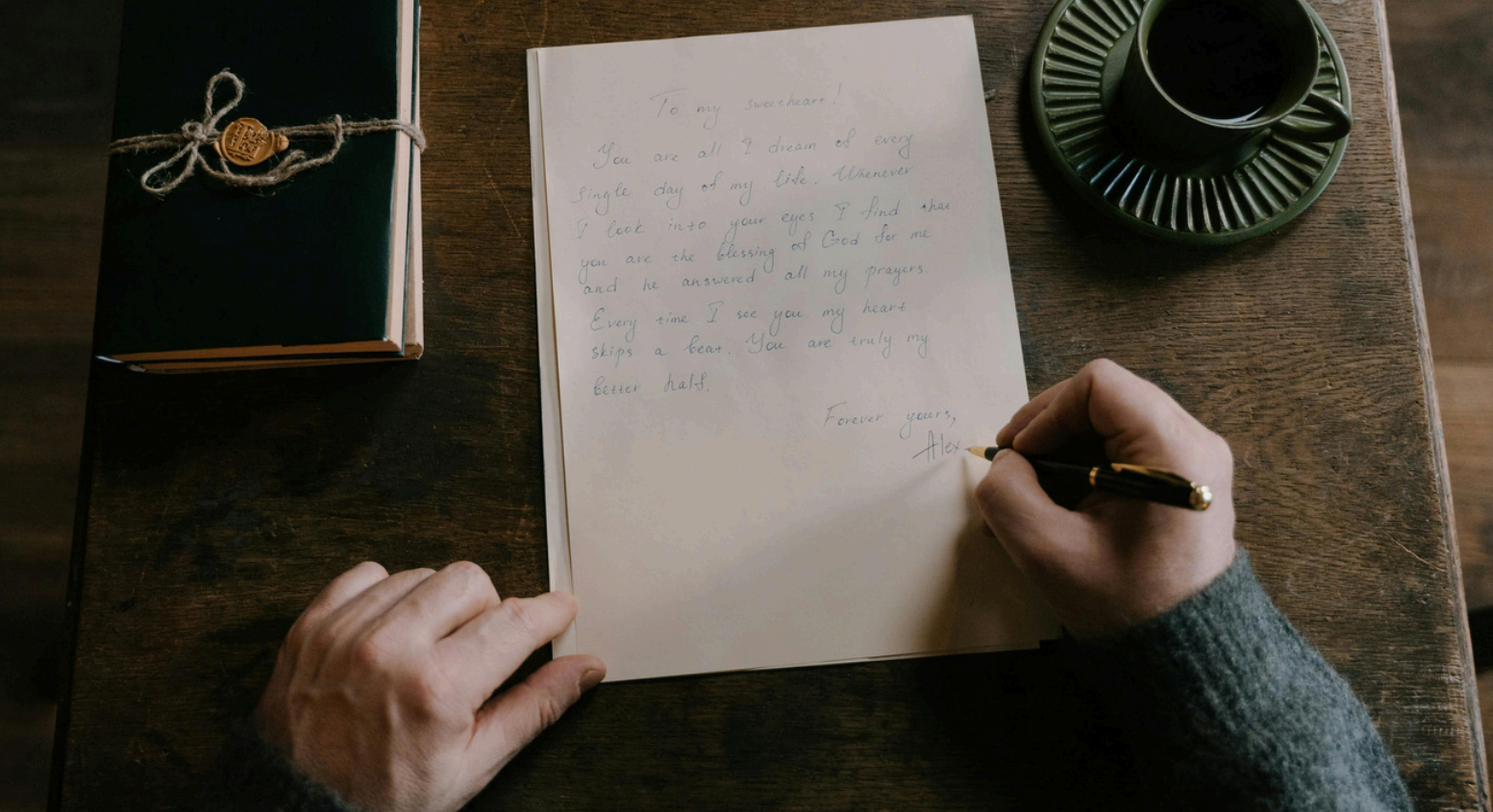
This creative and therapeutic writing practice captivates me with its charm. I am grateful for its magic, for it has forged my path as a writer. Weaving letters together and setting down words, I have found not only comfort and release, but also the hidden gift of writing that awaited within me.

Within each person lives a collection of literary treasures: books, verses, melodies, stories, fragments that, like shooting stars, etch themselves eternally into our memories.

Embrace one of these treasures and let its words guide you on a flight of inspiration. Pour out your own reflections, the emotions that these words evoke, the echo that resounds within your soul, and the admiration you feel for the author's artistry in weaving such verses.



the beginning..



Immerse yourself in that song or poem that seems to have been written just for you, for in it, your own story is reflected.

"It was not ideas that saved the world, nor intellect or reason, but quite the opposite: those foolish hopes of men, their persistent fury to survive, their yearning to breathe while it is still possible, their small, stubborn, and grotesque everyday heroism in the face of misfortune."

Ernesto Sabato

"The journey taught me that every beginning is slow; that everything we find along our path has incalculable value, even if it seems unnecessary to us.

That the journey is
made to the measure of the traveler's feet,
and that reaching the goal is not the main objective
it is to discover the path, it is to discover
yourself on the path."

taken from the book: *El Astrolabio de las hadas, la búsqueda de la luz astral*
(A book of my authorship)



A POEM

A poem does not just exist, it lives,
it is probably the most sublime
form of communication.
It is a message that unites the impossible,
a silver thread that nests
from the hands of the writer
to the soul of the one who inspired it.
And a poem always reaches its recipient,
in a decade, in a century, in eternity,
in this life or the next.
When a poem is spoken, a pact with
the universe is cast,
because a poem carries the most
sublime purpose: to console life itself,
to reclaim the mistaken story,
to ignite hope when nothing else remains,
and to eternalize all that was never said.
A poem puts an end to silence,
and its spilled shadow is proof that more than
existing, we have truly lived.

A poem.

Unpublished poem by my authorship.



EXERCISE NO. 4

Two paths

"The only certainty in my life and my future right now is VAST UNCERTAINTY, and in the face of that, I have two options:

ONE...

I find myself immersed in a constant sense of tragedy, lamenting my fate and feeling trapped by a sense of victimhood. I don't think I deserve it; I'm a good person who helps others. Yet my thoughts are ruled by uncertainty. In this stage of my life, I question everything, even God and destiny. I cry, sink into sadness, and anxiety consumes me. And so my days and my life pass by.

OR TWO...

I live with gratitude for my life's journey, for the deep experiences and the people I have met.

I focus on LIVING TODAY, HERE AND NOW, IN THE PRESENT, because it is the only thing over which I have any control. I value and treasure the little things as sources of deep joy.

I resolve to give the best of myself in everything I do and to everyone I encounter.

And this is a decision I must make every day."





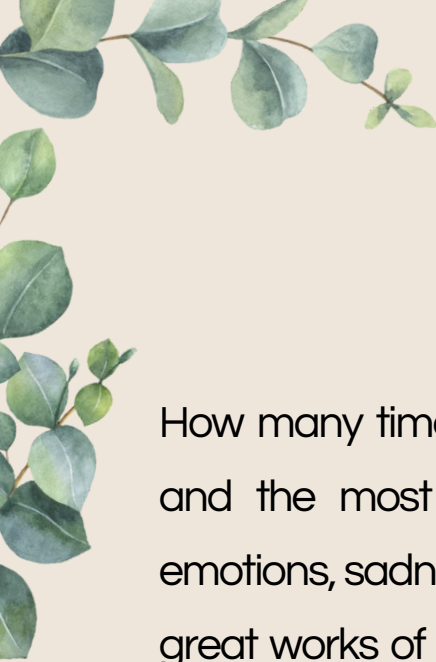
Which option do you choose today, here, and now?

And whatever your choice may be today, WRITE IT DOWN.

If you find yourself drawn to option number ONE, allow yourself to accept that this is okay too, because the first step toward well-being lies in the acceptance of what isn't working or what doesn't feel right.

MENTAL MANTRA:

“Every day I am kinder to myself”



EXERCISE NO. 5

Drama as inspiration

How many times have we been moved by the most beautiful songs and the most sublime, heartbreaking poems? Drama and deep emotions, sadness, heartbreak, and disappointment, have given rise to great works of art, literature, and music throughout history. Often, it is from a broken heart that art in its purest form emerges.

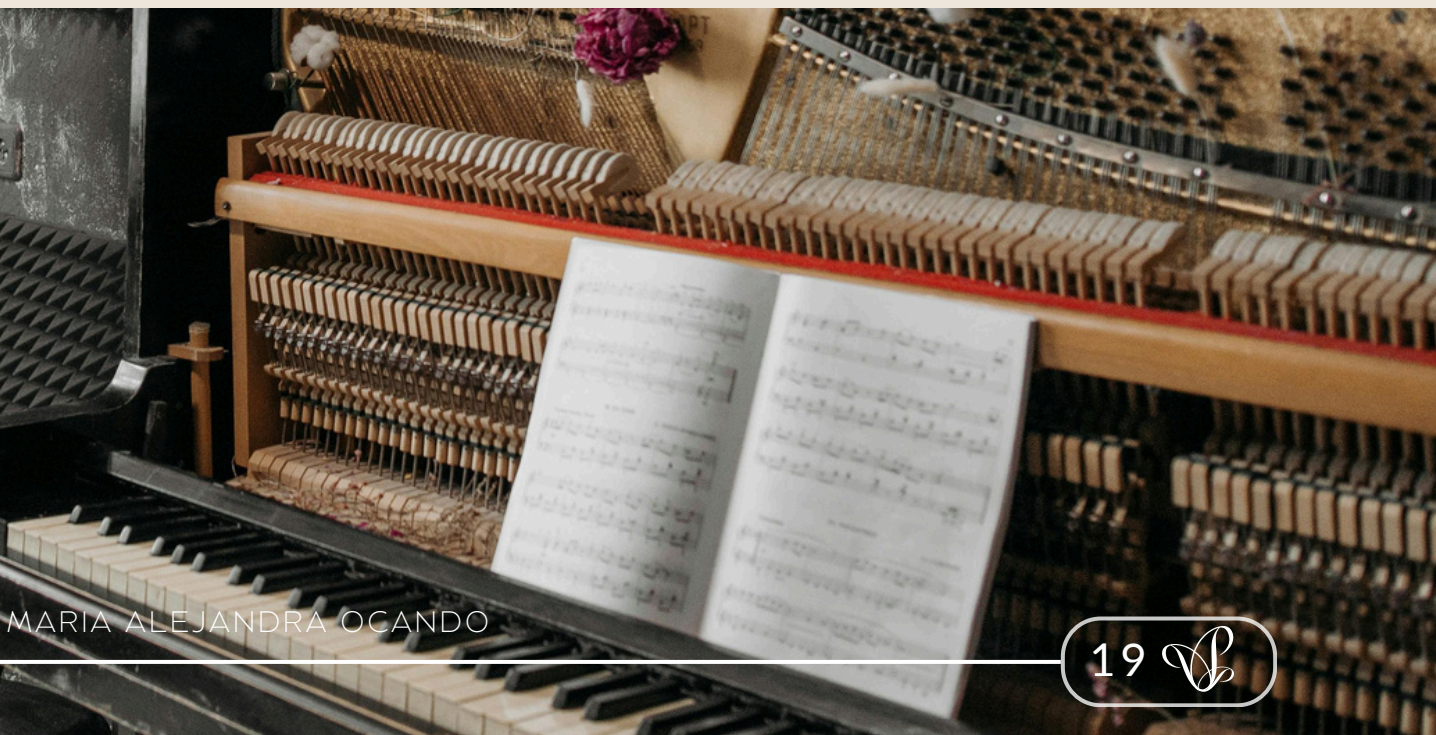
Personally, I always use these experiences as fuel for writing and creation. This has allowed me to develop poems, stories, and even a novel. I invite you to do the same through the following exercise.

Guidelines

First, reflect deeply on these questions:

- **What emotions were predominant during the most difficult moments of your migration journey?**

This helps identify the feelings that could be channelled into your creative work.



- **What would you say to your past self now you left?**

This question encourages reflection and internal dialogue, which can be useful for creating monologues or dialogues in a story.

- **What lessons or treasures have you found during pain?**

This reflection turns hardships into blessings, creating a brilliant foundation for a message full of hope.

- **Do you have a metaphor that captures your migratory journey?**

Perfect, that will help you weave poetic images that shine in songs or poems.

- **If your journey were a melody, what rhythm, sound, or emotion would make you dance?**

This question sparks creativity and might inspire lyrics or verses with a unique touch.

- **What story of joy or overcoming can you share thanks to your migratory experience?**

This leads us toward a focus that enlightens and motivates, ideal for stories that leave a mark.

- **What wonders in your life today would not exist without your migratory adventure?**

Reflect on those achievements and positive changes that have made you who you are today.





Now is the perfect moment to set your own creativity free: a poem, a song, a story, a reflection or even the beginning of a book. Why not?

Many great writers have emerged from painful experiences. You don't need strict guidelines; writing is simply allowing your heart to speak and letting your emotions flow freely.

Stop

Put this book aside
and immerse yourself in this exercise.



CREATIVE

MARIA ALEJANDRA OCANDO

PREFACE

value and importance of the Word of God cannot be over-estimated at the present moment. Its integrity are being assailed from almost every form of attack. "If the foundations of the righteous do?" (Ps. xi. 3.) They were not limited to a few they were fifty years ought to be the orders of the

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Thank you for weaving words and stories with me.
I hope this practical guide serves as a radiant
beacon on your journey. Write!
If you want to go deeper into your therapeutic journey
and need the assistance of a specialist, don't hesitate
to contact me through my social media.
And if you are interested in literary coaching to help
your writing projects take off, reach out let's make
magic together!

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