



Writing Your Heart Out with Deborah Shepard

**An introduction to the art
and craft of memoir**

Memoir Writing Classes 2014
Michael King Writers' Centre
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Deborah Shepard

Deborah Shepard is an author, film and art historian, and life writing mentor. Her books include *Reframing Women: A History of New Zealand Film* (Harper Collins, 2000), *Between the Lives: Partners in Art* (Auckland University Press, 2005) and *Her Life's Work* (Auckland University Press, 2009.) Her new book *Giving Yourself to Life: A Journal of Pain, Hope and Renewal* (Calico Publishing) is due for release soon.

Deborah taught a popular series of master classes at the Michael King Writers' Centre early in 2014 following her Autumn Residency at the Michael King Writers' Centre in 2013, when she worked on her new book *Writing Your Heart Out: the Art and Craft of Memoir*. Previously Deborah had taught memoir through the Centre for Continuing Education at The University of Auckland for eight years. In 2010 she was the mentor on the First Chapters writing programme in Manukau and Papakura, South Auckland, where she mentored 30 new writers and edited eleven of their life stories for the publication *Life Writing from Manukau and Papakura*. Deborah is a life writing mentor for the New Zealand Society of Author's Mentorship programme and is the consultant biographer for Mercy Hospice, where she facilitates training workshops on the art of recording the stories of people who are terminally ill. She runs a popular forum on her website www.deborahshepardbooks.com where life writers post their stories.

Writing Memoir

Deborah says, "Memoir is an ideal starting point to discover your writing talent because these are the stories of your life. You know them best. Working in a mutually supportive and cooperative small group setting you can begin to explore and record the important and defining stories for yourself and your family."

"Writing memoir involves a healthy mix of self-examination, reflection, observation and empathy. The work is inward looking and contemplative but it also challenges us to look beyond ourselves to consider the people who figure in our stories and why they matter. Often people are delighted to discover universal dimensions in their writing when a story, or experience resonates with other writers. Participants on her courses speak of the sharing of the writing as one of the absolute highlights of the programme. Deborah also believes that writing memoir is consolidating and comforting and can help people work through current losses and transitions. For her the most appealing aspect of the genre comes from the act of writing itself. It has a meditative quality offering a pause in the daily whirr to reflect upon and integrate the meaning of experience.

"On my courses we explore techniques that assist the release of memories and in the edit we learn how to strengthen and craft the raw material into compelling narratives. This happens in an atmosphere of mutual support and trust."

Testimonials from previous workshops:

"I have gone from ambivalence and doubt to feeling confident I can do this due to Deborah's superb teaching methods and well-structured classes."

"Thank you for this class, and for Deborah's time and expertise in making it so challenging and enjoyable...and for the constructive way in which she provided feedback."

"I have gained so much from Deborah's Life Writing Classes.....her gentle encouragement, her generous affirmation...her own sharing of her writing successes and dilemmas."

Writing Your Heart Out with Deborah Shepard **An introduction to the art and craft of memoir**

A programme designed for people who approaching memoir or writing for the first time.

Where and when

Michael King Writers' Centre, Takarunga Mt Victoria, Devonport, Auckland
Tuesday evenings from Tuesday September 23 to October 28, 2014
6pm to 8.30 pm

Course outline

Session one: Tuesday September 23

Getting Started. Defining Memoir and an introduction to the joys of writing from life. A reading programme. A writing technique. Mapping stories on a timeline.
Writing exercises: *What brought me here? I was born...*

Session two: Tuesday September 30

Remembering Childhood: Considering the ideal conditions for writing. A style guide and an editing workshop.
Writing exercises: *My writing space. A Childhood Memory.*

Session three: Tuesday October 7

Writing directly from life. The art of journalling. An exercise in observational writing.
Writing Exercises: *Writing on the pulse. Writing in the moment*

Session four: Tuesday October 14

The writing discipline: How to overcome self-doubt and stay on track. Writing mentors or the people who model the right attitude to the work.
Writing Exercises: *Who are my mentors? To my turangawaewae: the place where I feel most at home and most alive.*

Session five: Tuesday October 21

Ethical issues. What to leave in and what to take out: some salutary examples. Using a participatory methodology. Preparing work for the 'Your Story' page on Deborah's website.
Writing Exercise: *On friendship and loving. Someone I have loved.*

Session six: Tuesday October 28

Publication and celebration: A discussion of mainstream publishing, self-publishing and other options for the writing. How to protect the writing project. The defining qualities of successful writers. Setting up a writing group.
Writing exercise: *'A self-portrait: Where to now?'*

Cost - \$230 incl GST for the programme, non-refundable, payment due by September 23.

How to apply - Please fill out the application form and send with a short sample of your work or write on a memoir topic of your choice (500 words maximum).

The deadline for applications is September 15, 2014, places confirmed by September 17.

For further information, please contact:

Karren Beanland - Email: manager@writerscentre.org.nz; Phone: 09 445 8451

THE
MICHAEL KING
WRITERS' CENTRE



Writing Your Heart Out with Deborah Shepard
Tuesdays September 23 to October 28, 2014

Name:	
Address:	
Phone and cellphone:	
Email:	
Employer (if relevant):	
Your writing experience:	
What you would like to achieve on this course:	

Please attach a sample of your work or write on a memoir topic of your choice (500 words maximum).

Applications may be posted or sent by email. Applications close on **September 15, 2014**:
Michael King Writers' Centre, PO Box 32-629, Devonport, Auckland 0744
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