

Writing: A Key to the Heart's Treasure

*An e-booklet for parents of
differently-abled people*

by
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A parent's heart is a treasure chest full of stories, hope and abiding love. Ani Tuzman invites parents to unearth these jewels and share the wealth.

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Our Wealth

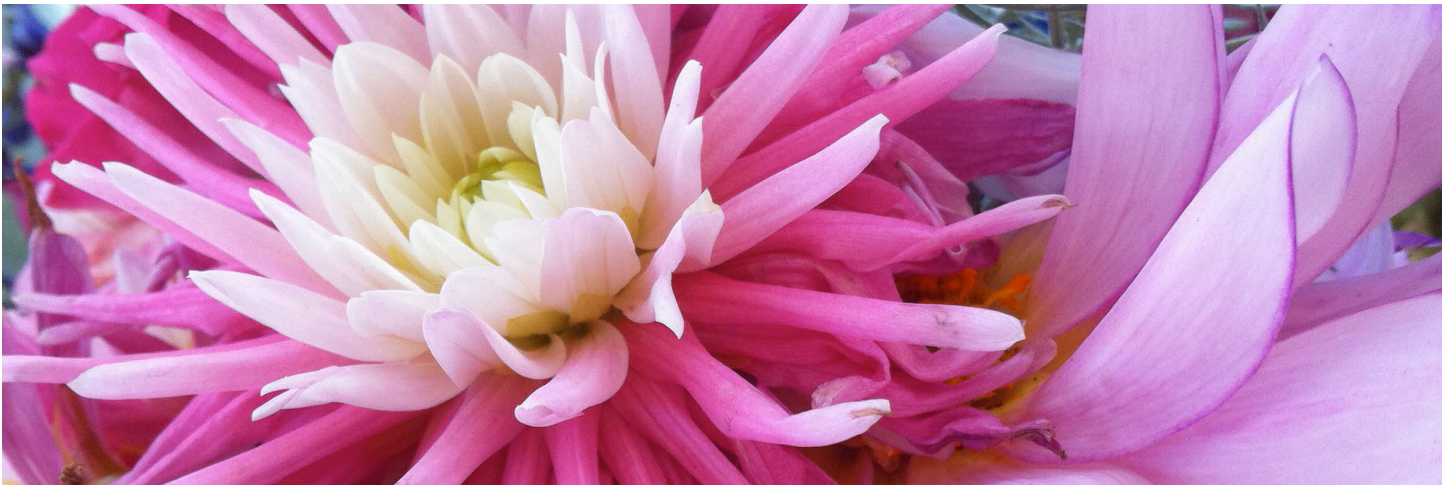
What a harvest of tender moments and stories, including challenges and victories of all sizes, can be found in the hearts of parents and others who love differently-abled people.

Talk about strength. Faith. Perseverance. Patience. Gentle compassion. Fierce advocacy. Deep-as-the-sea gratitude and love—undefeatable love.

What a dance. What a tightrope we walk. What a roller coaster ride. We reach the tops of mountains, standing with our children before vistas we only dreamed of seeing. And we lay belly down in the mud of defeat. But we always get up. We always, always get up and encourage our children to keep on keeping on.

I believe that the love in a parent's heart is the greatest power on earth.

Imagine harnessing this purest of love!



Why Write?

One way to harness the power of a parent's love is through speaking our experiences— sharing our love in all its colors and flavors.

Words are vessels in which to convey our love: the love in our bewildered moments, in our undaunted devotion, in our efforts and our surrender. Even when we feel defeated or long for things to be other than they are, love is present and forceful.

How wonderful then to pause to open the treasure chest and lift the hidden gems into the light so their facets radiate and brighten our hearts.

Below, I offer you several keys that can help unlock the chest and celebrate the treasure discovered there. I call these keys writing sparks.

A few guidelines (and a suggestion or two) before you get started.

- **There is no wrong way to do this**, no wrong way to write from the heart.
- **No one can write just like you.**
This is great news! If everyone sounded the same, it would be as boring as if there were only one kind of flower, just one color and one fragrance in our gardens.
- **Give yourself permission to write freely.**
You may choose to let thoughts, images, feelings pour out stream of consciousness. Forget grammar; forget sentences. Strings of words or phrases are fine. Allow anything and everything to flow through the tip of your pen or fingertips on the keyboard. Discovery is one of writing's delightful gifts.

At first, you might feel like an airplane taxiing, starting and stopping before suddenly finding yourself taking off. Once up, if you want to make a sharp turn and head in an entirely different direction, go for it. Change direction as often as you wish.
- **Enjoy the ride. Allow exhilaration.**

- **Write fearlessly no matter the weather.**

Part of the wonder and exhilaration of writing is that it can be wild, stormy, and comforting all at once, risky and enlightening. You may write your way through walls, break open shells, stir memories, give wings to love, multiply joy, and who knows what else?

If inner critics show up to whisper or shout that you don't know how to write (perhaps reminding you of what past teachers or others had to say), kindly ask them to just take a break. Tell your inner critics to go get a breath of fresh air, and let you have yours. Should the critics try to convince you that what you have to say doesn't have value, don't believe them; they are not reliable sources of the truth.

- **The last (for now) guideline: Have fun.**

Two more useful tips as you are about to dive in:

- You might want to set a timer and write freely for five or ten minutes, then if you feel like keeping on, keep on.
- If it helps, close your eyes and center yourself before writing. Become aware of the weight of your body sitting. Take a few deep breaths. Settle in. Invite inspiration and imagination. Thank yourself (perhaps even in writing) for taking this time.



NOW, A FEW WRITING SPARKS....



1. Favorites

Write a list of your daughter or son's favorites. You might list favorite objects, (could be toys), people, places, phrases, music, habits, foods, or clothing, etc.

You can make a different list for each category, or create one list that just includes a mix of all kinds of favorites.

As you are listing, notice if something listed calls to you, beckoning you to write more about it. **When that happens, follow.** You do not have to know in advance what you are going to write, having no clue of what's ahead is not only fine, but fun. A moment in time or a scene may be evoked, perhaps some lines of dialogue.

Give yourself permission to write freely.

**Note: Young writers can have fun with this by giving objects voices or writing letters to and from their favorites.*



2. More Lists

Lists can be great sparks for writing. Below, I name a few topics/categories to start you off. Choose one of the topics or make up your own. Start listing under that category.

So here goes. (The following may be apply to your children or to you.)

- **Delights**
- **Fears or apprehensions**
- **Quirks** *Whatever feelings arise, e.g., amusement, sorrow, frustration, allow them.*
- **Limits, obstacles overcome, or hard-earned skills**
- **Moments when grace seemed to intervene**
- **Gratitudes**

You might use the phrase: **“I am grateful for...”** or **“Thank you, [*fill in your child’s name, your name, or someone else’s] for...”**

As you are making your lists, notice when you feel drawn to dive more deeply into something you have listed. Follow that call and let yourself write into it freely.

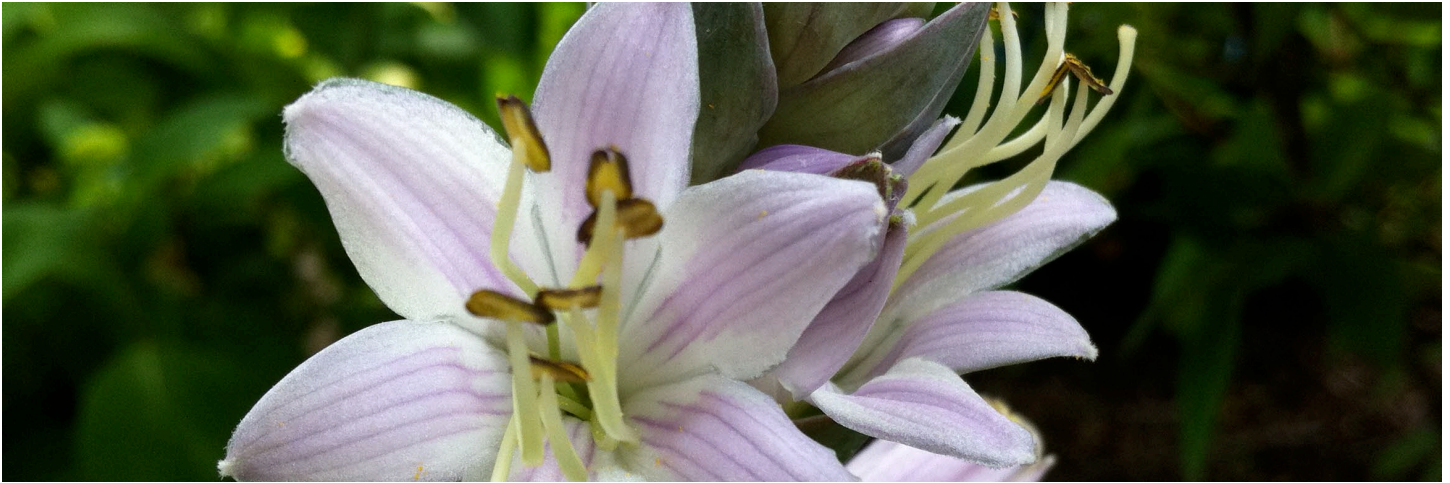


3. Priceless Gifts

Think of and perhaps write down some of your son or daughter's inherent gifts and qualities, e.g., exuberance, never holds a grudge, earnestness, innocence, etc.

Imagine an unusual auction in which these qualities are being offered as priceless, rare finds.

Give words to the auctioneer. What does she or he say when announcing each quality up for bid? "Ladies and Gentlemen..." (You might have the auctioneer address the uses or benefits of this quality.)



4. Harvesting Tender Moments

Recall an especially tender or poignant moment in your journey with your son or daughter (sister/brother/student). Could be something that happened a long time ago when s/he was an infant or something that happened this morning. Be there again.

It might help to close your eyes, so you can leave the present and really feel into that moment. Sense, see, hear or smell what's present. You might be involved in the scene or just watching from the sidelines. Be there fully. Let your heart open wide.

When you are ready— keeping a part of your awareness in the experience and a part here now—gently open your eyes and begin to write. Remember: stream of consciousness is fine; anything goes.



5. “In this one, you are....”

Imagine that you are sorting through photographs.

Start your writing with this phrase: **“In this one, you are....”** then describe what is seen or unseen, such as feelings, or what preceded the moment in the photo.

Scenes and images may come into your mind one after another quickly. Or you may see one image or scene and linger with it. You may see moving images not still photos.

Examples:

“In this one you are in the incubator and I am not sure you will live.”

“In this one you are eight, running happily the wrong way down the soccer field oblivious to the taunts and frustrated shouts of your teammates”.

As you are moved, write further about the pictures you see—or want to see. You may wind up with several word snapshots or open your lens wide onto one time and place. All good!

There are countless writing sparks that can open the heart and evoke the current of love to flow.

To receive more inspirational sparks and to hear other voices and add you own, please join A Parent's Heart community.

www.aparentsheart.com

About A Parent's Heart

A Parent's Heart is the hub for parents of differently-abled individuals of all ages— a resting place where parents can find inspiration and community. A Parent's Heart supports parents in telling their stories to connect deeply with each other and share their journeys.

The vision of A Parent's Heart is to:

- Build a loving, powerful community strengthened by the unique bond shared by parents of differently-abled individuals.
- Appreciate and value parents for their dedication, reflecting their love back to them.
- Acknowledge the life-changing lessons of parenting children with special needs.
- Inspire self-compassion.
- Support parents to write their stories, giving voice to their love, fear, trials, triumphs and joys—including the moments of almost unbearable tenderness, the day-to-day infinitesimal and huge victories, the unceasing hope.
- Harness the power of pure love found in a parent's heart as a force for good.

Join A Parent's Heart community

Add your heart and your voice.



About Ani Tuzman

Ani Tuzman worked in the fields of early childhood and special education for years prior to co-founding A Kangaroo's Pouch/El Buche del Kanguro, a pioneering bilingual, multicultural day care center.

Ani's passion for writing and respect for the spirit of children came together when she founded *The Dance of the Letters*. For the past thirty years, Ani Tuzman has inspired creative expression in children, teens, women and men.

An award-winning writer, Ani's poetry and articles have been published internationally. She recently completed an historical novel inspired by the life of the mystic healer and spiritual guide known as the Baal Shem Tov.

Ani is also the mother of three, her last child born with a rare heart defect and other abnormalities that almost claimed his life.

A Parent's Heart.com is the fruition of Ani's vision: a space for parents of children with different abilities to come together and share from the heart about their unforeseen and amazing journeys. Ani is the author of the forthcoming book, *Living With An Open Heart, A Mother Son Odyssey*.

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