

EXPLORING WORDS

*Michelangelo's described
'releasing' his sculptures
of prisoners from the stone.
He did not impose them
on the marble blocks on which he worked,
rather he chiselled away piece by piece
all that was needed to reveal
the prisoners locked within...*



Slave (Awakening) - Michelangelo. Marble, 1519-1536



Take the words together...

What do they suggest to you?

What images come to mind?

What emotions come to mind?

Maybe particular events?

Perhaps in your own life?

Perhaps in other people's...

Take the words singly...

What does one of them suggest to you?

And then what does that suggest?

And where does that lead you?

Play with the words and ideas.

Let your mind make connections.

Let one word suggest the next.

Just put down whatever comes to mind.

Avoid judging or choosing

Simply let go and write.

Let your words and phrases

radiate outwards from the quotation.

Ignore the inner critic.

Ignore the inner voice

that tells you this is foolish,

this is illogical or chaotic

or worse still 'not good enough.'

These words and ideas are for you alone.
Know that a period of chaos is necessary
in order to let new ideas come through,
in order to allow your own mind
to surprise you and lead you
to unexpected places.
This is a journey of discovery.
Accepting chaos is a vital first stage in the
creative process.

When you come to a full stop
and no further words are coming
simply return to the quote
taking another word, another chance
to allow some further associations...

Circles...
Look at all your random words and phrases
and see if you have any natural groupings.
Circle ones that go together or
link them with drawn lines.
Add arrows to indicate direction if you wish
but don't think too long or analyse.
There is an "unthinking" quality
to this process that suspends time.

Beginning to write
As your ideas unfold
you will get the urge to start writing.
Or perhaps the feeling that you do
have something you can write about
will come more gradually, as though
someone were unveiling a sculpture bit by bit.

Look at the words and phrases
scattered on your page.
What are the pieces of writing
waiting to be released?

What is your first sentence?
Scan the clustered perceptions.
Something will suggest
your first sentence to you.
If you feel stuck, however,
write about anything from the cluster
to get you started. The next thing
and the next will come.
Let one thing suggest the next...

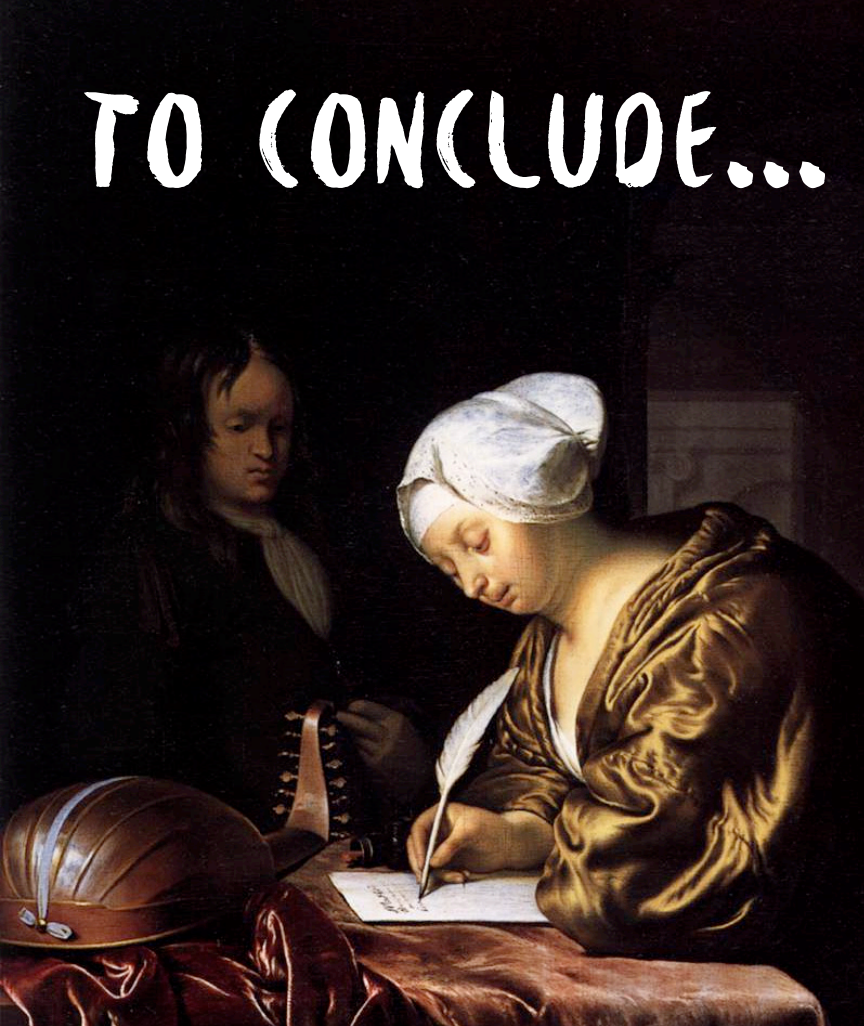
ALLOW ABOUT TEN MINUTES...

Can you bring the piece back
full circle?
Look at your first sentence,
your opening words
your first theme.
Hook back into that...

WRITE

IT IS WELL TO UNDERSTAND AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE IN ONE'S WRITING LIFE THAT THERE IS ONE CONTRIBUTION
WHICH EVERY ONE OF US CAN MAKE: WE CAN GIVE INTO THE COMMON POOL OF EXPERIENCE SOME
COMPREHENSION OF THE WORLD AS IT LOOKS TO EACH OF US

TO CONCLUDE...



FIRST, I DO NOT SIT DOWN AT MY DESK TO PUT INTO VERSE SOMETHING THAT IS ALREADY CLEAR IN MY MIND. IF IT WERE CLEAR IN MY MIND, I SHOULD HAVE NO INCENTIVE OR NEED TO WRITE ABOUT IT. WE DO NOT WRITE IN ORDER TO BE UNDERSTOOD, WE WRITE IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND.

C. Day Lewis

The Poetic Image

See as you write what shape
the words seem to request...
and when the writing
has come full circle,
read the piece out loud.
Ask yourself what words you
would like to change or add.
Ask what shape the piece should take.
Is it a free form verse?
Or a prose vignette?
Are parts of the piece unclear?
What about the piece is
particularly satisfying?

What is the title of this piece?
Is it the title of this piece or is it the
beginning of the next?
Perhaps you could use your first line or
some phrase out of the piece.

NEXT TIME YOU ARE WRITING...

you could take a different starting point
- any word, any phrase - and run through
the same process again.

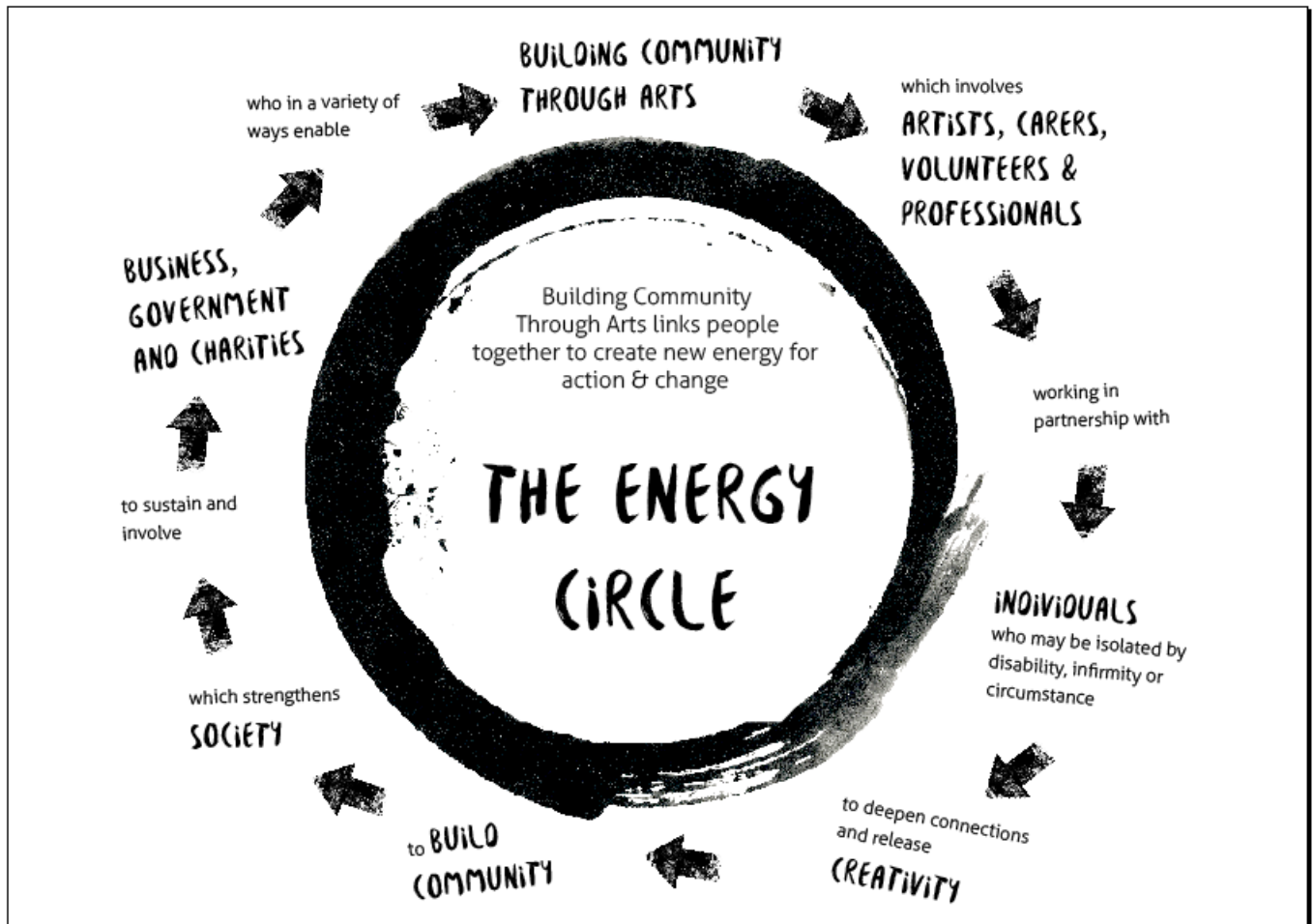
WHEN WE WERE LITTLE WE HAD NO DIFFICULTY
SOUNDING THE WAY WE FELT; THUS MOST LITTLE
CHILDREN SPEAK AND WRITE WITH REAL VOICE

Peter Elbow

Writing with Power

ABOUT BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH ARTS

Building Community Through Arts (BCA) was developed as part of Kew Studio's outreach work in a series of projects from 1993 – 2002. Toolkits and programmes have been recently updated and are presented as a set of free tools for use by anyone wanting to develop a community using arts workshops and encounters. Visit kewstudio.org/explore-creativity for more.



FURTHER READING

Explore these ideas in greater depth in *Writing the Natural Way: Using Right-Brain Techniques to Release Your Expressive Powers* by Gabriele Lusser Rico, a Tarcher/Putnam book, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York.