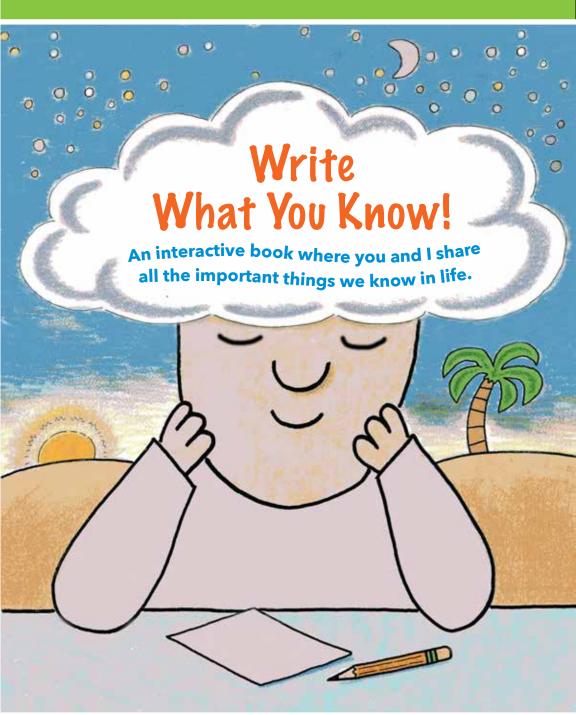
An Interactive Digital Journal from MakeBeliefsComix.com



**By You & Bill Zimmerman**Art by Tom Bloom



## This book of personal truths belongs to:

(TYPE YOUR NAME)

#### Date begun:

(TYPE HERE)

## Write What You Know!

An interactive book where you and I share all the important things we know in life.



**By You & Bill Zimmerman**Art by Tom Bloom



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Book design: Barbara Berasi

The author welcomes comments and suggestions that you would like to see included in future editions.

Please write: William Zimmerman, Guarionex Press Ltd. 201 West 77 Street, New York, NY 10024

Thank you.

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#### **Pedication**

#### For All Whom I Love and Who Love Me

Never give up—no matter how tired, sick or broken you may feel at times.
Continue to fight hard for yourself and find the healing voice within you—it is there if only you will search within and listen.

#### For my wife and daughter

Remember I have loved you with all my heart.



#### To my cousin Judy and friend Paul

Special thanks for reaching out to me when I needed help.

#### Dear reader,

This is a book to help you write down all the important things you know in life. By the time you finish filling in its pages you will be both amazed and proud of all that you have learned. It was that way for me after I answered this book's writing prompts.



I crafted "Write What You Know!"

during some very dark days when both my wife and I were being treated for serious illnesses and I felt physically and emotionally weak. I willed this book into being because I wanted something positive to come from this frightening, painful time, and because I wanted fervently to believe that my life had meaning. I discovered that each time I started writing a response to one of the book's question prompts asking about the things that are important to me, I began to feel a sense of peace and satisfaction. I saw that I had something worth saying about my life.

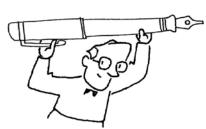
I hope that writing in this book will be a very life-affirming experience for you, too. As its pages fill up with your written thoughts, you will be surprised by how much wisdom you have acquired and how much you know.

Everything we do or experience ultimately teaches us something and each day we learn something worth remembering. As babies we soon learn that we are dependent on others to love and nurture us.

As youngsters we learn in school that there are good people and there are bullies. We learn how important kindness is. As adults we learn how hard it can be to make our way in a challenging, often difficult world.

And as we age, we learn to pick ourselves up when we stumble and to persist no matter how hard the going is. We begin to realize how lucky we are to have come this far and how precious our lives are.

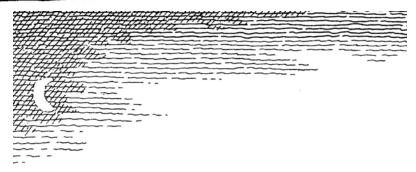
There eventually comes a time in life, as it was for me, when



you want to reflect on and recount what you have learned over the years. This interactive book, with its many writing prompts, helps you do that—whether you're a young or an

older person. By writing in it you are performing what might be considered a sacred act and this book becomes your personal bible about you and your life. This book of your written thoughts and personal truths will give you something substantial to hold onto when life buffets you with its

i WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! i



unexpected shocks, such as illness or loss. It will give you a core of strength that you can return to, to nourish you from time to time. And, if you are a teacher, this book will provide you and your students with countless ideas for writing and self-expression.

The front of each blank page in this book presents a writing prompt where you can answer each question. Opposite each blank page throughout the book, you will find the same writing prompt on which I have written my own personal truths in response to that prompt. In the same way that you will use the blank pages to write your thoughts, so have I written mine. I share with you what I know to encourage you to honestly express your own truths.

In creating this book I decided that I wouldn't ask you to do something I wouldn't do; this is why I first tested each question on myself. While I share my innermost thoughts with you, in no way do I intend for my words to be yours.

Your words, your thoughts, your feelings must come from you alone and may be very different from mine. Yours will reflect your own life's experiences. Just listen carefully to your heart and start writing. (Don't feel pressured: feel free to write only on the pages that speak to you—you don't have to finish the whole book. And there are also blank pages at the back of the book for you to feature your own writing prompts.)

If you are totally honest in your writing, as I hope you will be, you will discover that no experience in life, good or bad, is ever wasted. Each has so much to teach us. At moments, in filling in my own responses to the prompts, I felt joy in my memories and in what I have learned in life. Other times I was moved to tears because what I was writing was so meaningful to me. I found that answering the questions on these pages was a profound, maybe even a sacred experience. Perhaps, too, my words will help the people I love who may one day read this book. I would like them to remember me.

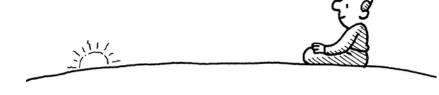
It's always good to take stock of one's life. By doing so, we come to realize that each of our lives has worth, whether we are world leaders or just simple people who work hard to get by day by day. In encouraging you to fill in this book's pages, I am, in effect, saying to you, "Take heed! Pause for a moment and become aware of what you have gained from your life, including its joys and pains. Take heed! What you write is valuable and worth saying."

I hope you will enjoy this writing adventure you are about to undertake. Remember, though, to listen to your heart as you write.

Yours sincerely,

Bel Zimmer Mon

Bill Zimmerman



iii Write what you know! ii Write what you know!



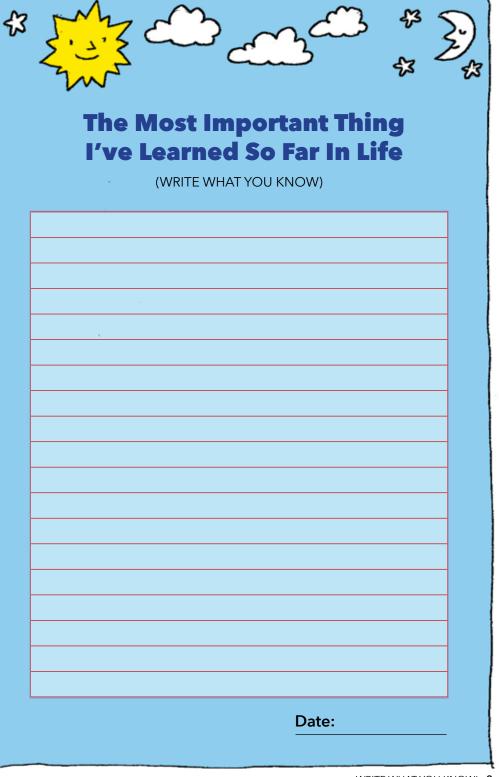
### The Most Important Thing I've Learned So Far In Life

(WHAT I KNOW)

The most important thing I've learned so far in life is to persist, no matter how badly things go. When we stumble, we need to right ourselves again and then take our next steps, small that they may be until we are steady on our feet. Problems will be solved along the way. Some things will take care of themselves. **We must always keep hope alive within us.** It is a little bell that rings forever—if only we will listen.

We all have courage.

I have been frightened many times in my life by what seemed to be overwhelming events, and I was not sure I could continue. But somehow, through praying or hoping or sheer stubbornness I hung on and continued. Looking back, I am amazed by how much courage was in me when I needed it. The same for you, too.





## This is How I Helped Heal the World

(WHAT I KNOW)

I have always tried to put myself in the shoes of other people, determined to understand their point of view. I have tried to listen to what is in their hearts and to help them make their own way.

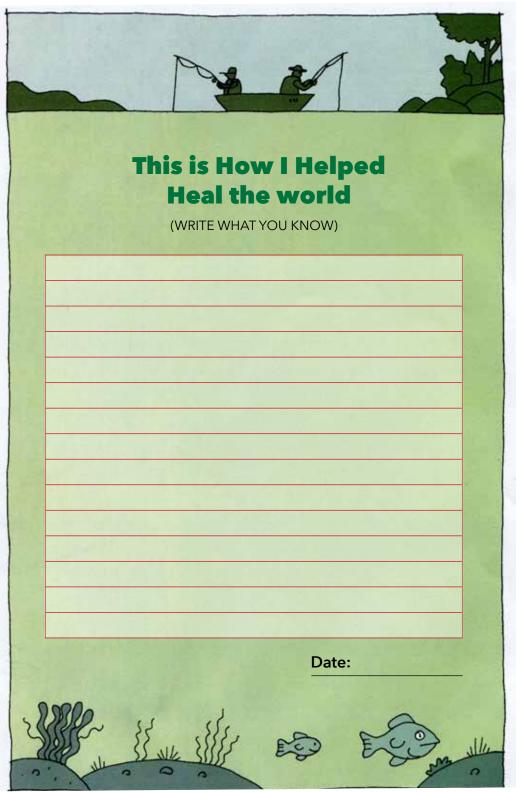
As a journalist I made it my cause to help people better understand the world and what others think.

In my books I have tried to help people express what is deepest in them and to find comfort.

In my work with youngsters and adults I have tried to help them read and write and express their thoughts.

I have tried to help heal my wife's pain. I try through my love to give her more heartbeats to sustain her life and help her persist through illness.

#### YOUR PAGE



WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! 4



#### **Song of Myself**

(WHAT I KNOW)

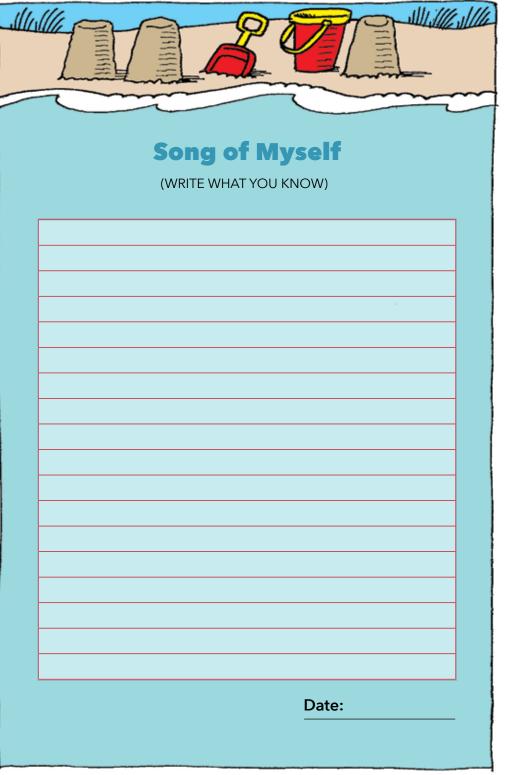
- I sing a song of loneliness, of separateness from others.
- I sing the song of a boy who knew little joy in his young life, but who found it later when he married and became a father.

I sing of pain and fear.

I sing of lack of confidence at times.

- I sing the song of a person who has tried his best to make his way in the world and build a core of strength. With my strength I try to help others. I know what it is to struggle.
- I sing a love of books and music. They give me strength and hope.
- I sing of prayer-may we make things right in this difficult world.

I sing, too, of hope, everlasting hope.







Write, don't think too hard

## What I Have Tried to Accomplish with My Life

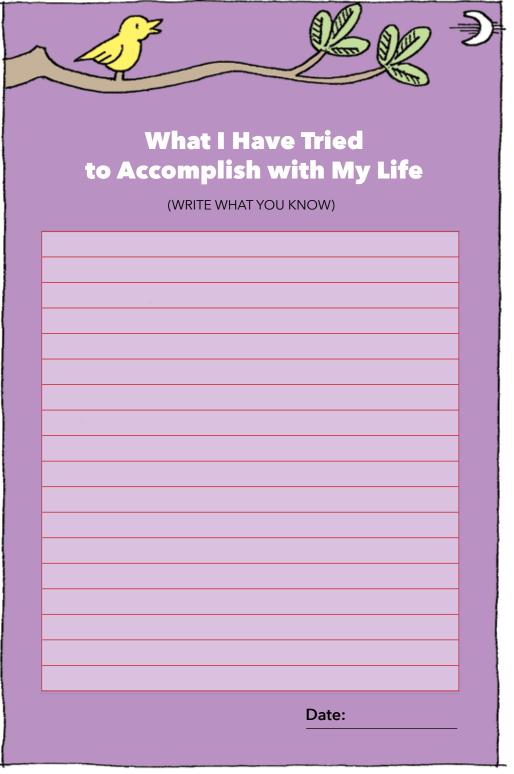
(WHAT I KNOW)

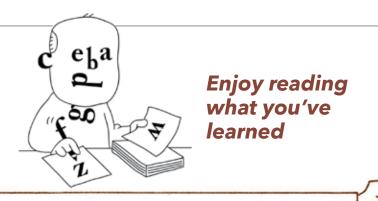
I have tried to live a responsible life, work hard, be a good father and husband. I have tried to help others through the work I have done, the books I have written, through listening to and encouraging others.

I have tried, in my own way, to make the world a little better than I found it. I have tried to live a decent, useful life and offered my love and good will to others.

I have found life very hard at times, but I have tried to do my best.

I haven't wanted to waste a moment of life, having seen my father lose his so very early. So I have deliberately squeezed as much joy and achievement as I could from this precious life. I have never taken life for granted. It is something so wonderful and not to be squandered.





## What I Have Loved Truly, Madly, Deeply

(WHAT I KNOW)

I have loved books with all my soul. They saved me during a tumultuous childhood and saw me safely through the chaos and pain of early family life. They always give me hope and allow me to expand my limited world into an immense universe. Books are my salvation.

I love, love, love the music of Bach which always strengthens my soul and spirit. His music comforts me, allows me to accept my deepest feelings and fears. His music reassures me that mankind can be good and sacred, rather than always killing and destroying. He takes me to a spiritual place.

I have loved my wife and daughter truly, madly, deeply. They have allowed me to love, to open my heart to others, to also open myself to pain and sorrow. Loving them has enriched me in spirit. They give me strength.

I have also loved with all my heart an aged cousin who showed me only unselfish love and kindness. She accepted me, with both my goodness and my limitations. She did not judge me. I miss her so.

#### YOUR PAGE

## What I Have Loved Truly, Madly, Deeply

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)







## What Is Courage and How to Find It?

(WHAT I KNOW)

Courage is the ability to persist and carry on no matter how deeply you have fallen or how fearful you are. It is finding that hidden kernel of strength within you and allowing it to emerge and flourish as you do your humblest best to deal with the problems and challenges in life.

Courage is always within you if you allow yourself to believe in your powers, to believe that you are capable of trying your best to overcome the fears and obstacles in your life. It is a matter of having belief in yourself. **Each of us** is stronger than we think.

#### **YOUR PAGE**

## **What Is Courage** and How to Find It? (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW) Date:



Light a candle on your desk where you write



#### **The Tiny Miracles I Behold Daily**

(WHAT I KNOW)

The flowers emerging in early spring after a harsh winter.

The singing of birds.

The smell of fresh air.

#### Our love for another.

The ability to use our imaginations and create something new.

The love of our pets.

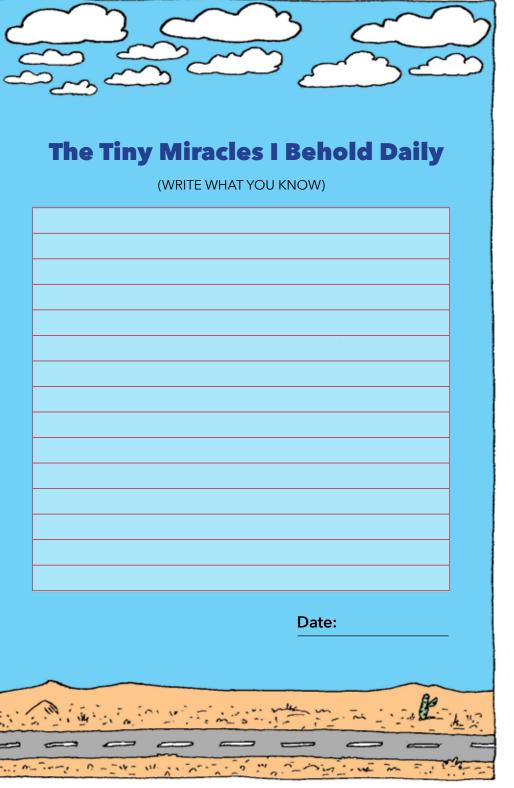
Any kindness extended to us.

Being alive and partaking in the world and its joys.

My uncle once wrote that the ripening of a green banana is a tiny miracle—and he was right.

My wife caressing my face.

My daughter's loving words.





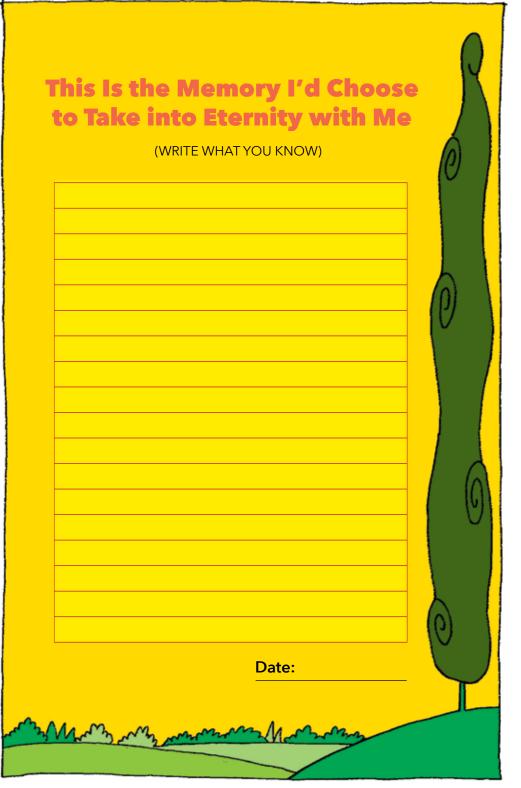
## This Is the Memory I'd Choose to Take into Eternity with Me

(WHAT I KNOW)

I always will remember seeing my daughter born right before my eyes. I still can see the crown of her head emerging from my wife's body, then her face, then her shoulders, the tiny arms, the torso, the legs and feet. I still can hear her first cry as her lungs gasped her first breath. So tiny, so beautiful, such little fingers, such a miracle to come from the love of two people.

I can remember how tired my wife was after nearly a weekend of painful contractions. I did what I could to comfort her; I kept rubbing her back, holding her, encouraging her. She was brave and overcame her fear.

I can still remember my overwhelming joy as a husband and new father. It was the happiest day of my life. I felt complete; I had always wanted a family of my own. I thank God for this miracle, for this blessing. Those memories, those feelings have never left me, they console me when times are sad. They will remain part of me to my dying day.





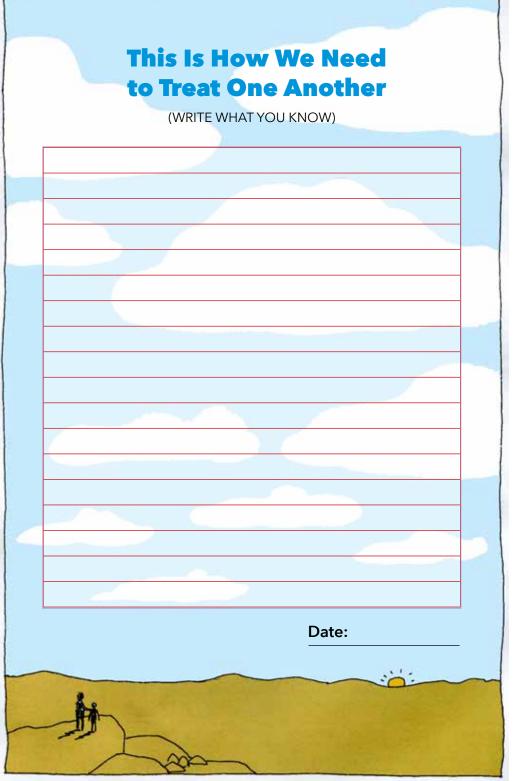
Let yourself go

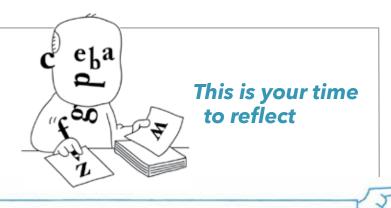
#### This Is How We Need to Treat One Another

(WHAT I KNOW)

We need to treat one another with love and kindness. While each of us has many strengths, we also have many vulnerabilities, we can be very fragile. Life is difficult, and just as we need help and for love to be shown to us, so should we be sensitive to the needs of others and respond.

When we can, we need to reach out to help people and to be nourished in return. As challenging as our lives may be, it is important that we make an effort to see things from the perspectives of others in our lives. In this way, we engage in our common humanity and our hearts can be united. We must open our eyes to see others more clearly and work to overcome our own limitations of shortsightedness, our blindness to the plight of others.





## What Kind of Life Should We Lead?

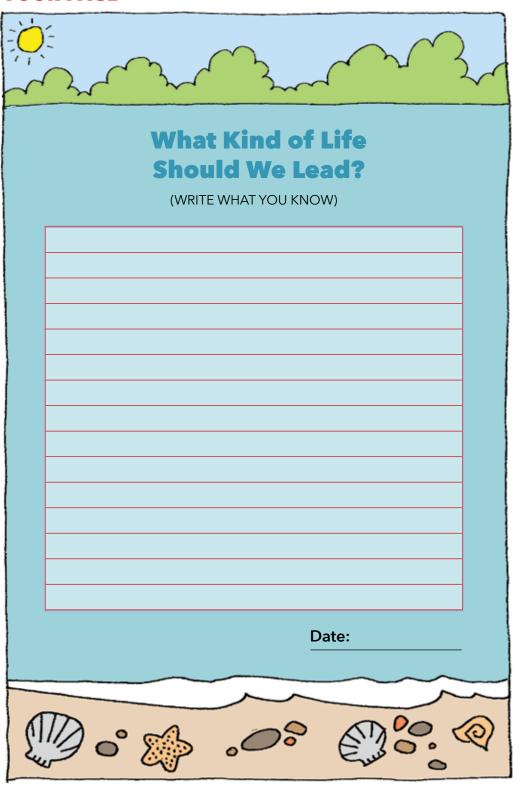
(WHAT I KNOW)

Everything in life is so delicate. We must live to do no harm, but rather try in our own way to make the world better. This can be achieved by the love and kindness we show others, by our being unselfish, by our giving to others.

We should learn as much as we can about the world we live in and our history. We need to read and study and strive to overcome our limitations and to become our better selves.

We must plumb our depths and search for the richness within us, to find our highest spirit and share it with others, as well as to discover the good natures in other people. Each of us can be a hero in our own meandering way as we do our best to live our God-given lives.

#### **YOUR PAGE**



19 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! 20



Write down the blessings in your life



#### **An Act of Kindness I Remember** Which Made a Big Difference in My Life

(WHAT I KNOW)

When I was learning to read in school I just couldn't put the letters together to sound out words; I was a frightened, unconfident child. I wanted so achingly to learn how to read, but I was getting in my own way, afraid I would fail and show my ignorance. My kind, wonderful teacher chose to stay after school with me day after day, helping me. She was so patient and encouraging and helped calm me down enough so that I could learn. She believed in me, she understood my fear, and she helped me build confidence each day so that I could finally relax and take in all that she was giving me. I have never met a kinder person in my life.

I did learn to read well and in so doing saved my fearful young life. Reading gave me hope and purpose; reading allowed me to enter expanded worlds of the imagination, delivering me from a life filled with family strife. Through reading I overcame the sorrows of childhood and of life. The memory of that kind teacher remains a blessing to me today. I will never forget her. I try to be patient and kind like her when others need my help.

#### YOUR PAGE



#### **An Act of Kindness I Remember Which Made a Big Difference** in My Life

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

021
Data

Date:





Finally, a place to express what has been deep within you



#### On Being Less Selfish

(WHAT I KNOW)

It is by giving that we learn the fullness of our nature, that we see the many good qualities that truly are within us. Each of us is needy in our own way; each of us needs loving and nurturing. And to this end, so must we be willing to extend love and support to others who need the same.

To realize our full natures, we need to break out of our cocoons and try to understand others, to see all the blessings within them that often are within us as well. We are in this hard life together and must give succor to one another, rather than turn away and fasten only on ourselves. To be selfish is to lead a hollow life.

ng Less Selfish E WHAT YOU KNOW)
Date:



Never be ashamed of what you write



#### **Hopes and Dreams I Still Have**

(WHAT I KNOW)

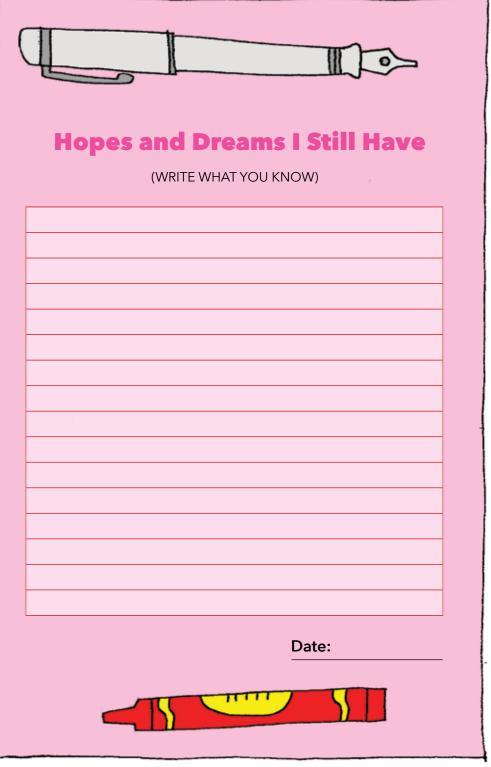
I hope my daughter finds the path that is right for her, that she has a fulfilling life, rich with many experiences and the success that she hopes for. I want her to be happy and to find someone with whom to share her life.

I hope my wife finds the good health and strength that she seeks and never loses her strong, vibrant spirit.

I hope, for myself, that I will keep creating new things to the end of my life, that somehow I can take the lingering pain and misery I feel at times and convert them into something good that will also help others. I would like as long as possible to live a creative life, to continue learning and growing. I would hope, too, that love will also remain an important part of my life.

I hope the world turns better, that war and devastation will finally halt, that man will stop fighting with man, that we can live in peace and harmony and love.

I hope we will learn to treat the Earth with better care, rather than continue to destroy the wonders that nature so abundantly gave us. We must come to love our Earth and not take it for granted.





Play some music if it helps relax you and gets you in the mood to write



#### **How to Find Joy**

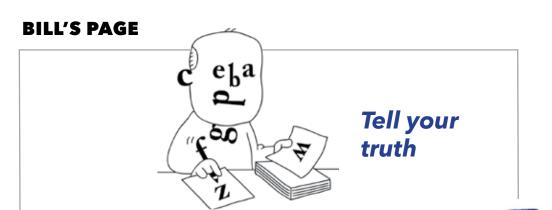
(WHAT I KNOW)

One way to find joy is to focus on one or two things that you love and do well. For me, it has been writing and creating work that expresses what I feel and which helps others.

I have found great joy in my immediate family, too, knowing that we love and are there for one another. My family has given me a sense of completeness, that I am bigger than my parts.

I think, because life is hard, we must insist on having joy in our lives which gives us the strength to survive and go on. But we must learn to discern the joy that is inherent in our lives, often in the simplest of places—a walk on the beach, blooming spring, a baby's laughter. Always we must make an effort to look carefully and not go through life with blinders.

How to Find Joy (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)	
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#### On Doing the Right Thing

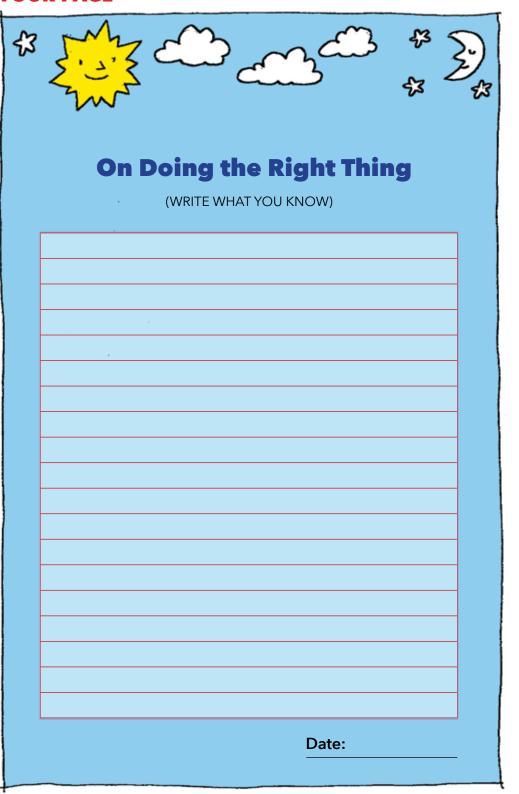
(WHAT I KNOW)

Listen to your heart.

Listen to the little voice inside that tells you when something is right or wrong.

Trust yourself and you won't go astray.

We have an obligation to our highest self to be kind to others and to do no harm. We are part of a community that must work together to solve problems and make the world better than we found it. When we do wrong we go against what is good and holy within us. We must nourish our innate goodness and overcome what is base within us. We must consciously become our best selves.





Let your dog or cat comfort you as you write from your heart; stroke their fur

#### Whom I Love with All My Heart

(WHAT I KNOW)

I love my wife and daughter. They nurture me and fill my life with goodness and kindness.

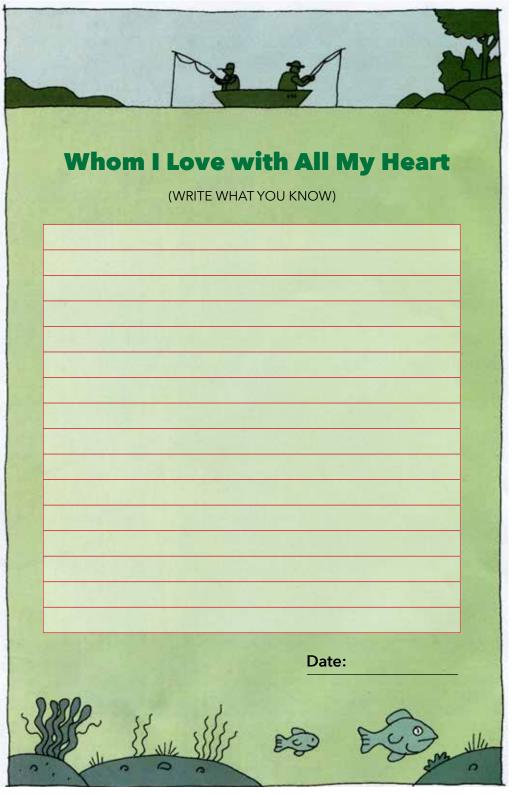
I have had a long marriage and this love has proved to be the richest experience in my life. It has helped me overcome my selfishness; it has opened me to new experiences and ways of seeing the world. My marriage has given me comfort and stability.

Being a father has helped me fill the holes in my being, the holes which were just waiting to be filled with love. Loving my child has enriched me, has matured me, and made me a more compassionate person.

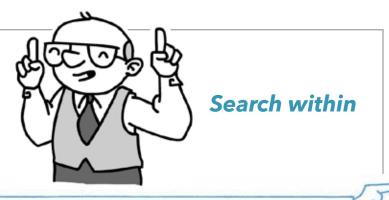
Opening oneself to love also makes one more vulnerable, particularly to loss. Love of others is the final consolation and makes life a little more easy and meaningful. I think that people cannot love enough; they have so much to give if they allow themselves to do so.

I also have loved the pets in my life. I am grateful for their companionship and comfort.

#### YOUR PAGE



31 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! 32





#### What I Value Most in Life

(WHAT I KNOW)

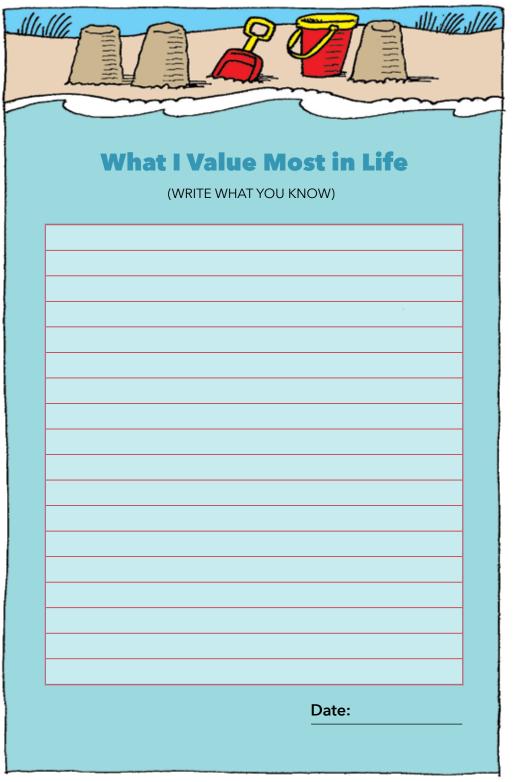
I value having hope in my heart. Without hope I am lost and in darkness.

#### I value books and learning-they provide the foundation for my life and sustain me through dark times.

I value hard work and creativity. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than creating a new book or project.

I value love and kindness because each of us is so needy and hungry for all the help, compassion and support we can get.

I value good friends with whom I can share what's in my heart and learn what is in their hearts too. Friends help dispel the darkness and brighten our lives.





Catch your breath, then write



## What I Would Like to See Go On Forever and Ever

(WHAT I KNOW)

The quiet of early morning.

#### The ocean and beach.

The love of my wife and daughter.

The music of Bach.

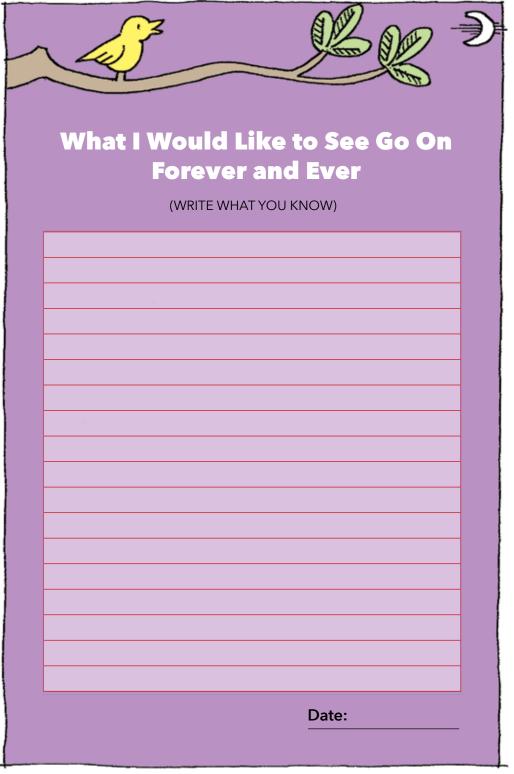
The contentment of good companionship.

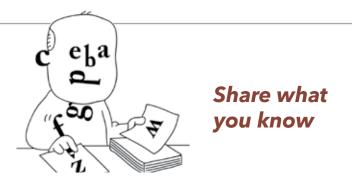
The discovery of new ideas.

The joy of good health and physical strength.

The people I love dearly–I never want to lose them.

Acts of kindness, caring, and reflection.







#### What Is Our Responsibility to Others?

(WHAT I KNOW)

We are here to help one another because life is so very fragile. One moment we are happy, the next moment we may lose everything or someone important to us, leaving us sad and alone. Each of us, no matter what we have accomplished or been given, struggles with the similar problems as we live our lives.

Each of us, no matter how high or low our station, needs to be loved and to reach out and love others as well. The more we can find it in ourselves to be giving and kind, the stronger we will become, the fuller our natures will grow. All we need do is put ourselves in the shoes of the other person to realize what he or she needs and then find that quality in ourselves to offer another.

As a child I was a slow learner, but as I grew older I became a tutor to many people who were having trouble learning to read and write. I understood how difficult it can be to learn and I saw the need to help others build their confidence. Those who know things have a responsibility to share what they know with others.

#### YOUR PAGE

## What Is Our Responsibility to Others?

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

	Date:
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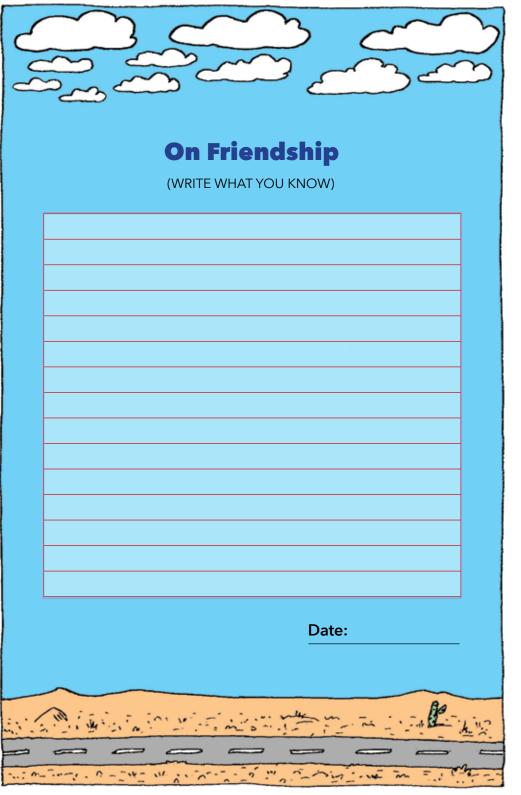


#### **On Friendship**

(WHAT I KNOW)

It is very hard to be alone. Having a friend means sharing your life with another, learning how others think and feel. Having a good friend means being able to count on someone when you need help and support, as well as giving of your best nature to someone who needs you, too.

Losing a friend is like losing a bit of yourself—the light goes out or grows dimmer. I have lost many friends to death and each loss has left a hole in my life which can never be filled. Making a good friend is one of the highest acts of being a human being.







#### **On Raising A Child**

(WHAT I KNOW)

Raising a child s one of the least selfish acts a human can perform. It draws forth all the loving and goodness and patience that a human possesses. It is a thrilling experience to see a child grow and thrive and build confidence in life.

#### Rearing a child brings forth all the joy a parent has within her—or himself.

In raising my own daughter I wanted her to be free to explore and find her way so that she could grow strong and confident, rather than be burdened by the fears I often felt in growing up.

Sometimes, it seems, that raising a child should be the easiest thing to do; you need only to let the love flow from your heart to your child. If you can be loving and kind and patient with your child, she or he will then more easily find their place in the world.

Your child is the center of your universe, but you must teach her that she is part of that larger universe which must be shared lovingly with others. Yes, your child is very special, but so, too, are all the other children in the world. We are part of something bigger than ourselves. We must not be selfish.

#### **YOUR PAGE**

# **On Raising A Child** (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW) Date:





#### What I Believe In

(WHAT I KNOW)

I believe we must love one another and remember that each of us shares the same feelings—joy, anger, hurt, loneliness, hope, courage. No one has a monopoly on life or emotions. Each of us stands unsteady at times and we need strength and support to stand firmly on our own two feet.

Some of us are luckier than others, in that things come easier. We then have a responsibility to help others who are not so fortunate.

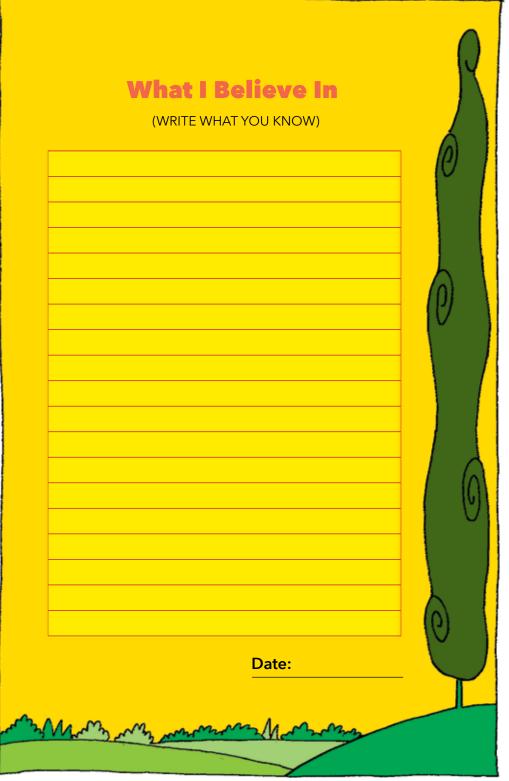
I believe that life is wonderful and we should be grateful to partake of our time on Earth. No matter how difficult things may become in life, we can still find hope in the sunlight, in the magnificent oceans, in the trees, in the people we love. If we look carefully, we can always find something good to help brush away our fears. I believe we must keep striving to find positive things to overcome the pain we feel at times.

#### I believe in love and kindness, that we are called upon to help make the world better.

I believe in the generosity of others.

I believe that we must cling together to find safety in the darkness of night.

I believe in hope everlasting, that somehow, some way we can repair ourselves and gather our strength to lead decent, useful and loving lives.





Be proud
of what you have
learned in life

#### **My Mission in Life**

(WHAT I KNOW)

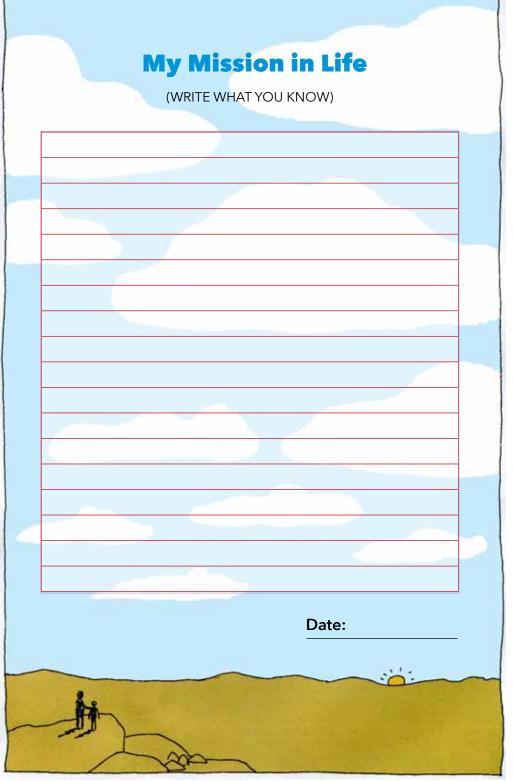
I have endeavored to be a good teacher, to show people what I have learned and to help people express what is deepest within them.

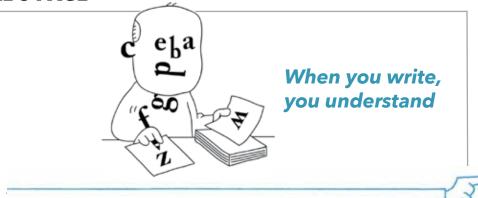
As a child I was a very frightened, insecure student, and it was only because I had a wonderful, patient teacher who unselfishly coached me, that I was finally able to learn to read and write. As I grow up, I became a journalist whose mission was to understand things and inform readers about what I was learning.

My equally important mission in life was to be a good husband and father. I came from a family where there was much conflict and unhappiness, where we children were constantly frightened by the chaos, and I wanted to have a family of my own where we would all love one another and find fulfillment.

Another mission has been to help people learn how to read and write, to help them express all the important thoughts and feelings within them, rather than choke their true selves and emotions inside, hidden from the world.

I have seen my mission as one of trying to help repair the world and heal its injuries. I have done my best, I think.





#### **Things I Loathe**

(WHAT I KNOW)

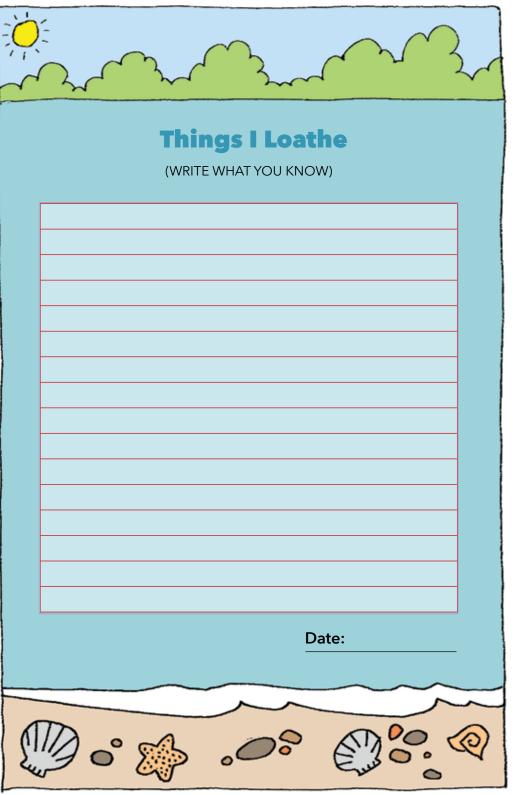
The selfishness and closed-mindedness of most politicians.

Seeing people hurt one another and be at war.

#### Cruelty, selfishness, bullying.

I hate insensitivity shown by some to the plight of others.

Being told what to do—I want to figure out things for myself and don't want reins placed on me; I need to breathe free.





Play some soft music when you write



#### **What I View As Sacred**

(WHAT I KNOW)

#### Our love for and kindness to one another.

A family's well being.

Books.

Writing.

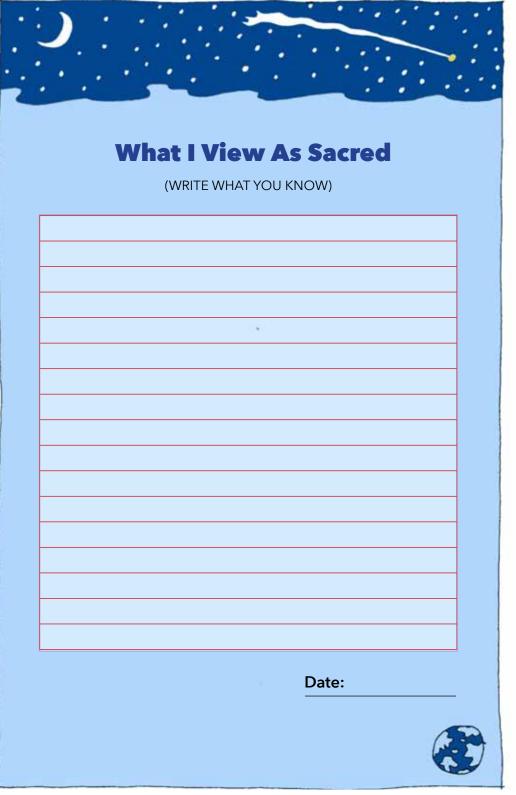
Music in church.

Personal happiness and peace.

Planting and growing things.

Playing music.

Loving one's pet and being comforted in return.





Close your eyes to allow your thoughts to emerge

#### What I Have Learned **About Evil**

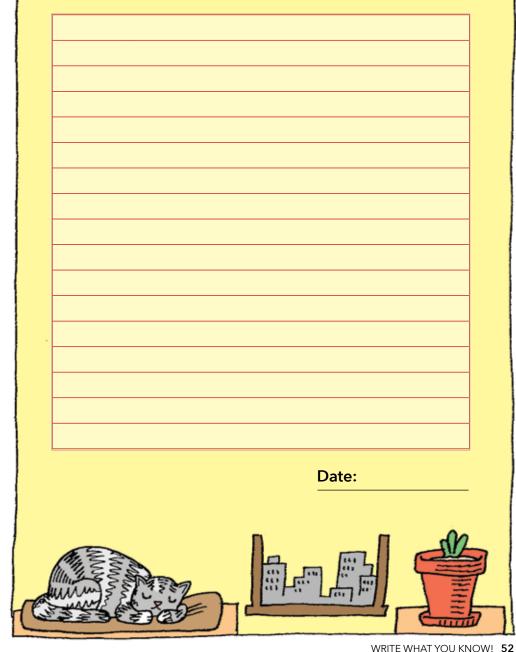
(WHAT I KNOW)

The more we hurt others or upset their lives, the more pain we will personally suffer. We know in our hearts what is right; when we depart from this inherent understanding, we do ourselves great harm. We diminish ourselves by hurting others. The ideal is to live in peace and harmony with others, to do no harm, to do good whenever we can. This is not hard to do if we set our minds to the task.

#### **YOUR PAGE**

#### **What I Have Learned About Evil**

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)





#### Someone, Something I Believe In

(WHAT I KNOW)

I believe in our humanity, that within us are decency and love to guide us. I believe we are in the world for just a very short time (no matter how much time we wish we had) and that we must use our time well.

I want to believe in God, that there is a Supreme Force who helps order our lives and who can comfort and protect us. But I am not sure anymore—there is too much war, hatred and misery in the world to believe that He or She exists and truly loves us. If this were so, would He really allow so much suffering?

Perhaps I believe in mankind to make things better, but I am not sure of that either. We seem to bring too much pain to the world and sully the wondrous Earth that was given to us to sustain us. How miserable we humans can be at times. We have not yet learned how to tap fully into the love, the kindness, the compassion that is innately within us. Why do we not fully embrace all the good that is within us, rather than give in to evil compulsions?

As I write these words, I am a little surprised at myself. My words sound cynical, almost bitter and seem to have dimmed some of the hope I had within me. I feel some shame for what I have written. Yet, it is okay to have conflicting thoughts and emotions, no?





Are you surprised by what you are learning about yourself?



#### **Fears I Have**

(WHAT I KNOW)

I fear losing the people I love and care about. I fear the emptiness in my life when they leave, I fear the loneliness.

I fear harm and illness coming to the people I love.

I fear, too, disease, illness and infirmity for myself, and I fear the day I will not be able to take care of myself or the people who are dear to me.

I fear the ravages of time and the toll these take on my spirit and body.

I fear leaving this wonderful world with all its miracles, with all its beauty. How lucky we are to have been given life.

Fears I Have				
	(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)			
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#### The Guiding Principles of My Life

(WHAT I KNOW)

To be kind and help others, to share what I know and learn.

To be a good husband and father and to act responsibly toward others.

To create new things, such as books and web sites.

To continue learning throughout my life.

To make others happy when I can.

To make the world a little better in any way I can.

To treat others with respect the way I wish to be treated.

To lead a healthy useful life.

To dream, to hope.

#### YOUR PAGE



#### **The Guiding Principles of My Life**

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

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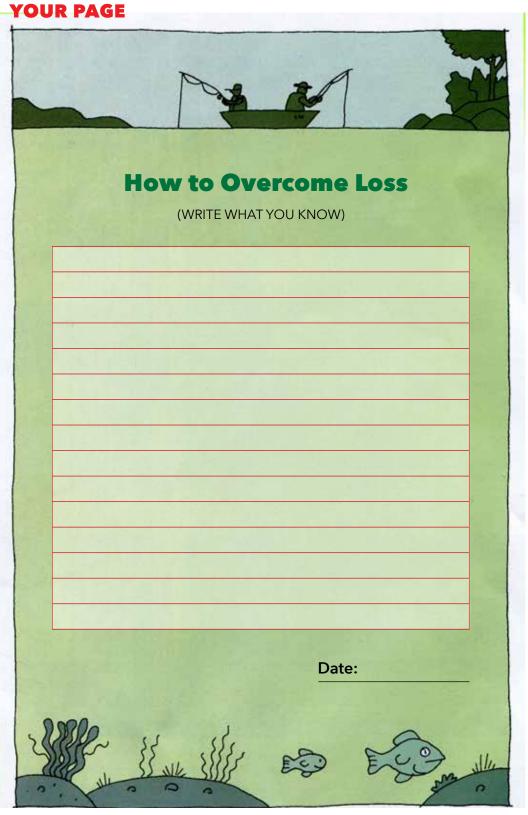
#### **How to Overcome Loss**

(WHAT I KNOW)

Not an easy question to answer. Perhaps the biggest resolution is letting time pass so we can come to terms with the loss or any great changes in our lives. It took so many years for me to accept the early loss of my father, and his death still pains me. He is always in my heart.

I think you cannot fill the emptiness in your heart caused by losing someone you love. The void remains; it may grow smaller, but it never disappears.

Work hard when you experience loss. Being productive or creative can help fill some of the loss as you re-engage with everyday life and fulfill your responsibilities. But there also comes a time when you will be alone with yourself, your thoughts and feelings, and it is then that you will experience the full emotional impact of the loss of someone who helped fill your life. At such times the only way I know to deal with such loss is to pray to God for comfort. Or, I talk to myself to be strong.



59 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! 60



Write with full conviction, write with power



## What I Have Learned From My Mistakes and Failures

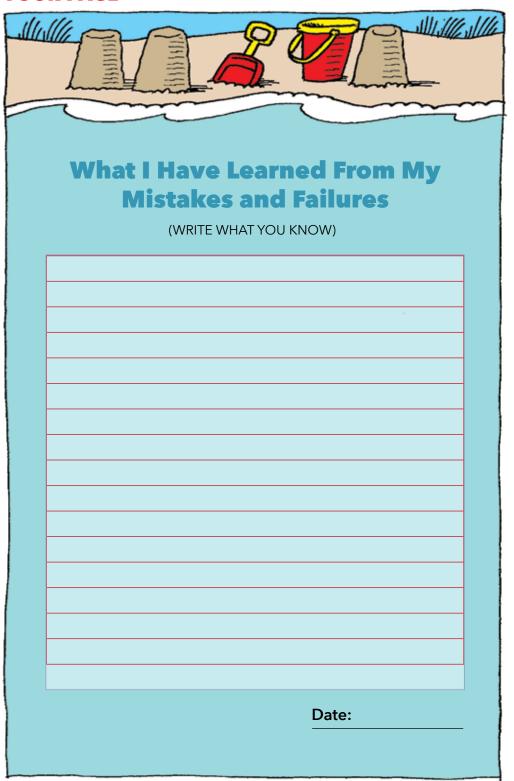
(WHAT I KNOW)

I have learned that it's okay to make mistakes, and even fail, as painful as it may seem. We learn from our errors—they reveal new information to us and we gain understanding.

The most important thing I learned after making a mistake or suffering a setback was that I needed to pick myself up, steady myself, and forge on, one baby step at a time. I learned my world need not come to an end after failure, as long as I was prepared to try again and do my best.

I remember losing a job I held for many years and I thought then it was the end of the world for me. But I found with time there were other opportunities waiting for me if I looked, and I opened new doors for my life which led to a much richer, more satisfying life than before.

Give everything in life your best shot-never hold back!





Add your thoughts each day; something new, something important will come to you each time, you'll see

## Important Things That I Would Like the People I Love to Remember

(WHAT I KNOW)

Life is hard, just do the best you can to carry on and survive. Be kind and generous to the people you meet. Your good behavior will help others be better people, too.

Look for beauty and goodness. They are always around you if you keep an open eye.

Always keep hope alive in your heart and soul—never give in to negativity, it does you no good. Hope keeps you going and improves your life.

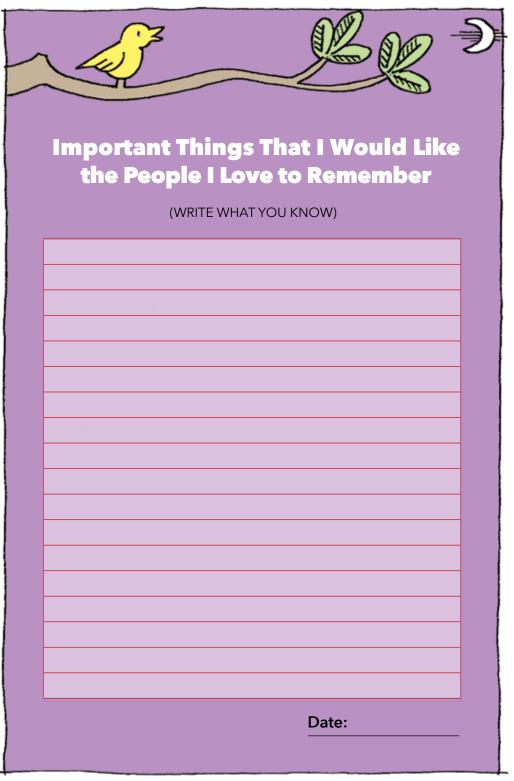
Try in your own small way to make the world a better place. You have the power to help others; use it.

Be loving to others—no one ever gets enough love in life, everyone is alone and in need of some comfort. We all need a kind word, a gentle touch.

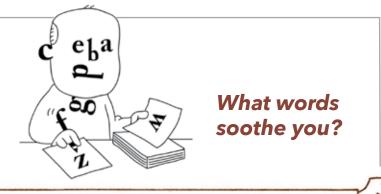
Take pleasure in the work you do and do you job well-doing so helps instill pride in one's self.

If you think of me, remember I always tried my best in life. I held nothing back and gave fully of myself. I was a happy soul despite all the pain I experienced in life.

#### **YOUR PAGE**



63 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW!



#### Whom I Would Trust With My Life

(WHAT I KNOW)

Hard question. I am not sure. I never had much trust in others. Perhaps I would trust God, but I am not sure about that either. I seemed to have lost trust as a child when I would pray to God to hold my embattled family together, but that never happened.

I think I trust myself the most. I have always had to depend on myself to get where I was going. I don't think that will change. Most people have enough trouble taking care of themselves, so how could I trust others to take care of me?

I am not pleased with my answer. I wish it was different. My response reflects my feelings of separation from others. It is an inadequacy that I need to overcome.

Whom I	Would Tru	ıst With I	My Life
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#### **About Resilience**

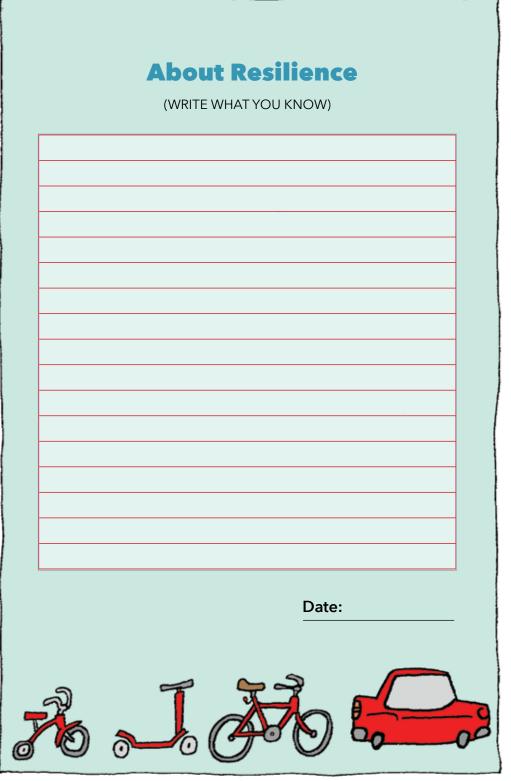
(WHAT I KNOW)

I have learned that each of us is stronger than we think, that we have greater inner resources than we ever thought possible.

In life each of us will get hit with blows. These may make us fall or leave us sorely pained. But with a little time, we will heal, maybe not as fully as we'd like, but we will mend well enough to go on with our lives. We have an innate resiliency that enables us to bounce back from our hurts and losses and somehow carry on.

Resiliency seems to come easier when we are young, but even with the passage of time and our aging, we still have the capacity to regenerate ourselves, to find some joy or peace in life.

The ability to adapt and endure is what makes human beings special.





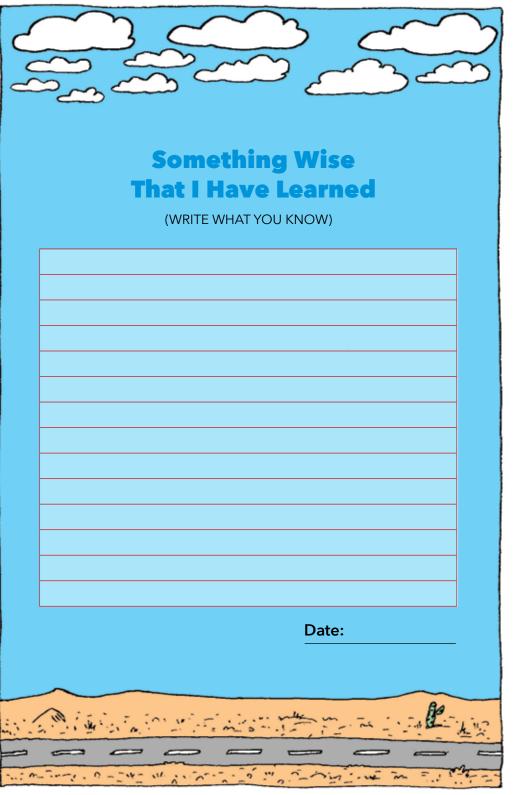


## Something Wise That I Have Learned

(WHAT I KNOW)

Be grateful for each day of life that is given to you and the people whom you love. Learn not to take things for granted. **Everything in life** in a miracle—to breathe and live, to love, to laugh, even to cry. As humans we experience so many emotions that enrich our lives.

I learned this from having lost so many people and from getting through my own illnesses and those of my wife. It is only when we have lost someone we love or lost something we value that we begin to realize how precious life is, how fragile. Therefore, we must learn to be thankful for whatever good that comes in our lives.





You know many things.
Don't be afraid
to write them down

## What the Passing of Time Has Taught Me

(WHAT I KNOW)

Our love for one another is paramount.

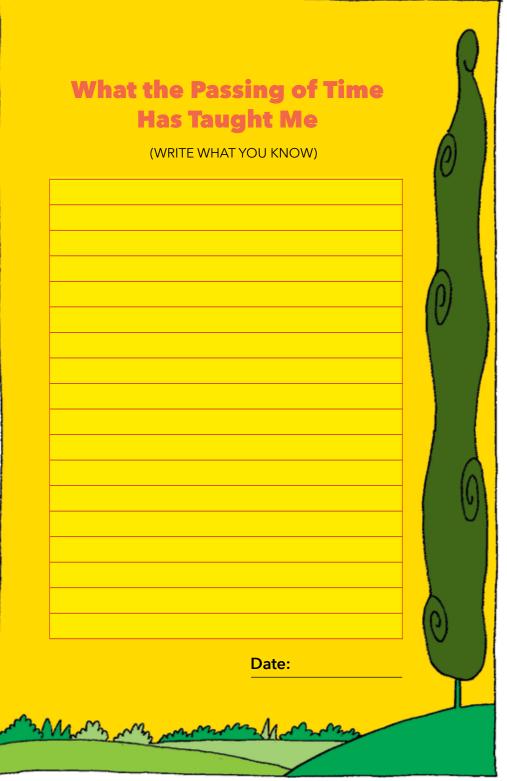
We must be ready to help one another.

We should be grateful for the life we have and everything in it, regardless of the problems we face.

We can constantly grow and expand our view of the world.

We can overcome our worst selves if we try.

There is no greater gift than the gift of life.





Write for posterity

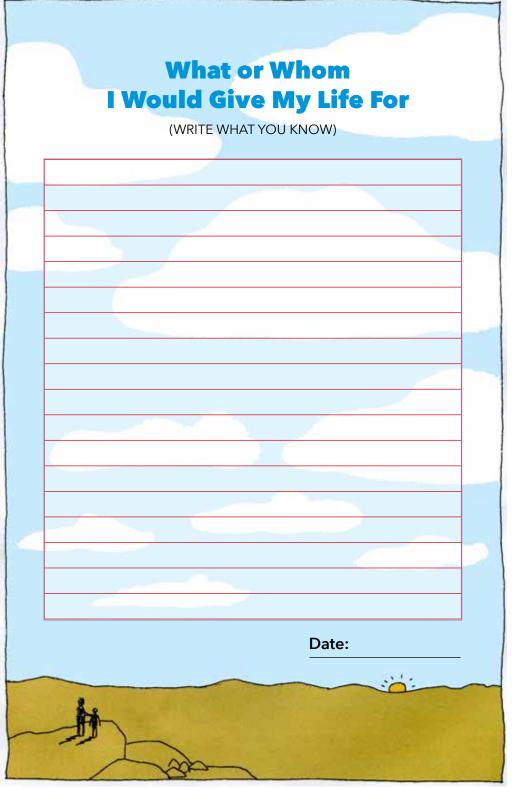
## What or Whom I Would Give My Life For

(WHAT I KNOW)

I would give my life for my wife-she can have my heart.

I would give my life for my daughter.

My life would be empty without them.





#### **How to Mend A Broken Heart**

(WHAT I KNOW)

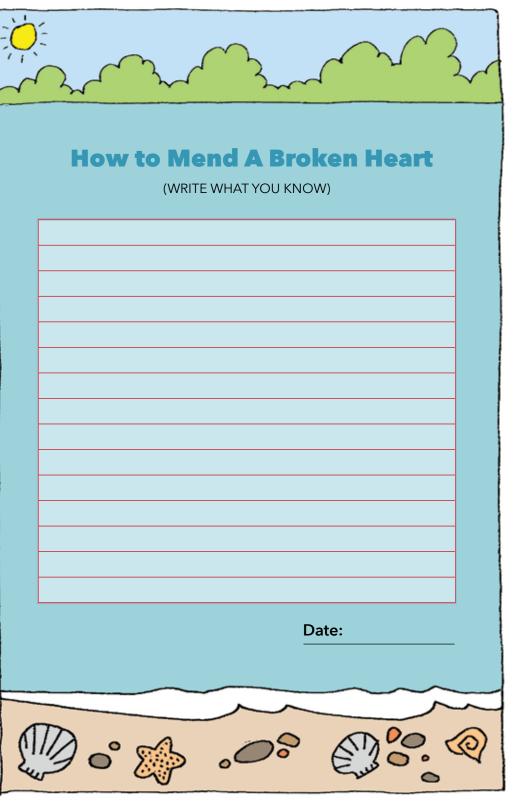
Give time, ancient time, a chance to heal your hurts and pain.

Keep hope alive in your heart because having a dream helps get you through the worst life has to offer.

Find an undertaking, a mission, a purpose that will keep you energized, busy and useful; **helping others will help you mend.** 

I have learned that when crises develop, the only way I can get through them is by working and starting a new creative project. By doing so, I provide a path for myself into a better place. I channel my pain and upset by writing books.

#### **YOUR PAGE**



75 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! 76



You can write something silly or funny, too! Everything counts!

#### **Simple Pleasures That I Adore**

(WHAT I KNOW)

Reading-books, newspapers, comics, and anything that helps me understand the world better.

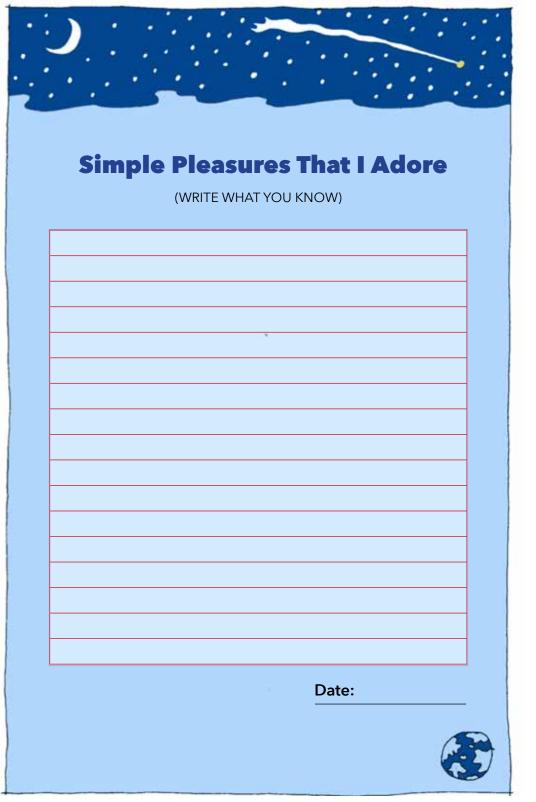
Sitting quietly in the park with my wife.

#### Listening to music early in the morning.

Sitting at the kitchen table and writing my thoughts.

Swimming or wading in water-this gives me such peace and comfort.

Eating a simple sandwich or making scrambled eggs.





If you were harvesting words from the sea, what would be in the net?

#### **What I Would Place** in My Imaginary Treasure Box

(WHAT I KNOW)

Beautiful feathers.

Stones from my mother's jewelry.

A tiny, baby doll.

My father's ring.

A CD of beautiful American Indian flute music.

The first book I read.

The first book I wrote.

#### A lock of my daughter's baby hair.

A cassette with my wife singing the words to "I See Sky." This is a song that brings tears to my eyes whenever she sings, the song she would sing when she was confined to a hospital bed and could only look out the window.

#### YOUR PAGE

#### **What I Would Place** in My Imaginary Treasure Box

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

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Forget about grammar or writing rules. Just write from your gut



#### **What I Consider Wondrous**

(WHAT I KNOW)

My daughter being born in front of my eyes.

Love between two people.

The beauty of books which helps us enter new and unimaginable worlds.

Kindness shown to me.

A beautiful day.

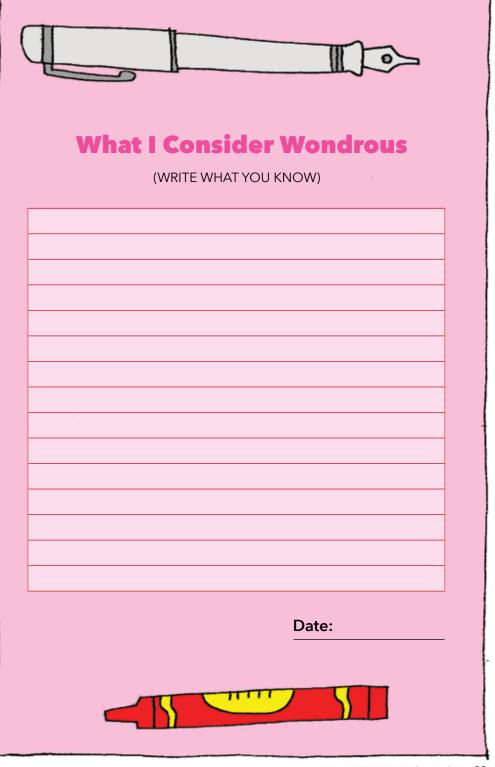
Paintings by Michelangelo and Vermeer.

The joy of building something from nothing and making a dream come true.

#### Planting seeds and growing flowers.

Swimming-the water is always healing.

Creating something new using my imagination.





Write your autobiography in seven words



#### What I Want From Life

(WHAT I KNOW)

A modicum of joy and pleasure.

Some laughter at times.

Some love from people I care about deeply.

Good health so that I can enjoy my life.

The ability to continue creating.

A sense of peace.

#### **YOUR PAGE**

# **What I Want From Life** (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW) Date:



Don't censor yourself, accept the thoughts as they arise in you



### What I Want to Be Remembered For

(WHAT I KNOW)

I would like people to respect the body of work I have built in my life—from the articles I wrote as a journalist, to the many books I have written, to the web site I have created.

I would like to be seen as someone who constructively used his life to help others through his work and teachings.

I would like to be considered someone who helped make the world a little better, who did his best to lead a worthy life, who was a loving husband and father and friend.

#### YOUR PAGE



### What I Want to Be Remembered For

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Deter
Date:





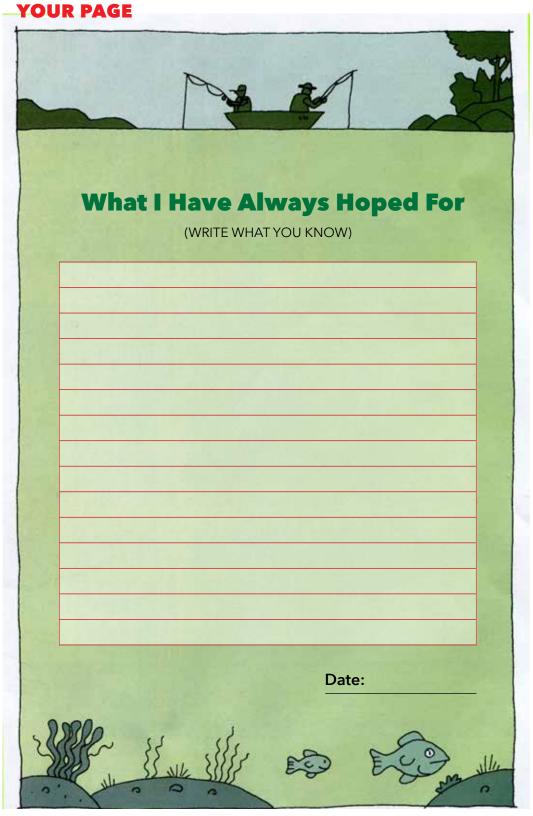
(WHAT I KNOW)

As a young boy I used to hope that my mother and father would stop fighting and love one another and me. I hoped we could be a happy family, rather than one riddled with anger and tears.

As I grew older, I hoped for a family of my own, that I would find a wife and raise a family and that we would be happy, that we could become the family I longed for when I was a child.

As a young man, husband and father I hoped for a successful career, both to find my own personal fulfillment and to provide for my family.

Today, as so many years have passed, my hopes are simple—to stay healthy, for my wife to regain her health and strength, for my daughter to be happy, for my work to continue. I hope that we finally live in peace with one another. Will the latter ever be possible? I wonder.





#### If There Were No Tomorrow, This Is What I'd Do Today

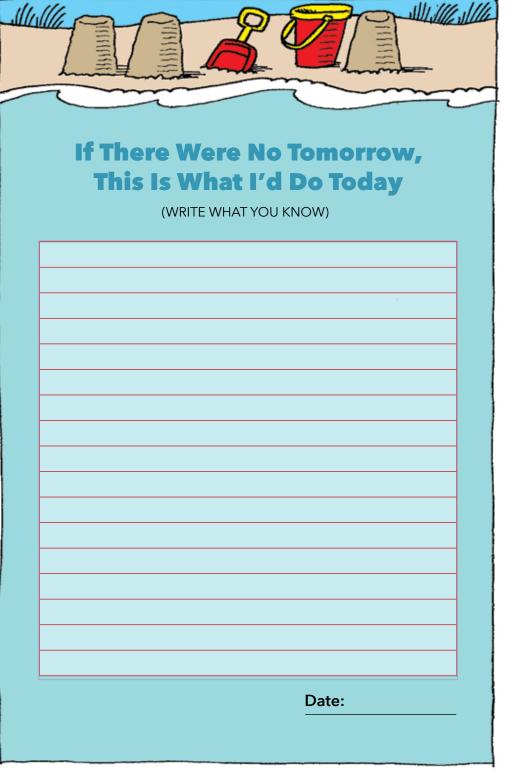
(WHAT I KNOW)

I would draw close together with my wife and daughter and tell them how much I love them. I'd tell them that they were my universe, my heart, and what a thrill and godsend it has been to know and be with them.

Perhaps we could have a last meal together and share our stories and deep secrets. Perhaps we could give each other love and some comfort.

I would try to be as grateful as I could with the short time, the hours and minutes, the seconds that were left to us before tomorrow came.

I would thank God for having given me life.





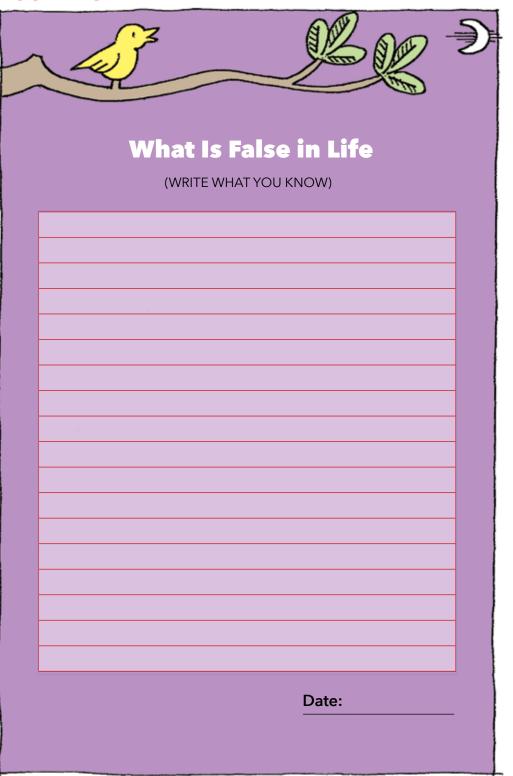
You have important things to say



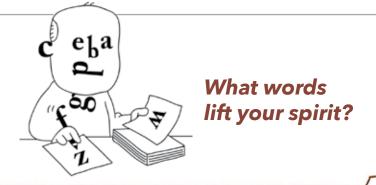
(WHAT I KNOW)

We really need so little in life—safe shelter, enough food to eat, people we love. Possessions do us no good, they do not last and have no eternal meaning. Only love for one another is all important.

#### **YOUR PAGE**



91 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! 92



## What Is the Path We Should Follow in Life?

(WHAT I KNOW)

Follow a path that encourages you to help others. Who hasn't needed a helping hand in life?

Find someone to love with all your heart and passion—it is no good to be alone.

**Find the work that speaks to you**, that makes you feel proud, that helps you discover the noble part of yourself, that helps you express yourself, what you feel and think.

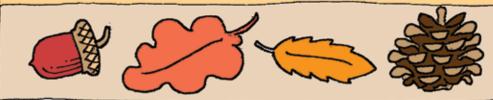
Do some good in the world-life is so difficult and so many people are suffering. Be kind, be good, be caring.

#### **YOUR PAGE**

## What Is the Path We Should Follow in Life?

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)









(WHAT I KNOW)

I am not sure of the answer, only to say how good it is to find a life partner with whom you can live and make a life together. No one, though, can fully assuage our basic loneliness since each of us is separate from the other. I think we must just learn to live with our separateness. No one can complete us; we need to find ways to live with ourselves, to fill ourselves up and accept loneliness as a part of living.

I remember experiencing great loneliness as a child and it never quite left me as an adult. This has meant that I have had to find comfort in myself. I have learned to live comfortably with myself.

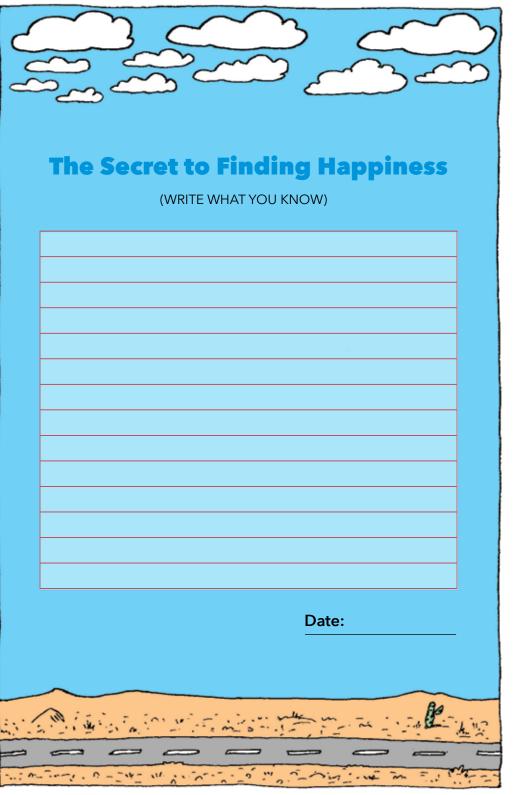
How to Deal with Loneliness (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)	
Date:	
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(WHAT I KNOW)

Accept oneself, love oneself—we are what we are and we must find the good that resides within us. **We must value ourselves.** If we can find love in ourselves, then we will be able to reach out and find love in others. I have learned, too, to take pleasure in the tiny miracles to be found in each day of life. I take nothing for granted; every good, every beautiful thing I encounter is a blessing.







Write to enrich your life



#### The Importance of Kindness

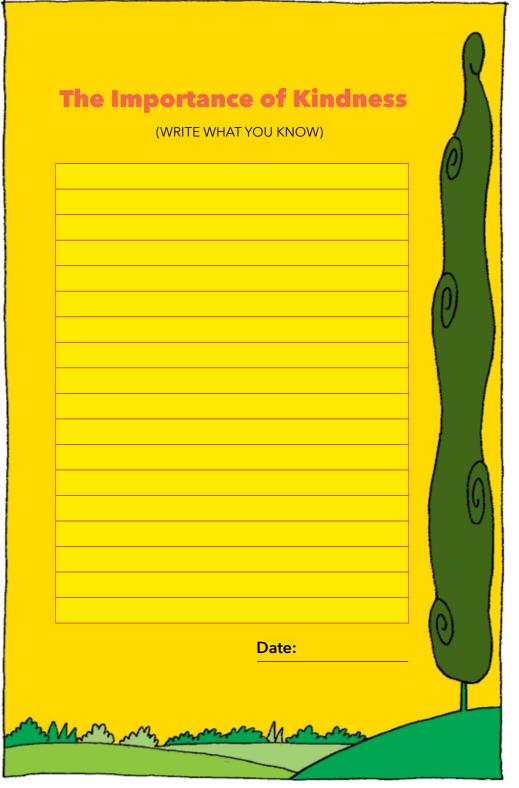
(WHAT I KNOW)

We are all vulnerable and frail at times. This is when we can use the kindness of others to help us through our dark passages. Is there anything sweeter or more pure than a generous act from someone who can feel our need?

Just as we need kindness shown to us, so must we be ready to offer the same thoughtfulness and love to others. We share this precious world and we share our lives living together.

The more we can be gentle and giving to others, the more peaceful and nurturing the world will be, and our lives will be that much braver and stronger.

I will never ever forget the people who entered my life and encouraged me in my studies and work and who told me when I had done a good job. They gave me hope for the future, they made me feel special.





Don't be afraid. take a chance. **Nothing to lose** 



#### **How Do You Find** the Road to Freedom?

(WHAT I KNOW)

The key to freedom is to focus on what is important in life and put all the rest in the background.

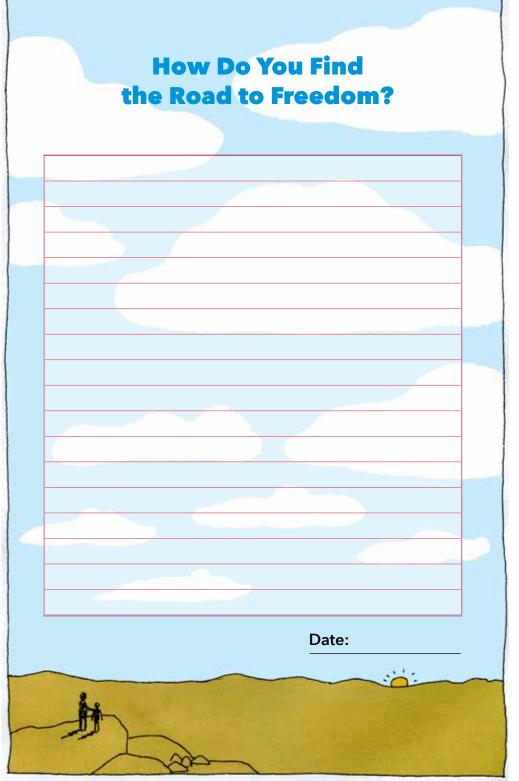
Ask yourself what it is you need to live a good life.

Is it finding the right work that will nurture you and give you pride in what you do?

Is it finding a person to love or to be a good friend to?

Is freedom being able to live comfortably with yourself and feel contentment with your life?

I find freedom as I read books and newspapers and learning about the world. Reading takes me away from my misery and unhappiness. I find freedom in my work which gives me a way to express all that is good within me and gives vent to the creativity within me. Creating is the ultimate freedom.







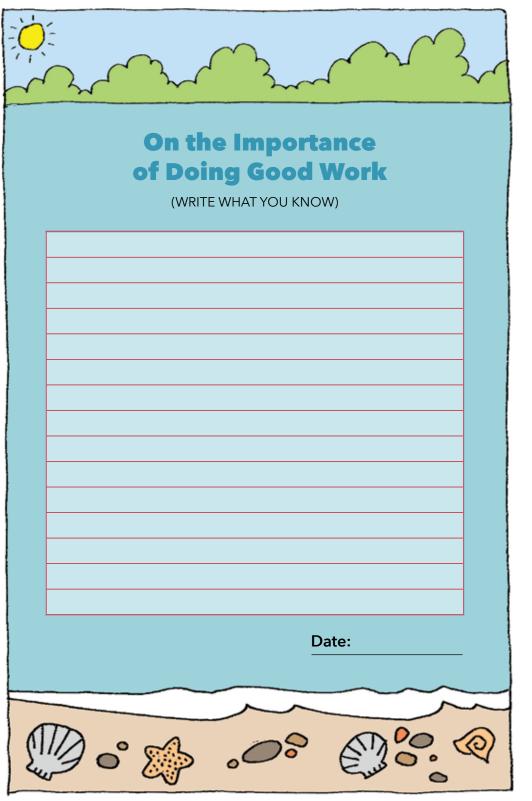
(WHAT I KNOW)

Work gives us a way to tap into our creativity and express the personal, best things in us. It may be our love of discipline, or the joy of solving problems or expressing our ideas. Work gives us focus and allows us to put aside, for the time being, the pain and uncertainty we may feel.

**Every since I was a child my happiest moments have been in my work**—whether it was a written homework assignment or, later, writing books and managing a newspaper and creating educational web sites.

I know of no greater joy than to have seen my dreams come true over the years as I became more confident and skilled in my work.

#### YOUR PAGE



103 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW!



Do you remember the first words vou ever wrote?



#### What the Passage of Time Shows Us

(WHAT I KNOW)

We learn through time's passing that everything in life changes-nothing stays quite the same no matter how much we may want things to be constant.

With time, we lose the people we love as they age and leave our lives-that's the hardest, most painful experience we must endure.

As time passes, we grow from children to young adults to elderly. Along the way we gather experience, we assume more power, we may become more confident. As we grow older and frailer, we lose some of this certainty.

Everyone experiences life much the same, regardless of age. We love, we fear, we are happy at times, sad at other times. And many of the important values from the past are handed down from one generation to the next.

Perhaps most importantly, the passage of time unveils the value of time: it is finite. You can buy virtually anything you want or can afford except for more time. Cherish it. Use your limited time on Earth as well as you can; waste none of it, and appreciate all that comes your way.

#### YOUR PAGE



*

Date:





Write for the person whom you hope one day will read this

#### What or Who Provides the Bedrock of My Life

(WHAT I KNOW)

My wife and daughter provide my bedrock. They give me ballast when I feel lost and drowning. They return the love I have given to them.

Lused to think-or wanted to believe-that it was God who was my foundation. I remember praying to Him as a child, asking that He keep my family together, that He make my mother and father love each other rather than fight all the time. I prayed for him to help me hold my family together.

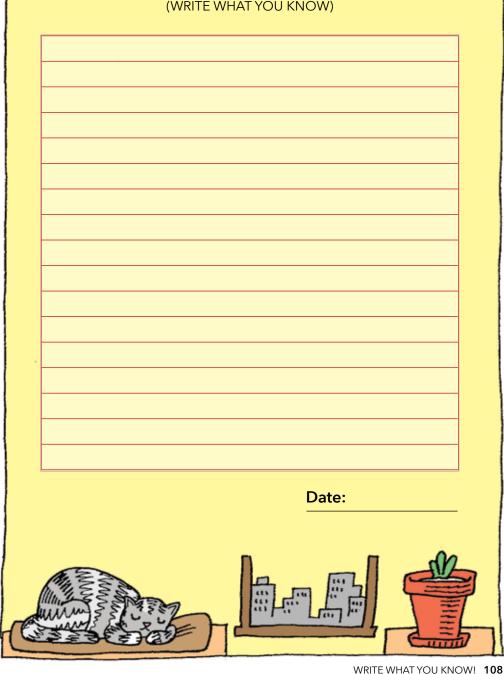
But He was not there for us and everything was torn asunder. Later, as I grew older, I prayed to Him again. I guess He was there along the way to ease my pain and fears and worry. But I think now that He has deserted me. Or perhaps He was never there, that it was I who was responsible for my fate...I am not sure.

I have learned to provide my own foundation. I do the best I can to comfort myself, to depend on myself, to see myself through my tears and fears. What other choice do I have?

#### YOUR PAGE

#### What or Who Provides the Bedrock of My Life

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)







(WHAT I KNOW)

#### I look for kindness.

I notice if they are good listeners.

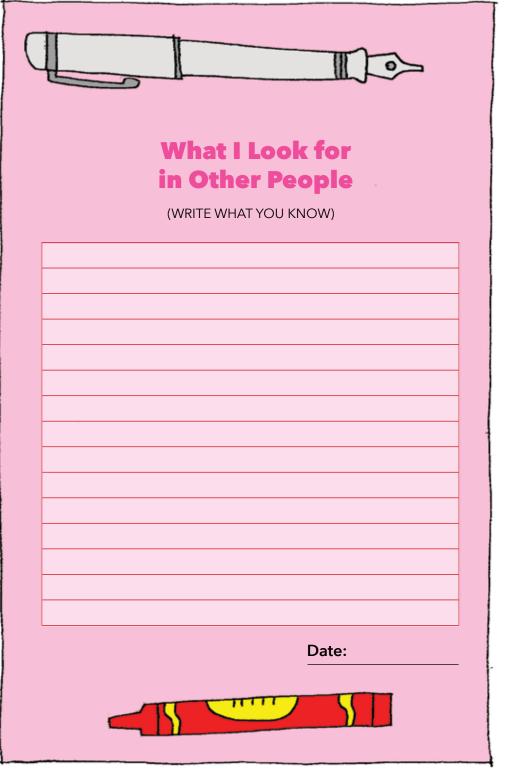
Do they have a caring nature?

Do they demonstrate empathy and sensitivity and compassion?

Is the person a giver rather than a taker?

I want to be friends with people who have good values, who want to help others and make the world a little better.

I don't like selfish, self-centered people who think they know everything and who can't put themselves in the shoes of another person.





Take pride in the fact that your writing is very important to you and to others

#### **What I Respect About Myself**

(WHAT I KNOW)

I am a hard worker and always try to do my best in every situation. I share what I've learned with others in order to help them.

I have cared deeply about my work—it is the best part of me.

To the best of my understanding, I have been a good and loving father and husband. I have done my best to take good care of my family and to help friends and family and people who worked for me.

I respect what I have accomplished in my life, that I have not wasted my time here on Earth.

Life is short and very precious—I know that from having lost people whom I loved early in life—and I have tried to use my time constructively and helpfully.

#### YOUR PAGE

# **What I Respect About Myself** (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW) Date:



What are the words waiting to spill out?



#### What I Believe in With All My Heart

(WHAT I KNOW)

We must be kind and loving to others—the world can be cruel and harsh and we must make it easier for others to live their lives. Everyone's life is precious; every life matters.

We must not waste our precious lives, but instead be grateful for the short time we have here and live constructive, useful lives.

We need to reach deeply inside ourselves to pull out what is best in us—our compassion, our generosity, our love. We must use whatever special talent we have as effectively and generously as possible and not squander our God-given gifts.

We must make the world better in any way we caneven something so simple as giving a smile to others to make their day easier and brighter. We must not in any way contribute to the anger, the mayhem and harshness in the world.

We must be ethical and not lie or cheat.

We must treat everyone we encounter in the same manner that we want to be treated.

All this is not really that hard to do.

#### YOUR PAGE



## What I Believe in With All My Heart

· (WRITE WH)	AT YOU KNOW)
	Data
	Date:



Keep some old photos nearby to help you remember important people and events in your life

#### What I Want for the People I Love

(WHAT I KNOW)

I want only love and good health and happiness for the people I love. I want them to be protected from pain, disease, despair and evil. I want them to be safe and to find serenity in their souls.

I would like for them to remember me with love in their hearts, to feel that I served them well when I was alive, to feel that I did my best for them.

I would like them to do good deeds in my memory to make life better for others, and most of all, to enjoy the lives that God has given them. How precious is this life, how much we take for granted when, instead, we should treasure each moment.

## **YOUR PAGE** What I Want for the People I Love (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW) Date:



Write some words from the pain you have felt at times



#### What to Do When You Feel Sad or Lost

(WHAT I KNOW)

Write to yourself or to God. Write what is in your heart—it will help you find comfort and better understand your situation and yourself.

Write about your feelings, or a happy memory, a hope, a fear, even a hate.

Listen to music that soothes your soul. It will help heal your raw wounds.

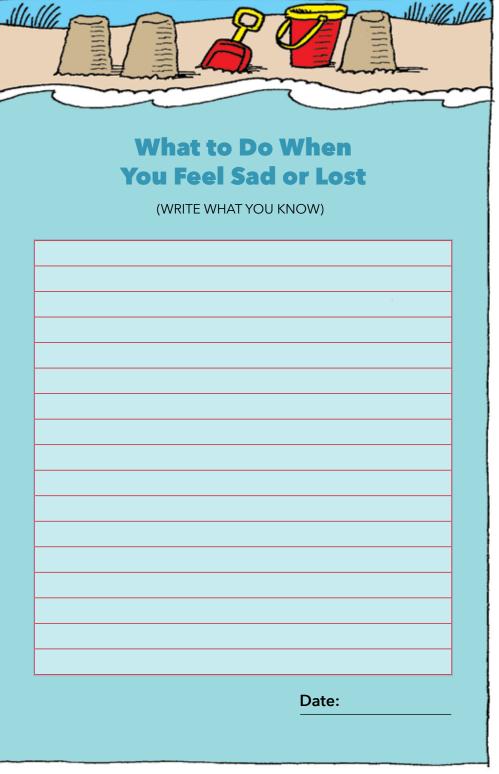
Take time to rest to allow your body to find comfort and renew itself. A healthy body will give you more confidence, courage and strength to get through difficult times.

Seek out comfort from those who love you.

If you feel ready, adopt a pet from a shelter. Loving, holding, stroking and caring for a pet is comforting and healthful for both of you.

Realize that these bad days will fade with time and new ones, filled with light and flowers and even love, will be there again for you to enjoy.

Be mother and father to yourself: you are worthy of love. (You know that, don't you?)





What are the words you wish someone had left for you to find?

### ...]3

## These Are the Most Precious Words I Would Wish to Leave to My Child

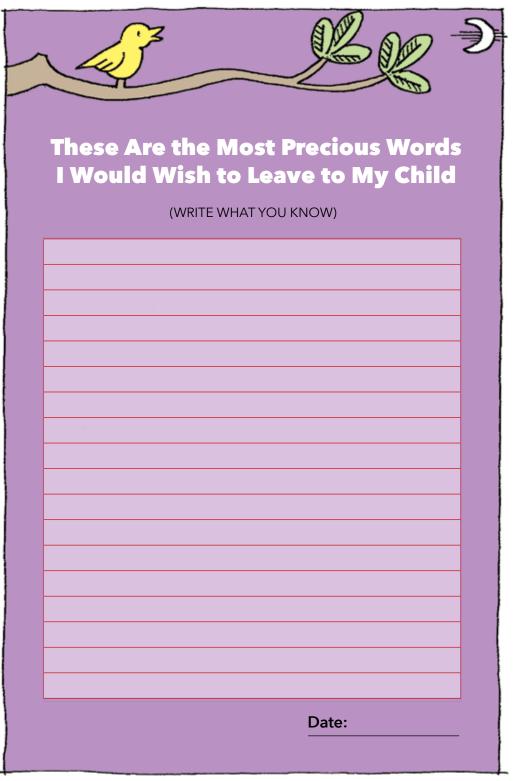
(WHAT I KNOW)

I have loved you fully, with all my heart. I never held back loving you and I tried to show you the best of my nature. I tried to be a loving father, to be the father I always longed for my-self. Yes, I made mistakes along the way, but my intentions were always good. I wanted only the best for you.

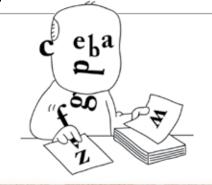
May you plumb all the richness within you. You have so many good things inside you waiting to come out and be expressed.

Don't be afraid, my child. Too long I lived with fear and it does no good. Find the courage within you. Believe that you are strong and that my love will always be with you. You are my heart, you have always been my heart from the moment you were born. That's how much I love you.

#### **YOUR PAGE**



119 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW!



Let every word in the book be the truest you know



#### What Is Success in Life?

(WHAT I KNOW)

To know that you have helped others and made the world a little better.

To know that you have shown love to others.

To have done the best work you knew how to do.

To have learned that we are all in this world together and that we must help one another to survive and prosper.

Success is not money; success is living our lives with good intent and grace.

#### **YOUR PAGE**

# What Is Success in Life? (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW) Date:



Imagine a giant post or billboard with your important words.
What would they say?

#### **Blessings for Those I Love**

(WHAT I KNOW)

May you reach your fullest self and grow in appreciation of the life which has been given to you.

May you experience only joy and love and good health.

May you remember I have always loved you and may you, in turn, freely offer your love to others.

May the world find peace and all people be treated kindly and with respect.

May you realize your deepest dreams.

May you find pleasure in every moment of your life.

May you accomplish all that you are capable of doing.

May you have good luck in life.

#### YOUR PAGE

# **Blessings for Those I Love** (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW) Date:



What would we do without words?
How would we be?



#### **Last Words**

(WHAT I KNOW)

Everything in life is delicate,

Life is a matter of balance.

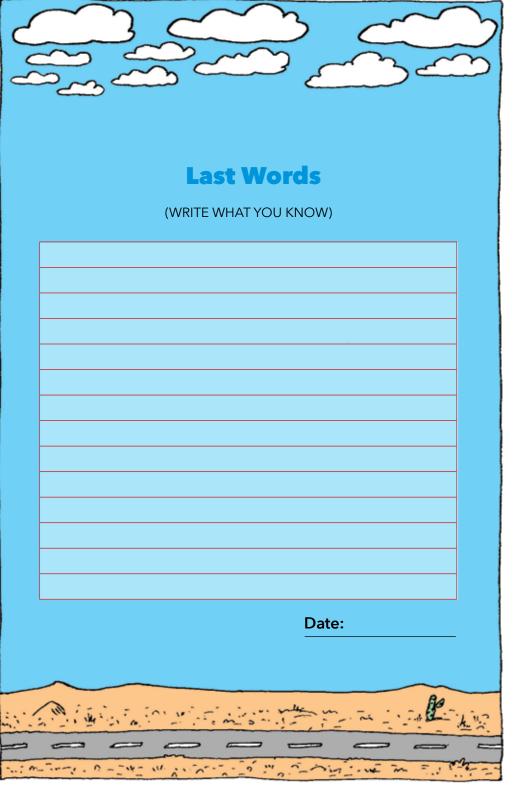
Everyone has the same needs: for love and protection and imparting joy to others.

Never take life for granted-remember how precious our time here is.

Be grateful for the life you have been given and do all the good that you can.

Be willing to forgive, too, for we are all human and make mistakes no matter how high the station we achieve in life.

Be merciful to others.

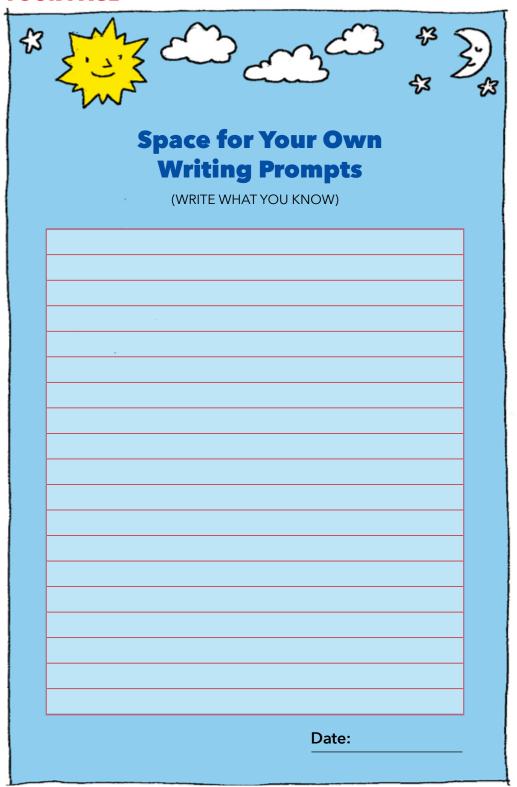


#### **YOUR PAGE**





#### **YOUR PAGE**



#### **YOUR PAGE**

## **Space for Your Own Writing Prompts** (WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW) Date:



#### **About the Author**

In his many books as well in his work as a newspaper editor, **Bill Zimmerman** has pioneered innovative writing techniques to help people express all the

important things within them. His books and web sites are used in literacy and English Language Learning programs around the world and to encourage creative thinking and expression.

His web sites are: <a href="http://www.billztreasurechest.com">http://www.billztreasurechest.com</a>, which features excerpts from all his books; <a href="http://www.makebeliefscomix.com">http://www.makebeliefscomix.com</a>, which enables visitors to create their own online comic strips, and <a href="http://www.somethingtowriteabout.com">http://www.somethingtowriteabout.com</a>, his writing prompts blog for students. Please visit them.

#### Among his popular books are:

- Pocket Doodles for Kids
- Pocket Doodles for Young Artists
- Make Beliefs: A Gift for Your Imagination
- Lunch Box Letters: Writing Notes of Love and Encouragement to Your Children
- How to Tape Instant Oral Biographies

Zimmerman's work has been featured on The Today Show, on the PBS acclaimed Ancestors Series, and in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and such magazines as Family Circle Magazine, Esquire, Business Week, Reader's Digest and Essence.



#### **About the Artist**

Tom Bloom is an artist who has brought joy to the world with his cartoons and illustrations which have appeared in leading publications, including The New York Times, The New Yorker, Fortune, Barron's and many more. He has

collaborated with Bill on many other books.

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131 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW! WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW!

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