

# Journaling for Caregivers

**B. Lynn Goodwin**

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# Why journal?

- It's a record of events.
- It's a record of feelings.
- It gives perspective.
- It's been known to restore sanity.
- It's cheaper than therapy.
- It can save the life of a distraught caregiver.

# How do you journal?

- Set a timer for 10 minutes or longer.
- Write what's in your heart.
- Let one idea lead to another.
- Forget about grammar and spelling. As long as you can read it, it's fine.
- Send your judgment gremlins out on the patio or tell them to go play on the freeway.
- As you let one idea lead to another, you'll figure things out and get to what you really want to say.

# What if you can't think of anything to write about?

- Start with a sensory image or
- Use a sentence start.
- Complete the sentence.
- Write your next sentence.
- Just keep going without judgment. Write whatever is in your head.
- Don't worry about contradictions or changing subjects.

Questions?

# Sample sentence starts

- Today I want ...
- Today I don't want...
- Today I remember...
- I wish I could remember...
- When I get overwhelmed...
- Next time...

*If there is time to share, **we'll only say what we love in the writing**, and I will explain why we do that with raw writing.*

# Miscellaneous thoughts

- If you send a note to [Lgood67334@comcast.net](mailto:Lgood67334@comcast.net), I will send you a list of prompts.
- Pick subjects that appeal. Try to write at least 3-4 times a week. If you want to write for longer than 10 minutes, go for it.
- Remember, there are no mistakes, only new material.
- Feel free to follow B Lynn Goodwin on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- Questions?

# Something to keep in mind as you write

## PURPLE

By ALEXIS ROTELLA

In first grade  
Mrs. Lohr said  
my purple teepee  
wasn't realistic enough  
that purple was no color  
for a tent,  
that purple was a color  
for people who died,  
that my drawing  
wasn't good enough to hang  
with the others.

I walked back to my seat  
counting the swish swish  
swishes  
of my baggy corduroy trousers.  
With a black crayon  
nightfall came to my purple tent  
in the middle of an afternoon.

In second grade  
Mr. Barta said draw anything,  
he didn't care what.

I left my paper blank  
and when he came around  
to my desk  
my heart beat like a tom tom.  
He touched my head  
with his big hand  
and in a soft voice said  
the snowfall  
how clean  
and white  
and beautiful.

**When you are writing about tough subjects, pretend you are Mr. Barta and treat yourself as he treats the narrator.**

*Alexis Rotella* is a poet, ordained minister, and acupuncturist who runs a health center in Maryland. The poem "Purple" first appeared in *East West Journal* in 1980 and has since appeared in many other publications, including the first edition of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*.

# Writer Advice

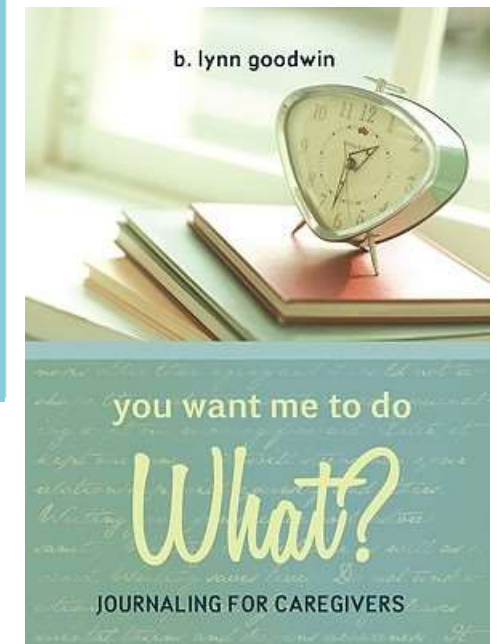
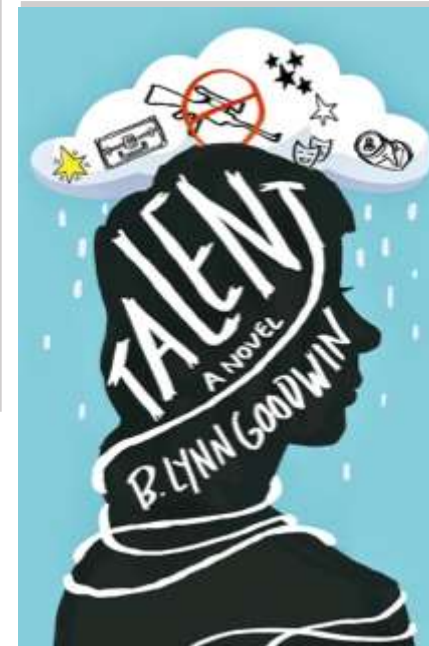
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The primary focus used to be author interviews, and editor B. Lynn Goodwin has had the privilege of corresponding with over 100 well-known and debut authors who have shared their experiences, insights, and inspiration with readers. Recent interviews are archived.

While Goodwin continues to interview authors, the primary focus has moved to contests. We run four contests a year and give feedback to everyone who enters. Goodwin, who won awards for both her YA, *Talent*, and her memoir, *Never Too Late: From Wannabe to Wife at 62*, sends personal feedback to everyone who submits an entry to each contest.

WriterAdvice also publishes the work of volunteer reviewers. Click on Guidelines to learn more about both. Please write to us if you would like to contribute.





# More Information About FCA

**Family Caregiver Alliance** offers education, services, research, and advocacy based on the real needs of family and informal caregivers. Founded in the late 1970s, FCA is the first community-based nonprofit organization in the United States to address the needs of families and friends providing long-term care for loved ones at home.

**National Center on Caregiving (NCC)** was established by FCA to advance the development of high-quality, cost effective programs and policies for caregivers in every state.

**NCC** sponsors Services by State, a state-by-state resource locator designed to help caregivers find support services in their communities.

**Bay Area Caregiver Resource Center** — operated by FCA for the six-county San Francisco Bay Area — provides support to family caregivers. FCA's staff of family consultants, through education programs and direct support, offer effective tools to manage the complex and demanding tasks of caregiving.

**FCA CareNav** is a secure online solution for quality information, support, and resources for family caregivers of adults with chronic physical or cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer's, stroke, Parkinson's, and other illnesses.

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