



Black-Out Poetry

1. Write a paragraph about a stressful experience, a traumatic memory or a difficult event that has impacted your life. It may be a relationship that consumes your every thought a dream that haunts you or a problem that needs resolving. You can use a page from your journal or a newspaper article on a current event.
2. Edit the paragraph. Start at the bottom, reading from left to right. Box those words that are pleasing to you ... the ones you like. It may be as simple as the word "a" or as complex as the word "reflection."
3. Black out the remaining words. Take a black, thick-Sharpe and cross out every word. All that remains visible to your eye will be the boxed words you selected.
4. Trace the boxes. Take a separate piece of 8x11 white piece of paper. Overlay it on the page with the boxes. All that you will see are the boxes. Turn the paper and look at it from all four perspectives. Choose the one that is most pleasing to you. It may or may not be the original one when you drew the boxes.
5. Connect the boxes. Use colored pens, pencils, crayons or other creative mediums. As you look at the boxes, an image may come to mind or you can simple begin and be curious about how they will become connected. Be creative. Surprise yourself.
6. Name your creation. Turn the paper and look at it from all four perspectives. Choose the one that makes the most sense to you. Once you select your perspective name it. Turn the paper over and write the name on the back. Under the name write a short "Once upon a time story..." about the picture. Option: Do the same from each of the other three perspectives.
7. Write a poem. Make a list of all the words you boxed in #2. Use these words to capture your story.
8. Reflect on your discoveries. How has your perspective of your original experience changed? What is your voice ... What is your take away or growth as a result of having this experience? What difference (physically, emotionally, mentally, behaviorally and spiritually) does black-out poetry make when you reflect upon your experience?

Note: This process was designed by Dr. Jo Anne Grace for clients dealing with stressful experiences or traumatic memories. For other applications of black-out poetry, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0f5Bmq_oMU