I write to prolong my memory of life now, to see that I have had thoughts, emotions, ideas, encounters and experiences. I cannot remember, it is as if I had not lived those days, and that my life was the barest of details I do remember. By writing it down it is engraved and my thoughts continue, are part of some stream and not just the discarded bits from the day’s menu.

Amy Tan

I write the first draft to get the meaning. the second to put in everything I left out, the third to take out everything that doesn’t belong and fourth to make it sound like I just thought of it.

Margery Allingham

"Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change, truly are powerless, because they cannot think new thoughts."

Rushdie’s Surprise Speech At Columbia University
BREAKING THROUGH WRITING BLOCKS

Fill in the following blanks:

1. My writing project is ____________________________

2. What stops me from writing is ____________________________

3. When I'm frustrated because I'm not writing, I tell myself
"______________________________",

and I feel ____________________________

4. Check which of the following reflects your position:
   ___ My feelings come to me and I cannot change them.
   ___ When my feelings are not helpful or appropriate, I can change them.

5. Write yes or no next to each of the Four Existential Positions you choose to experience:
   ___ 1) I can write and feel good.
2) I can not write and feel good.

3) I can write and be miserable.

4) I can not write and be miserable.

6. Imagine you have finished the writing you've planned.

Write how your life will be different. ____________________________

7. Is the change for the better or the worse? _______

Explain how ____________________________

8. Which relationships in your life will be most affected?

________________________________________

9. How will your completed writing most influence your attitude

toward yourself? ____________________________

________________________________________

10. What will you have to give up or diminish? ________________

________________________________________
11. What will you have to take on or increase?

________________________________________________________________________

12. What will you get in return for your efforts? _________

________________________________________________________________________

13. How will you be rewarded? _____________________________

________________________________________________________________________

14. Complete any of the following sentences:

I can't possibly finish my writing project unless _________

________________________________________________________________________

until ____________

________________________________________________________________________

without __________________

________________________________________________________________________

before __________________

________________________________________________________________________

because ____________________________________________
since ______________________________________

____________________________________________

After _______________________________________

____________________________________________

I'll be able to finish it when ____________________

____________________________________________

or ___________________________________________

15. Check the people listed below whose judgments of you you value:

__father  __mother  __spouse  __lover  __children  __grandparent
__aunt   __uncle   __brother  __sister  __colleagues  __clergy
__community  __employers  __subordinates  __employees  __teachers  __associate
__old friends  __new friends
INSIST—"PLEASE DO NOT TALK WITH NEIGHBOR WHILE IN WRITING SESSION"
Raise your hand if anything is not clear and we'll go out into the hall to talk.

Those who wish may use their computers in the Atrium.

BEGIN WRITING—strike gong

1. Start a sentence with any of the following phrases, then keep going without stopping even if you just keep repeating the last word until a new one breaks through.

   I know (knew)  I will (would)
   I think (thought)  I won't (wouldn't)
   I feel (felt)  I can (could)
   I want (wanted)  I can't (couldn't)

   Substitute pronouns as desired: I, we, you, he, she, they.

2. Read what you have just written:
   Underline a sentence that stands out to you

3. Read what you have underlined or say "pass."

   Exploratory - I
   Nurturing Parent
   Adult
   Free Child

   Crafting - II
   Critical Parent
   Adult
   Adapted Child
After writing a word beginning with each letter continue writing whatever comes until the next letter. Repeat the above with each new letter. Let it flow. You needn't start a new sentence with each letter, just continue.
This is the story with happy ending

I have not yet started the writing habit although I've been thinking about it for at least 12 years now. This morning, I woke up riveting with ideas and an inner push to write. Stories and actors screamed dialogues at me while I was listening to Ann Patchett's book titled "This is the story of a happy marriage" read by the author. Sitting at my kitchen island in the middle of my son's effort to clear my books seems like a "wrong time to write. Yet I could no longer stop this urge for the pain of not writing is too unbearable.

This year begins with cold shoulders from a certain male friend - current best friend and former lover. I still remember the look in his eyes when he asked me to please leave his house. His look was cold and determined as though he promised himself to never be abandoned again. He needed someone to be with him all the time, no matter what. I obviously had things to attend to, and if it is not one thing (e.g. choir, church, research) it's another (e.g., sons, household issues). After spending three days together celebrating love, life, and friendship, I was going home to San Francisco to clean up clutters and get ready for the New Year. He said plainly that nothing has ever changed with me and that he is not my priority. Ouch!

So why am I mentioning this incidence in my debut writing session? It is because I am easily distracted by people, objects, things, etc... that pop into my mind, all the time. It would be ideal for me to be left alone, abandoned, despised, and so on and so forth in order for me to focus on writing for my sake. I must say that it is nobody's fault to interfere with my work. I do an excellent job at distracting myself.

Since it's January 2nd, I decide that it is not time for self criticism, editing, or anything that may deter me from this writing muse. Ann Patchett said that writing is an art, and art needs craft. It is the practice of daily writing no matter what that constitutes the "craft". Thus I keep my eyes on the screen while moving the fingers on the keyboard.
Currently, a situation comes up. Michael seems to think that something I put in the trash bin prevents it from being picked up by Sunset Scavenger. They picked up the next door neighbor's trash, what exactly did you put in it, he voiced accusingly. I calmly remind him that it is possible that the trash collector forgot our bin, and I'd call the scavenger people to complain. He proceeds to call himself.

I envy those who dedicate their time to do the hardest thing first. It is key to success. But what if I see pretty much everything as "hard". I'm inspired to make a list of Good things (that I'm reluctant to do). It would look like this:

1. reflect
2. practice an early morning routine: pray the examen + yoga
3. get a good night sleep
4. write
5. clean up
6. check mail
7. throw things I don't need away
8. stop shopping for clothing & accessories

Likewise, I should make a list of Things that deter (me from doing good):

1. play solitaire
2. love/need for company of men, specifically
3. react
4. distract
5. pay attention to my look or feel
6. keep checking on progress
7. self doubt
8. use "should've or would've"
NAME

My intention:

_____ I want to use this class to write with others, writing and responding to prompts, or to keep writing if I am inspired without prompts. Am here for the pleasure. No out of class writing envisioned.

_____ I want to continue writing my

_____ I want to find a clear premise or theme

_____ I want to overcome a writing block

_____ I want to invest more emotional skin

The course will be a success if

Here's what I expect from the teacher

Here's what I expect from myself