

## HANDOUT

# Additional Writing Exercises & Prompts

## WRITE YOUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

What makes you go? What drives you to fight? Who are you? What do you stand for? These are all very important things to consider when writing a purpose statement. Write about what you are and what you're made of. Write about all those things that people can't tell just by looking at you- but if they watched you long enough, they'd see it in your actions and words. Write about what inspires you and how you hope to inspire others.

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## DISCOVER YOUR SAFE PLACE

Think of a real or an imaginary place where you feel safe and at peace. Create that place in your mind and write a detailed description of it using all your senses—what you see in this place, but also what you hear, smell, taste and feel through tactile contact. You can then use this as a visualized meditation, closing your eyes, breathing and imagining this place thoroughly, one sense at a time.

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## FINDING AN ENDING

Is there an experience inside your head that won't seem to go away? What is it? Why does it haunt you? Does this story need an ending? Explore your story.

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## DIALOGUE WITH YOUR BODY

When you are faced with an injury to your body, you need to reach an understanding of what has happened. You can begin by having a conversation with your body. A dialogue is a script that bounces back and forth between you and another person, pet, thing — or, in this case, your body.

By talking you allow your inner voice or wisdom to help you understand your injury. Don't judge or criticize what you write. View this as a search that might reveal some important insights. It might start like this:

*Self:* Body, why are you so exhausted?

*Body:* You know I don't sleep well at night anymore..

*Self:* I do know this. Sleeping is hard when you have nightmares.

*Body:* I think we need to do something to make them stop.

*Self:* What are you thinking?

*Body:* Maybe we haven't really processed what happened that night?

Play out your conversation with yourself to find answers that will help you get a handle on your situation.

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## **A LOOK AT YOUR VULNERABILITY**

In what ways has this experience made you more vulnerable, and in what ways has it make you less vulnerable?

Examine your decision making ability.

What have you learned by going through this trauma that now affects the way you make decisions? Write about positive decisions you've made or believe you will make as a result of what you went through.

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## **A LETTER TO YOUR PAST SELF**

Write a letter to your past self—the self that went through the loss or trauma—from your today self. What would you say to comfort her? What advice would you give? Offer your past self the acceptance and love that she needs.

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## **DO YOU HAVE A PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE BASED ON PAST TRAUMA?**

How has this philosophy helped you survive?

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## **WHAT GOT YOU FROM YOUR DARKEST HOUR TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW?**

What did you do? Did someone do something that helped you?

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## **LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS OF CULTURE**

What is the cultural meaning of the experience for you?

How does your culture see you due to this traumatic experience? If you were able to reject cultural (family, neighborhood, job, community) evaluation of yourself, how were you able to do this?

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## **A TEACHING MOMENT**

Based on what you learned as a result of your experiences, what would you want to teach others about survival and suffering?