

This writing exercise is one of several offered in a workshop presented through Cabrillo College Extension. To learn more about these classes, obtain additional writing exercises, or to register online:
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Memoir Writing:
Using the Journal to Explore Memories and Meaning

The *Written* Photograph: Captured Moments

Some of our life experiences are like frozen capsules of memory. Author Kathleen Adams calls these “tiny moments of intimacy, yearning, beauty, despair, exhilaration...moments to capture and hold forever in your heart.”

This journaling device allows you to look at a particular moment in time and preserve it in prose, whether it’s a moment of sadness and grief, or pleasure and serenity.

A captured moment preserves an instant of feelings and sensory images just as a camera produces a photograph that holds a particular memory of your life and freezes it in place.

Examples of these moments include: being read to by your grandparent, a broken love affair, a funeral of a loved one, a breathtaking sunset, the autumn leaves you picked up as a child to savor their colors, the birth of a child or grandchild....

Writing Exercise:

Describe in detail—using the senses of sight, smell, taste, and sounds—an experience from your life.

If a particular moment does not come to you easily, use the mind map exercise starting with a core memory and spin off the related people, places and things from that time, especially relating the feelings and senses you experienced.