

Finding Your Story, Session 2, March 21, 2021

Clustering Exercise

Some writing manuals refer to clustering as mapping or webbing.

Choose a word to cluster. It may be a person or place you found when you drew a map of your childhood home or neighborhood. It could be the name of a grandparent, a parent, or someone else you love. You can cluster almost anything and you'll find memories, emotions, and thoughts.

The rules of clustering:

1. Circle each word as you write it; don't move on without circling or you'll just be making a list. Your brain needs the circular motion to keep ideas flowing.
2. Try not to lift your hand from the page. Keep moving.
3. Don't stop to think; let ideas flow. Stopping or slowing down will disrupt memories from forming.

Creative Tension Clustering is an exercise you may want to try later. It is clustering two different things or people to see how they relate.

Sensory Exercise

Think about the event, person, or place you just clustered. List anything about it that you can:

1. See
2. Hear
3. Feel
4. Smell
5. Taste

You have the ingredients, so begin writing.

Verb Exercise

Take the nouns from your clustering and sensory exercises. Combine them with any of the verbs from one of the lists below and write a story, poem, essay, or remembrance. Capture what unfolds; don't try to manage it or make it go in a particular direction. Try to write without lifting your hand from the paper. Don't censor. You can edit later.

Begin with the words "The rain sliced" or "Today I ..." or "I remember when" or "When I was..." or "Once upon a time" or any way you want to use the words you found.

A Cook	A Carpenter	A Basketball Player
Slices	Saws	Runs
Whips	Hammers	Dribbles
Chops	Measures	Passes
Dices	Nails	Shoots
Cooks	Sands	Jumps
Bakes	Joins	Skids
Sears	Hones	Pivots
Fries	Cuts	Fouls
Heats	Hangs	Defends
Cuts	Fits	Blocks
Stirs		Charges
Taste		Shoves
Beats		Trips
Experiments		
Beats		
Kneads		
Serves		