

Fast Writing for Dealing with Stress

Adapted from pages 127-133 of *Unlearn Your Pain* by Howard Schubiner and Michael Betzold. Mind Body Publishing, 2019. Used with permission of Howard Schubiner.

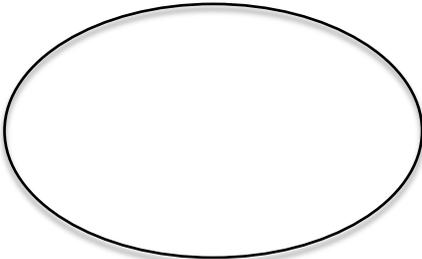
In this practice, you will write about stressful situations to allow your mind to more fully uncover thoughts and beliefs, some of which you may not even be aware of. This process gives room for Jesus to heal you so that you can get unstuck from areas cause you problems.

Creating a web

To prepare for fast writing, you will start by creating a web on the following page, using these steps described in Schubiner and Betzold's workbook. (Schubiner, Howard and Betzold, Michael. *Unlearn Your Pain*. Mind Body Publishing, 2019, p. 127-129):

- Choose a stressful situation in your life to write about. On the following page, write it in the center of the oval. This is the nucleus of your web.
- Begin to free associate on the topic or issue you chose. Open your mind and write down whatever thought occurs to you. Try to write it down in a one- to four-word phrase, and then circle what you've written and connect it by a line to the nucleus.
- Now write down a word or phrase that represents your next immediate idea, circle it, and connect it to the nucleus or satellite circle, whichever prompted it.
- Set a timer for five minutes. Continue this process until the timer goes off. You will end up with a cluster of ideas and thoughts, which may look like a web filling the page.

Creating a web



Fast writing

When you write faster than you normally would, helpful material that you would usually censor before writing it down is allowed to surface. (Schubiner, Howard and Betzold, Michael. *Unlearn Your Pain*. Mind Body Publishing, 2019, p. 129.)

Shubiner & Betzold (2019) describe this process based on the work of Natalie Goldberg. (*Writing Down the Bones*. Shambala Press, 1986)

1. On the following page, write the topic or issue from the nucleus of your web.
2. Keep your hand moving. Write faster than you would normally; attempt to take dictation from your thoughts as they stream across the radar of your awareness. Write whatever comes to your mind or your hand.
3. Don't cross out anything, even if you didn't mean to write it. Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar.
4. Allow any thoughts and any feelings to be expressed. Search for anger and express that fully. Then look for guilt or shame as well as sadness, loss, and grief. Express those feelings completely. Finally search for feelings of love that may be present and direct those towards yourself and others involved. If you need extra support, process this with a counselor, therapist, or spiritual director.
5. Set a timer for ten minutes. Do fast writing on whatever thoughts the sentence sparks until your time is up.

Note: When you are writing about negative thoughts or feelings, consider shredding or destroying it when you are done. This symbolizes separating from these thoughts and letting them go. As you destroy the paper, release your negative thoughts to God forever. Let him know that you are going to let them go and move forward. Thank God for this release.

Fast writing - free write

My feelings about me and _____ include:

Fast writing - free write (cont.)

Complete this free-write by copying the following affirmation three times in the spaces below:

“I am relieved to express these feelings.” (Schubiner, Howard and Betzold, Michael. *Unlearn Your Pain*. Mind Body Publishing, 2019, p. 131.)

Fast writing – praying through your emotions

- The idea in this step is to process your feelings in prayer.
- Use phrases such as, “I see that...,” “I realize that...,” “I hope that...,” “I need to...,” “I want to...,” “I can...,” “I will...,” “I understand that...,” “I appreciate...,” “I wonder if...,” “I have learned...,” and “I have discovered.” (Schubiner, Howard and Betzold, Michael. *Unlearn Your Pain*. Mind Body Publishing, 2019, p. 132.)
- Continue to use the steps of fast writing.
- Set a ten minute timer for your writing.

Lord, my understandings about me and _____ include:

Fast writing – praying through your emotions (cont.)

Complete the prayer by copying the following affirmation three times in the space below.

“Understanding these issues helps me feel better.” (Schubiner, Howard and Betzold, Michael. *Unlearn Your Pain*. Mind Body Publishing, 2019, p. 133.)

Fast writing – closing prayer: receiving his love

- Imagine God’s face looking right into your eyes, shining with love, and saying, “I love you. I approve of you. I sing over you.” Imagine his face overflowing with joy as he looks at you.
- Place your hand over your heart. Breathe deeply. Breathe his kindness into yourself. Allow these feelings of kindness to fill your lungs and then to move into your whole body. Visualize his kindness and shining joy spreading to every cell of your body. This is the unshakable foundation of your self worth. (Willard, *Life Without Lack*, 2018, pp. 151-152) Feel the love and joy like that of a baby and adoring mother as they look into each other’s eyes.
- Repeat these prayers for yourself: “May I be peaceful and contented. May I be loving as I am loved. May I forgive as I have been forgiven.”
- If there are others involved in your stressful situation, pray these prayers for them. “May they be peaceful and contented. May they be loving and loved. May they be forgiving and forgiven.” (Schubiner, Howard and Betzold, Michael. *Unlearn Your Pain*. Mind Body Publishing, 2019, p. 121.)