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*Writing
with the Muse*



Cultivate Life!

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Writing with the Muse

by Joanne DiMaggio

A study of soul writing is a study in the creative process. All people are creative in one form or another. The question is—do some creative endeavors, by their very nature, dip into a deeper well than others? This question is especially poignant when applied to the creative arts. Many artists, composers, actors, and writers have learned—whether by accident or intentionally—to access an unseen dimension that becomes an endless fountain from which their creative genius flows. They reach that invisible world by entering an altered state of consciousness brought about by trance, meditation, or dreams. While in this altered state, the quality of their work changes to something on a much higher level; different in style, tone, and composition from what they produce in a conscious state.

Artists, writers, and composers who try to capture their process in words struggle with the same questions—what is inspiration, and where does it come from? How am I able to break through the mundane aspects of everyday life, to leave the confines of my physical environment and sail unencumbered to the unlimited heights wherein the Creative Forces await?

Read through the autobiographies and letters of famous artists, writers, and composers, and you will see how each describes a moment of inspiration when they gained an insight that was different from anything they received in a waking state. When in this reverie, elevated to the unconscious storehouse of universal wisdom, they produced extraordinary work.

When describing the writing process, English poet Percy Shelley acknowledged that this heightened level of inspiration comes from beyond the writer's conscious state. But writers aren't the only ones to experience this cosmic high. Great scientists, artists, and inventors all appeal to a Higher Source, a divinity, or some kind of internal "Daemon."

Over many centuries, the role of the Daemon—best described as an attendant or indwelling spirit—in the guided writing process has been cited by countless writers and provides an insight into who or what they considered to be the source of their creative genius.

Rudyard Kipling accessed his inner helper by a form of meditation that he described as "drifting." The first time he experienced this reverie, he felt as though his Daemon came to him, filling him with ideas and instructions to take down the inner dictation he was receiving. Kipling obeyed and eventually learned to recognize when his Muse was near, crediting his invisible Source for the content of the Jungle books, Kim, and both Puck books.

Madame Blavatsky, a Russian mystic who founded the Theosophical Society in 1875, claimed that the great Masters, who had knowledge of man's spiritual history, initiated her into the secrets of esoteric mysticism and helped her write the three-volume, 1,300-page

Secret Doctrine. I found this especially interesting and somewhat ironic. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, I was a member of a Theosophical study group in Wheaton, Illinois. We met on a regular basis and each member was encouraged to suggest a topic for further exploration by the group. Knowing Madame Blavatsky had used inspired writing to create *The Secret Doctrine*, I suggested we discuss the process of guided writing. My idea was immediately turned down. Although the description of the writing process for *The Secret Doctrine* is classic inspirational writing, it was a discouraged topic of discussion by the organization founded on that book's very principles.

In his book, *Channeling the Higher Self*, Henry Reed, PhD, relays the story of how author Richard Bach came up with the idea to write *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. As the story goes, Bach was walking one day when he heard an inner voice repeat "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" over and over. "He went home and began writing immediately, furiously trying to keep up with the flow of words that were coming spontaneously to mind," wrote Reed. "In one sitting he provided the world with one of its most uplifting stories."

One of the most famous uses of "automatic" writing was by a St. Louis housewife named Pearl Curran. In the early 1900s, she worked with a spirit named Patience Worth, who had been a seventeenth-century English woman. Those messages turned into several thousand poems, a play, several novels, and many short pieces. Authorities have studied the writing of the alleged Patience Worth, and many have concluded that based on Curran's education and talent, she could not have written them on her own, especially since she used words that had disappeared from the English language long before her time.

William Stainton Moses was a well educated, ordained minister in the Church of England during the mid-nineteenth century. He used guided writing to produce his books *Spirit Teachings and Spirit Identity*, saying he believed that the source of those writings came from higher spirits and were intended for good.

In writing his poem *Hyperion*, John Keats said that the description of Apollo was something that was given to him, as if another person wrote it.

In describing the writing of his novel *Werther*, German poet Goethe said he wrote it unconsciously, as if he were asleep, and added that he was amazed at the process.

English poet William Blake, in talking about his work *Milton*, said it felt as though he had written the poem from dictation without premeditation.

And then there's the remarkable story of Dr. Helen Schucman, who heard her inner voice say, "This is a course in miracles. Please take notes." In describing the process of writing *A Course in Miracles*, Schucman said that while she had grown accustomed to the unexpected, she still was very surprised when she wrote: "This is a Course in Miracles." This was her introduction to the "Voice," and, like Blake, Schucman described the process as a kind of rapid inner dictation.

Of all the famous writers who used a form of soul writing, the one I most identify with is Ruth Montgomery. A nationally syndicated news columnist, Montgomery admitted that many of her metaphysical books were created through what she called “automatic” writing. Each morning, she would sit at her desk in front of her typewriter, say a prayer, close her eyes, relax her fingers, and then her guide Lily and twelve others came through.

Arthur Ford, who by the mid 1950s was America’s best-known living medium, introduced Montgomery to guided writing. She attended a talk he gave and afterward introduced herself as a reporter seeking an interview about the Spiritual Frontier Fellowship, a new organization Ford was involved in that had been founded by educators, professionals, and clergy to investigate psychic phenomena.

After the interview, Ford offered to do a reading for Montgomery. He went into trance and his spirit control, Fletcher, came through. After Montgomery researched and then confirmed the information Fletcher provided, she wrote a two-page Sunday spread on Ford and his uncanny ability. Thereafter, the two became friends.

Several years passed before Ford suggested to Montgomery that she try automatic writing. He instructed her to attempt it for no more than fifteen minutes at a time and always at the same hour each day—the latter advice being similar to what Edgar Cayce had told writers nearly thirty years earlier.

Following Ford’s suggestion, Montgomery sat at her desk at 8:30 every morning, said a prayer for protection, and entered a ten- to fifteen-minute meditation. During her trance, she picked up a pencil and held it over a piece of paper. For days nothing happened. Then one morning the pencil began to move in circles and figure eights. Several days later she began getting messages.

The turning point came when she found herself drawing a lily. The message she received informed her that this symbol was the identification of the source of her writing. From that day forward, Montgomery was greeted daily by the symbol of the flower and the word Lily. Afterward would flow what she called, “The most beautiful philosophy that I had ever read.” Montgomery said she never had such inspiring thoughts.

Montgomery’s initial writing sessions were done by hand, but when the sessions grew in strength and speed, her writing became illegible. She was instructed to “go to your typewriter,” and thereafter got typewritten messages with little punctuation or capitalization. These sessions produced philosophical discourses that filled two to three pages each day.

Lily and the “Guides”—as Montgomery liked to call them—suggested she put their messages in books. At first she refused because she had too much going on in her life. An active member of the White House press corps, she faced a demanding schedule of writing columns, attending dinner parties, and a hectic traveling schedule that at that time included covering the 1960 Kennedy/Nixon presidential campaign.

When her frenzied lifestyle landed her in the hospital, she experienced the power of prayer. This gave her the desire to write a book but one totally unrelated to her experiences. The book was not successful and her Guides quickly pointed out that this wasn't the type of book they had in mind. They gently suggested she not get involved with projects that wasted her time, but instead put her talents into producing material that would help others. Lily told Montgomery that she had no higher mission than to pass on to others the truths she was learning from the writing she had been receiving. And the rest, as they say, is history.

There is much to be said about writing in a dream state. That is, after all, a time when the unconscious mind is in control and can provide us with information that is not filtered by the more controlling waking consciousness. There certainly are a number of compositions that emanate from dreams to uphold that supposition. Robert Louis Stevenson, for instance, recorded his dreams and used them as the basis of his stories. He called his dream helpers his "brownies" and admitted to relying on them for help in the writing process.

With so many testimonials bearing witness to the existence of an unseen Source serving as a writer's Muse, it is easy to understand why, through the centuries, civilization has accepted inspired writings as sacred messages. Spiritually illuminated works, such as the Bible, are not written by any one person, but are said to come *through* that person. The writer, therefore, becomes the vessel through which Spirit manifests its message. Certainly no one can argue the point that they contain wisdom far beyond the conscious awareness of those who put the words on paper.

These sacred writings—all written in an altered state of consciousness—have changed the course of history, yet today, as in past centuries, creative work accomplished by means of attuning to a higher power still is met with skepticism and, in some cases, scorn. Those who readily admit to employing this process are often labeled schizophrenic or mentally unstable. Nonetheless, messages obtained through the writer's profound connection to a Higher Source have transformed millions of lives. Each writer, understanding the process and sensing the connectedness to the All That Is, recognizes that his or her role is that of a messenger, conveying profound Truths in a way that can be digested by readers at all levels of awareness.

There is always some element of fear and stigma attached to writings that don't quite fit in society's conventional box. Nonetheless, throughout history, writers continually aspire to reach into that invisible realm and use their craft to attune to the Divine. Every writer yearns to form a sacred partnership with his or her Muse with the hope that it will produce powerful messages of transformation to benefit all mankind.

Frank DeMarco is one such writer. The co-founder of Hampton Roads Publishing Company and its chief editor for sixteen years, DeMarco helped to select and shape hundreds of books by authors known and unknown and soon-to-become known, including such luminaries as Richard Bach, Joseph McMoneagle, and Robert Bruce.

DeMarco is the author of two novels and three books of nonfiction, with more of each on the way. One of his books, *Chasing Smallwood*, is a record of conversations with a nineteenth-century American who provides a fascinating glimpse of life in the West and during the Civil War.

DeMarco consciously began learning to communicate with the other side in 1989. By then he had been keeping a journal for twenty-three years, and writing in this manner had become a comfortable habit. First he experimented with a form of automatic writing and then moved on to confident written dialogue.

“For the longest time, I would try to do automatic writing, and I would either get gibberish or I would get nothing,” he told me. “I couldn’t figure out how to put myself in a trance. I thought I was just a failure, but over time I evolved a method.”

DeMarco credits The Monroe Institute (TMI) in Faber, Virginia, for deepening his connection to the other side. Founded by the late Robert Monroe, noted pioneer in the investigation of human consciousness and inventor of Hemi-Sync, TMI provides experiential six-day residential programs. In late 1992, DeMarco participated in TMI’s Gateway Voyage program, which showed him how to get in closer touch with what he now calls “The Guys Upstairs.” At this point, he was writing down the messages. Then early in 1993, at another TMI program, Guidelines, he first allowed others to come through in speech. This was followed by years of answering the questions posed by others while he held himself in an altered state.

“After the Guidelines program, it was a little of each—writing and speaking,” he explained. “When I work with someone else, it is always oral. Working by myself, it is always written.”

Even though he has a special relationship with The Guys Upstairs, DeMarco plays down the idea that individuals need to know the identity of their Source.

“It doesn’t matter who’s on the other end of the line, to a degree, because ultimately you’re going to have information coming to you. You then have to judge whether it’s valid or not; whether it resonates or not. What are you going to do? Are you going to get an affidavit saying what or who this really was?”

DeMarco’s relationship with Spirit has evolved to the point where he sometimes does not know whether it’s “himself” or “them” talking, but like knowing the identity behind the information, he doesn’t think it makes much difference. “Half the time when I’m talking, I think it’s them. They’re sort of nudging me. When you say something that has a huge impact on somebody else and it just casually comes out of you, you’re being used—but in a good way.”

Reading *Chasing Smallwood*, you cannot help but wonder if Joseph Smallwood is actually a past-life aspect of Frank, which would mean that in essence, he was talking to himself. But DeMarco prefers not to discuss abstract questions like that.

“I wouldn’t bother to describe the theory; I’d describe the process, because the theory could be all wrong. And even if the theory is right, it’s not going to help you. The process was that I just sat down with my journal in the morning, and there he was.”

DeMarco says he does not believe that he does automatic writing. In reviewing his technique, what he experiences certainly points in the direction of inspirational writing, especially since his handwriting does not change—one of the clear indications of inspired writing.

“The handwriting is no better than mine,” he chuckled. “I have never seen a difference. When I tried it in 1989, I thought it would be different, and I actually tried to make it different, and I couldn’t.”

In fact, when writing with The Guys Upstairs, not only is DeMarco’s handwriting the same, but so is the phrasing. “They’ll use my way of saying things. I sometimes know what’s coming in, and I’ll just write it as I know it. Sometimes they stop, and I can feel them searching for a way to say something. I’ll suggest a word, and they’ll quarrel with it.”

An example of this happened during his communication with Joseph. DeMarco used the word “passport” and Joseph told him that the word was wrong. “It only occurred to me later that he had never heard of passports in the 1800s,” said DeMarco. “He wanted to use the word ‘warrant,’ but I mildly quarreled with him over that because I did not know why I would use that particular word. Of course, the word ‘warrant’ doesn’t mean the same thing to us as it does to someone in that time period.”

If he were to describe his process to someone who had never done inspired writing before, DeMarco would say it’s akin to writing a letter. You start the letter, and the rest of the words come as you keep writing.

“If I were to ask you: ‘How did you do that?’ you’d look at it closely, and you’d say you really don’t know,” he explained. “You have the intent to communicate. You know how you want to start and the words appear. Nonwriters find it hard to believe that what writers really do is make themselves accessible to ‘it’ and then wait to see what comes. A nonwriter thinks you must have known what you were going to write. What they don’t realize is that they themselves don’t know ahead of time what they’re going to write. I can’t say that I usually hear the words in my head, although that happens occasionally. The vast majority is just a knowing.”

While famous writers, artists, and composers may not know exactly how their inspiration comes to them, each of them recognizes, in their own way, their role as the instrument through which this divinely inspired creativity flows. ###

The above is from Joanne DiMaggio's new book, *Soul Writing, Conversing with Your Higher Self*, published by Olde Souls Press.

Soul Writing: Conversing With Your Higher Self

By Joanne DiMaggio

When faced with life's big questions, we often find ourselves wishing for a guidebook, a manual to help us through the important decisions. But as Joanne DiMaggio so clearly points out, we do have access to all the answers we need. The process of connecting to the sacred wisdom within us that part of us that has our answers is always available through a technique called inspirational writing, or soul writing. Joanne DiMaggio is an inspired teacher, drawing upon her own experiences and her knowledge of the Edgar Cayce readings to inform and support the quest for self-discovery. With clear instructions on the soul writing process, examples of others' experiences, and information on how to expand this process into other areas of your life, *Soul Writing* is the ultimate guidebook to access that deep knowing each of us holds within. At some point in time, we are all looking for answers. *Soul Writing* shows you that the answers are there just waiting for you to slow down, open your heart, and ask!

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About the Author

Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, Joanne DiMaggio has been actively involved with Edgar Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) since 1987. In 1990, she became one of the founding members of the A.R.E. Heartland Region. She moved to Charlottesville, Virginia in 1995 and became Coordinator for the A.R.E. Charlottesville area in 2008. Joanne earned her Masters in Transpersonal Studies degree through Atlantic University in Virginia Beach, Virginia in May 2010. Her culminating project (thesis) was on inspirational writing and served as the basis of her book, *Soul Writing: Conversing With Your Higher Self*. She also earned her Spiritual Mentor certification through Atlantic University. Joanne has given talks on the subject of inspirational writing to groups across the country. She has mentored a month-long online course on inspirational writing for A.R.E. and was a guest on *Reflections the Wisdom of Edgar Cayce*, an Internet radio program. In September 2010, she formed the first Atlantic University Alumni Association for which she was given the charter and named president in November 2010. In April 2011 she was honored at the 2011 Distance Education Training Council's annual conference as Atlantic University's Outstanding Graduate of the year. Joanne has been professionally pursuing past-life research and therapy for over 20 years. In October 1991 she founded PLEXUS (Past Life Exploration, Understanding and Sharing) in Naperville, IL and brought that organization to Charlottesville under the name Athanasy in 1995. She is a member of the International Association for Regression Research and Therapies, the National Association of Transpersonal Hypnotherapists and a graduate of the Eastern Institute of Hypnotherapy. Using inspirational writing, Joanne produced a small line of greeting cards called Spirit Song. The International Greeting Card Association cited one of those cards, *What is Human is Immortal*, for its creative excellence, choosing it as one of six worldwide finalists in the Sympathy category for its Annual LOUIE Awards. Her first book, *Charlottesville: A Contemporary Portrait* was published in March 2002.