

Who am I? What is my work? (A Taste of) Enlivened Writing

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In our very own words...

- Writing about ourselves, our experiences, and our insights – our being and doing

Who am I?

What is my work?

- Our defining passions, and our deepest sense of our work... as service - in the world, for our world

Writing as Inquiry as Reflective Practice with Attitude

- **Being passionate** – what we really care about: the positive and the negative (the good , the bad, and the ugly); but especially what we notice we're noticing!
- **Getting out of our way** – and giving ourselves permission to be intensely personal - on the page at least! Going for the gusto...
- **Putting fears aside** – opening our mind, heart and will... to ourselves, as a whole! (as a whole person... body, mind, soul and spirit)
- **Working from my inside, out...** (rather than from the outside-in); the in-goings in my out-comings

Outside-In vis-à-vis Inside-out

Rational, Proficient

- Keeps what we care about hidden and private
- Requires correct vocabulary, grammar and syntax
- Prejudges other people's acceptance and approval
- Limits its potential to what seems significant

Experiential, Soulful

- Lets you discover more about yourself, your presence, your experience
- Surrenders expression and flow to the writing itself
- Finds connection in unique universal experiences
- Has its own meaning and purpose

Who am I? / What is my work?

- Write what comes up for you, in the moment
- Just write, don't edit; let yourself be the medium, the outlet - for what wants to come
- Give all the sensuous detail, zestfully – full of winks and smiles
- Go where the energy is – go 'fearward', setting any fears aside
- Without a parachute – in freefall - suspended, in sensuous suspense, until you 'catch' your Self

Barbara Turner-Vesselago, 2013 *Writing Without a Parachute:
The Art of Freefall* www.freefallwriting.com

Who am I? – Partnering with John O’Donohue

[NB This is an optional supplemental activity
– especially if you are undertaking this inquiry ‘solo’]

- If you wish to enrich and deepen your writing experience, consider some ‘partnering’ with John O’Donohue – a potential empathic friend, in this particular writing cause...
- The following blessing – *For the Unknown Self* – may lead you into a deeper discernment of your ‘self/Self’ – the I that is You
- Consider first engaging meditatively with the piece, as if the piece is ‘speaking’ to you, about your unknown self within – to draw you into a good space/state, to better contemplate your enlivened writing around ‘who am I?’
- After your ‘Part 1’ enlivened writing exercise (Slides 9 and 10 below), if you are on your own (doing this ‘solo’), consider some imaginary sharing/partnering with John O’Donohue, inspired by a second reading of his piece
- Use this ‘inner dialogue’ as the basis for further ‘Notes to Self’, to fuel your further inquiry – your reflective practice with attitude

For the Unknown Self ~ John O'Donohue

So much of what delights and troubles you / happens on a surface/ You take for ground.
Your mind thinks your life alone. Your eyes consider air your nearest neighbour;
Yet it seems that a little below your heart / There houses in you an unknown self
Who prefers the patterns of the dark / And is not persuaded by the eye's affection
Or caught by the flash of thought.

It is a self that enjoys contemplative patience / With all your unfolding expression,
Is never drawn to break into light / Though you entangle yourself in unworthiness
And misjudge what you do and who you are.

It presides within like an evening freedom / That will often see you enchanted by twilight
Without ever recognizing the falling night / It resembles the under-earth of your visible life:
All you do and say and think is fostered / Deep in its opaque and prevenient clay.

It dwells in a strange, yet rhythmic ease / That is not ruffled by disappointment;
It presides in a deeper current of time / Free from the force of cause and sequence
That otherwise shapes your life.

[Part 1 of 2]

For the Unknown Self ~ John O'Donohue

Were it to break forth into day / Its dark light might quench your mind
For it knows how your primeval heart / Sisters every cell of your life
To all your known mind would avoid / Thus it knows to dwell in you gently
Offering you only discrete glimpses / Of how you construct your life.

At times it will lead you strangely / Magnetized by some resonance
That ambushes your vigilance.

It works most resolutely at night / As the poet who draws your dreams
Creating for you many secret doors / Decorated with pictures of your hunger.

It has the dignity of the angelic / That knows you to your roots
Always awaiting your deeper befriending / To take you beyond the threshold of want
Where all your diverse strainings / Can come to wholesome ease.

[Part 2 of 2]

Part 1: Who am I?

- **Quickly outline** a few (one-word/short-phrase) points or themes that come up for you
- Some (upbeat) story-lines of **‘what I am most proud of - about being me’** (of who I am), that I cherish [‘proud’ signifies that it’s good, and I care about it]
- Some (less upbeat) story-lines of **‘what I sense might be misunderstood about the current ‘me’** – that I might want to change or clarify [‘misunderstood’ signifies that, despite my best intentions, ‘it’ doesn’t work – and I know that, and need to presence it]
- **Be ‘inviting’** – of feedback (from your self), and **‘be aspirational’** around the prospect of further development
- **Follow the energy** – your story-lines should be those with a noticeable energy (‘elan vital’) behind them; highly ‘charged’ by visceral experience.

Who am I?

- Launch yourself - fearlessly - into the story you tell yourself about **'Me, Myself, and I'**
- Working on your own **write freefall**, for five minutes, beginning with **'Here I am...'**
- Then, with a partner, **share the main 'surfacing' from your 'in-sighting'**... for a couple of minutes each
- Then take a couple more minutes, wondering what seems to be **'of the essence'** for both?
- Record seemingly relevant **'Notes to Self'** - about Who am I? - **that have been presenced.**

What is my work? – Partnering with John O’Donohue

[NB This is an optional supplemental activity
– especially if you are undertaking this inquiry ‘solo’]

- If you wish to enrich and deepen your writing experience, consider some ‘partnering’ with John O’Donohue – a potential empathic friend, in this particular writing cause...
- The following blessing – *For Work* – may lead you into a deeper discernment of ‘the work that works you’, that works for You
- Consider first engaging meditatively with the piece, as if the piece is ‘speaking’ to you, about your work relationship – to draw you into a good space/state, to better contemplate your enlivened writing around ‘what is my work?’
- After your ‘Part 2’ enlivened writing exercise (Slides 13, 14 and 15 below), if you are on your own (doing this ‘solo’), consider some imaginary sharing/partnering with John O’Donohue, inspired by a second reading of his piece, *For Work*
- Use this ‘inner dialogue’ as the basis for further ‘Notes to Self – on ‘What is my work?’ to fuel your further inquiry – your reflective practice with attitude

For Work ~ John O'Donohue

May the light of your soul bless your work
with love and warmth of heart

May you see in what you do the beauty of your soul.

May the sacredness of your work bring light and renewal
to those who work with you

And to those who see and receive your work.

May your work never exhaust you.

May it release wellsprings of refreshment, inspiration, and excitement.

May you never become lost in bland absences.

May the day never burden.

May dawn find hope in your heart

approaching your new day

with dreams, possibilities and promises.

May evening find you gracious and fulfilled.

May you go into the night blessed, sheltered and protected.

May your soul calm, console and renew you.

Part 2: What is my work?

- Get in touch with **the most sensuous part of your being**, that closest to your nerve-ends
- Focus on **the work that works you**, that works for you, when you are at your best
- What are **the main story-lines** here, for the story you would wish **to tell to your future?**
- **Activate all your senses in turn**, to map out **the life-work that calls you..** that most aligns with **your emerging felt sense of Self**

Sensing Sensuously - What is my work?

- Working on your own, **write freefall (and sensuously)** for five minutes, about your 'sensing' around your 'work'...
- ... **that which ignites your passion**, in your Self, for the most generous and welcoming 'sensing' of your work.
- Let your writing **initially take off from**: 'I can see'... 'I can hear'... 'I can touch'... 'I can taste'... 'I can smell'... 'I can feel'...(inward sensing/sensibility)
- **Let the writing 'work you'**... work out 'you'

What is my work?

- Launch yourself - fearlessly - into the story you wish to tell yourself about **'The Work that Works Me (and that works for me)'**
- Working on your own **write freefall**, for five minutes, beginning with **'I can... see/hear/touch/taste/smell/feel...'**
- Then, with a partner, **share the main 'surfacing' from your 'in-sighting'**... for a couple of minutes each
- Then take a couple more minutes, wondering **what seems to be 'of the essence'** for both?
- Record any seemingly relevant **'Notes to Self'** - about **'What is my work?'** - **that have been presenced.**

For the Senses – ‘Sensing’ with John O’Donohue

[If you have enjoyed your ‘partnering’ with John O’Donohue,
you may wish to consider this option for
further deepening of your sensing around your work]

- You have just taken a ‘tour’ of your senses, to sense your experiences and yearnings around your ‘work’
- The following blessing – *For the Senses* – may lead you into a deeper discernment of ‘the work that works you’, that works for You
- Consider some further/final imaginary sharing/partnering with John O’Donohue, inspired by your reading of *For Work*
- Use this ‘inner dialogue’ as the basis for some possible extending of your ‘Notes to Self – on ‘What is my work?’
- Notice any particular ‘yearning’ (that might merit some crystallizing and prototyping).

For the Senses ~ John O'Donohue

May the touch of your skin / Register the beauty
Of the otherness / That surrounds you

May your listening be attuned / To the deeper silence
Where sound is honed / To bring distance home

May the fragrance / Of a breathing meadow / Refresh your heart
And remind you you are / A child of the earth

And when you partake / Of food and drink
May your taste quicken
To the gift of sweetness / That flows from the earth

May your inner eye / See through the surfaces
And glean the real presence / Of everything that meets you

May your soul beautify / The desire of your eyes
That you might glimpse / The infinity that hides / In the simple sights
That seem worn / To your usual eyes