

The Transformative Language Arts Network

Presents

One City, One Prompt

March 1 – May 31, 2017

In *Your* Community
With Others Around the World

Organizing Guidebook

Table of Contents

I. Introduction and Overview

1. Vision
2. TLA Network
 - a. Transformative Language Arts
 - b. TLA Network's Mission
 - c. TLA Network's Guiding Values
 - d. TLA Network's Emphases
 - e. Recommended Reading and Resources

II. How to Organize a *One City, One Prompt* Event in Your Community

1. Theme for this Year: Community: Making It Your Own
 - a. Criteria
 - b. Options and Inspiration for Who Chooses Topic
2. What Kind of Event To Hold
3. Logistics
4. Publicity and Outreach
5. The Day of the Event
6. Follow-up: How to Share Your Work With Us
7. Help Along the Way

III. Guidelines for Facilitators: Excerpts

1. The Space That Holds the Witnessing
2. Be Here Now: Facilitating in the Present
3. Marketing Without Selling Your Soul to the Devil
4. TLA Workshop Ground Rules, Agreements and Guidelines
 - a. Ground Rules for Workshops by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg
 - b. Workshop Agreements and Guidelines by Patricia Fontaine
 - c. Workshop Agreements by Vanita Leatherwood

I. Introduction & Overview

Thank you for your interest in facilitating a *One City, One Prompt* event in your community. This handbook aims to provide the essential information you need to hold a successful event, from background information about Transformative Language Arts and the Transformative Language Arts Network, to facilitation guidelines, to templates you can adapt to publicize your community event.

1. Vision

The vision behind this event is two-fold: 1) to generate writing and other language arts about a particular topic of importance to your community for participants to learn more about themselves and their community; and 2) to build community locally and across and beyond the U.S. by helping people experience a way of communicating deeply through the arts in their home towns and also as part of a larger series of events in which others are doing the same.

2. The Transformative Language Arts Network

a. Transformative Language Arts

Transformative Language Arts is the intentional use of spoken, written, or sung word for social and personal transformation. This includes community building, ecological advocacy, social activism, personal growth and development, health and healing, and spiritual growth. Founded at Goddard College in 2000 by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg, TLA is a new and emerging calling, profession and academic field that merges language arts with individual and collective liberation: writing, storytelling, theatre, and music can work towards community-building, cultural and ecological restoration, and personal development. Examples of TLA are abundant in such areas as songwriting for social change, narrative therapy and narrative medicine, Playback Theatre and Theatre for the Oppressed, Poetry and Drama Therapies, community or therapeutic or social change-based storytelling, and in many other uses of language out loud or on the page that promote transformation.

b. TLA Network's Mission

TLAN supports and promotes individuals and organizations that use the spoken, written, or sung word as a tool for personal and community transformation. As such, the Network is committed to providing spaces, both physical and electronic, where people interested in Transformative Language Arts can share resources, network, learn, and enhance their capacity to practice Transformative Language Arts as Right Livelihood in their communities.

c. TLA Network's Guiding Values

The Network is guided by the same values essential to the practice and nature of TLA itself:

- **Cooperation** — collaborating for the good of all.
- **Community-Building** — fostering community among those of us in the field, and sharing tools and for strengthening our local communities.
- **Empowerment** — working in ways that help people, organizations, businesses, institutions and communities further empower themselves.
- **Sustainability** — developing sustainable ways to do this work we love, build community,

and sustain our individual and collective health.

- **Collective Wisdom** — recognizing that we each hold a piece of the truth, and together, we can best honor the love and wisdom guiding us.

d. TLA Network’s Emphases

In carrying out its Mission and Vision, the Network has focused on three areas for particular advancement and development:

- **Growth of the Field and Profession of TLA:** In coming together to amplify TLA, we can both grow the field of study that is TLA and the profession of making a living from TLA. Such growth also helps those who have been doing TLA without a way to name their work in a larger context.
- **Connection and Networking:** Through providing opportunities for individuals and groups to meet, share resources, teach and learn from each other, and help enhance one another's work, we bridge many fields and traditions, groups and institutions. Such a network allows all involved to make informed decisions about the direction of their TLA work, and provides opportunities for alliances, joint projects, education, and inspiration.
- **Right Livelihood through TLA:** Right Livelihood, a Buddhist term connoting the work we do in the world to serve our communities and make the most of our gifts, when applied to TLA encompasses the art of facilitation, ethics, engaging diversity, the business of TLA, and self-care.

e. Recommended Reading and Resources

Read more about TLA in *The Power of Words: A Transformative Language Arts Reader*, published by the TLA Network as the landmark collection on TLA in theory and practice (book is provided free of charge to all first-time members of the TLA Network). You can also see suggestions for further reading at <http://www.tlanetwork.org/resources/recommended-reading/>. The TLANetwork website contains many resources, including recommended reading, TLA Resources at Goddard College, and Education and Training.

<http://www.tlanetwork.org/resources/>

II. How to Organize a *One City, One Prompt* Event in Your Community

1. Theme for This Year: “*Amplify*”

Each community as its own collective voice, and in this spirit, *One City, One Prompt* doesn’t tell you what you should write about, but instead, offers a broad theme, a process and some possibilities for choosing a topic of relevance to your community.

a. Criteria

- The topic should be broad enough to embrace many viewpoints.
- The topic shouldn’t be so broad as to mean absolutely everything (such as “write about life”).
- The topic should be open-ended so that people may approach it as they wish. For example, if you’re writing about new beginnings across different religions, you would want to

structure the prompt to encourage people to express their own take on this rather than suggesting everyone write about why they believe in X.

- The topic could be something that helps people communicate about something they care deeply about. For example, you could bring people together to write about political divides by writing about “future visions for our community.”
- The topic should help lift people up (e.g. avoid topics such as “despair” or “degradation”).

b. Options and Inspiration for Who Chooses the Specific Prompt

- **OPTION 1:** You, or you and the others you’re working with, can brainstorm topics of relevance for your community and choose one.
- **OPTION 2:** At the actual event, you (or the group of you) can present to the participants two to three potential topics and have people vote (use little slips of paper with all the topics listed -- this way, no one is put on the spot for being the one who likes a particular topic).
- **FINDING INSPIRATION:** You can consider your community’s ecology, geography, history, social challenges and potential, growth or change. For example, a town that just experienced a natural disaster might want to write about new beginnings in the wake of the tornado, or how to rebuild community after the flood. A city with a history of racial tensions might be prime for looking at new beginnings in forging community across race. A small town facing diminishing population might want to visit how to cultivate community with less people and resources.

2. What Kind of Event To Hold

Organizing a *One City, One Prompt* event need not be overwhelming. Events could be as simple as inviting some friends over for dessert or as elaborate as organizing an all-day conference.

Here are some options:

- **Potluck, Coffee, Tea, Dessert Or Other Gathering With Food:** You can invite over friends to share food and then write on your prompt for 20 minutes, and then go around and share the writing for 20-40 minutes.
- **Add-on To Conference:** This event could be a workshop as part of a conference or, even better, a large plenary session (involving everyone) writing for 15-20 minutes, and then sharing their work in small groups, and if some later want to (just a few), share with whole group.
- **Add-on To Performance:** Before or after a concert, play, improv theatre presentation, storytelling night or other event, participants could be invited to write, and then share in small groups, and then, if appropriate, have a few people share with whole group.
- **Ladies’ Night Out, Poker Night for the Guys, Trans Luncheon, Audubon Society, Cancer Support Group, Seratoma or Other Service Group, Or Any Group That Already Meets:** An event can dovetail with an existing group, either serving as one of its meetings or a part of one of its meetings.
- **Community Evening or Weekend Morning or Afternoon Event:** You can hold your event in a public space, such as a public library, city hall room (or the lawn if you live in a warm place), public park, or in a private space open to the public, such as a church, synagogue, mosque, bookstore, cafe, coffeehouse, etc.
- **Booth at Event or Business:** You could set up a booth where people can sit comfortably and write for 10-15 minutes on the topic (and have it set up for them to receive a copy -- via email or right away, if you have a copier handy). It would be ideal to have 3-5 spaces

where people can sit and write (and if it's a very noisy place, you could have a gaggle of music players with headphones with soothing white-noise-type music for people to wear as they write).

You know best how to put together something just right for your community and in balance with your energy, experience and support you have in organizing this. We are here to help you brainstorm if you like.

3. Logistics

You are responsible for organizing your event, with this criteria:

- All events must be free of charge (if your event is part of another event, which charges a fee, at least the *One City, One Prompt* should be free).
- Events aimed for a general audience should be held, as much as possible, in an accessible place with good parking, and if at night, lighting too.
- Communicating the event to those you're inviting to participate.
- Setting up your space as needed, and cleaning up afterwards -- or finding others to do any/all of this.
- Finding and booking the space (even if the space is your own living room), and communicating with others connected to that space (e.g. if it's in your house, make sure raging teenagers don't roam through at will.....or better yet, get them involved).
- Making your space welcoming, and navigating any interference (e.g. if your event is in a bookstore, you'll want to set up chairs in as quiet and as isolated a place in the store as possible).

Please become a member of the public OCOP FB group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/onecityoneprompt/>). This way you can create a FB event that will be displayed on the page, upload photos and documents, and keep in touch.

4. Publicity and Outreach

We can help you nationally to an extent, but most of the people who come will come because of your local publicity. We recommend the following:

- **Set up a Facebook event within the OCOP FB group** for this happening (if you're not into Facebook, but some of who may participate are on it, you can ask a friend on Facebook to do this for you). It is important to create the event through the OCOP FB group (go to the "Events" tab on the group page and click "Create Event") so that it is displayed in the list. You will still be the host and have control over the event.
- If you use Twitter, tweet this out, at least 1 month, then 2 weeks, then 1 week, then a day beforehand. If you don't use Twitter, ask those who do to spread the word for you.
- You can make, copy and distribute postcards, flyers or bookmarks (bookmarks have a particularly long shelf life) around your community, and perhaps a local printer will donate the printing/copying.
- Contact all local media outlets by **CALLING** them (you're more likely to get coverage), or asking people who know who know reporters to contact them. Send follow up information: we will have an easy press release you can use.
- Email a blurb about your event out to everyone you know in town, and ask them to forward it to everyone they know.

5. The Day of the Event

- Arrive at least 30 minutes early to set up space, and welcome people. Please in mind that people sometimes show up 30 minutes early too, and so if you want time before anyone else arrives, come an hour early.
- Welcome people as they enter, and direct them to name tags (if you're using them), and a place to sign in (name, address, phone, email, and websites or blogs), and any permission forms that need signing.
- At opening of event, try this format (or you can rearrange these items as per your event):
 1. Welcome
 2. Spiel about TLAN: Please read information we'll send you, and distribute materials.
 3. Introductions (short, and sometimes with a prompt, such as "name and something you noticed today")
 4. Ground rules
 5. Introduction of writing prompt
 6. Writing
 7. Sharing
 8. Closing activity or ritual

6. Follow-Up: How to Share Your Work With Us

- Upload photos, copies of writing, and any applicable links to the OCOP FB group (so long as you have permission from participants), along with a summary/reflection.
- You can upload any videos from the event to www.vimeo.com
- If you would like to talk with someone about how it went, drop us a line, and one of us will call you at your convenience to debrief.

7. Help Along the Way

Whether you're a seasoned facilitator of community writing events for years or this is one of your first events, we're here to help support you. Teri Lynn Grunthner (director@TLANetwork.org), our Executive Director, or Jacinta V. White (jacinta.white@poetryheals.com), OCOP coordinator, can trouble-shoot logistic and facilitation issues with you. We also have several people on our team ready to talk with you if needed.

III. Guidelines for Facilitators

Organizing and facilitating excellent events -- and facilitation in general (which means "to make easy") -- is a lifelong art. To give you more insight and inspiration, we share these excerpts from *The Power of Words: A Transformative Language Arts Reader* edited by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg and Janet Tallman. Keene, NH: TLA Press, 2007. We also encourage you to get your own copy of this book, which benefits the TLA Network (and is free for all first-time members of the Network).

Excerpt from "It Unfolds Before Whoever Walks It":

1. The Space That Holds the Witnessing

When I was a teenager, living through what I was sure was one of the worst divorces in the history of New Jersey with both my parents barricading themselves in different parts of our house, I found that one man outside my family made all the difference in my life. He was my youth group leader, a large guy losing his hair but in full possession of a high-pitched voice and a wicked sense of humor. Each week, he and I would huddle together on the floor of our local synagogue before youth group, and I would tell him what was happening at home. Because I had a good witness – someone who continually told me that I wasn't crazy, I was just caught in a living hell – I found the strength to turn to writing, to reach out to others, to find my way. All my good witness really had to do was listen: give me a mirror to see myself through his eyes.

If TLA workshops are about any one thing, they're about creating environments – both in how we set up the physical space of the workshop and the “internal space” that holds the group – where we can serve as witnesses to each other's lives. Whether it's an art center auditorium where local teenagers are reading their poetry to their peers, a small bookstore back room where elderly men and women tell stories of their youth, a retreat center where traumatized children create a collaborative play, or a circle of mats in the woods where adults listen closely to the forest sounds to inform their writing, space and witnessing are twined elements of a successful TLA experience.

As far as the physical space, we need to arrange chairs in a way that we can all see each other, have a small enough space that the group can have necessary closeness and yet large enough to avoid claustrophobia. Having hot coffee or cold tea, cookies and pretzels and little chocolates can also enhance a space as well as enough light and good seating.

When it comes to where to meet, it's good to use our connections and imaginations, and also to think carefully about where this particular group or client would feel most at home in this work. Spaces to rent – and sometimes to barter use of – include community centers and other public-owned buildings (which often rent out meeting spaces), hospitals, libraries, schools, bookstores (if there are more uninhabited – except for the books – spaces), churches or synagogues or mosques or temples, retreat centers, not-for-profit centers, colleges and universities, and many other rooms to meet and create (not to mention having outdoor meeting spaces where and when appropriate).

The topic of whether to ever hold workshops at home is one widely debated by people in this field – some believing that it crosses a personal boundary to invite people into your home for a process that might be a tad therapeutic, and others believing it helps build community, and besides, it gets the house clean. Maybe all of the above is true, and as someone who occasionally holds workshops in my home, when I decide to host something at home, I take some time to turn your home over in a sense: clean up, set up chairs, bake something fragrant, light a candle, ask my husband and kids to temporarily relocate (although I have to admit my dog throws herself – and she is large – on the laps of people occasionally when they write).

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of having any particularly distracting persons you live with out of sight for the workshop – kids running into the middle of someone reading a passage about being sexually abused tend to ruin everyone's day, and it shatters the safe space

that's needed to create. I also set boundaries as to what's open for people to wander into and what's not. Closing doors to bedrooms, laundry rooms, etc. can work wonders in this regard, and also it helps to tell people, "We're in the living room, and you're welcome to sit outside on the deck and write, or even in the yard. The bathroom is behind me, and refreshments are over there" – just a little statement that clearly communicate what's workshop and what's not.

But much of setting and holding the space has to do with how we facilitate the inner space of a place to allow for people to witness each other and themselves: the way we help the group co-create whatever unnamable thing it is that makes it safe and welcoming for people to take artistic leaps into the wilds of their hearts. Repeatedly, I find this comes down to having clear and strong ground rules: guidelines for how the group will work together and how individuals can work on their own that will, ideally, enhance community and free individuals to create through making and sustaining a safe, creative space in which we all dwell when we're here.

The ground rules I use (in the appendix of this article) come out of my experience facilitating writing workshops for pissed-off teenagers, bored elders, intergenerational Latinos, low income Native American women, middle-aged white people going through big transitions in their lives and other groups. Sometimes I play with the wording a little, or boil these down to just five or six items, but generally, I'm trying to communicate one strong message: all that we do here supports people taking ownership of their writing and their artistic process, their time here. When that message gets across, I find that people naturally land in the place where they can fully respect each other's artistic process, each other's writing, each other's time much more deeply. From there, true listening – to ourselves and to each other – happens.

There are many other ways to construct ground rules, and some people – like Patricia Fontaine, and Vanita Leatherwood, who share their excellent sets of agreements in the appendix to this article. There are many manner of ground rules or agreements in a good many writing guides (see web.goddard.edu/~tla for many resources), the group itself – if appropriate – can construct their own agreements.

These agreements or ground rules are a community contract that helps us self-govern. If, for example, one of the agreements is confidentiality, and then someone breaks that confidentiality, there's something to refer back to in making a decision (whether it's made by you as the facilitator or by the group itself) as to what to do in this case. If someone tends to talk too much, a community agreement to have time for everyone to share their stories – plus some active facilitation – can help keep the group from being swallowed up by one person's voice. Just about every time I've read my ground rules to a group (and lightly discussed them), I've heard some sighs of relief because ground rules have a great tendency to turn down the volume of fear for many people. They're basically a way to say, "hey, you're safe here, and we're really going to listen to you and let you do what you need to do in this context, and now you go, girl (or boy)."

It's also important to draw out necessary ground rules for specific situations: If I'm facilitating a group where I notice that a member has a tendency to insult other members, I might stop and ask if we can agree to no insults, sarcasm or jibes (if this wasn't already clear in my ground rules). If I have a person who tends to bring up personal therapy issues in an inappropriate way (e.g. "Can we skip this next writing exercise so everyone can help me figure out what to say to my step-

mother about how she never loved me?”), I can refer back to the ground rules, or to the basic implicit or explicit understanding about the purpose of this group. Both the ground rules and attention to setting the meeting place up help us to set the space. Good facilitation helps us to keep that space.

2. Be Here Now: Facilitating in the Present

The most important thing I know about facilitating a workshop is being present. And the most important things I know about being present is that it's a life time practice, and it has everything to do with dropping my luggage at the door, paying attention, getting up the courage to act when I need to act, and holding down the impulse to act when I need to listen. Unpacking this helps to illustrate what I mean by being present.

- ***Drop the luggage at the door:*** All of us have found ourselves in charge of something – like facilitating a group, directing a performance, teaching a class – at a moment when we would much rather be at home in flannel with a hot cup of tea and a stack of old magazines. Yet when it's time to facilitate, it's time to drop that luggage at the door – the fight we may have just had with a spouse, the worry over the bank account, the exhaustion the coffee hasn't yet quelled. This is a kind of surrender (that I talk more about in the final essay in this book), but it's a necessary surrender. When it's time to show up for work, it's time to show up – and the best we can do is be there, but also be tender with ourselves in the process.
- ***Pay attention:*** What is intuition but close attention we pay to the sensations in our bodies, the voice in our heads, the strange, small feeling that we can't ignore? If we aim our eyes and ears toward what's happening in a group or coaching session – toward the body language and faces around us, what's being said and not said – we naturally will have a stronger sense of what's actually happening, and what we need to do as facilitators.
- ***Act when needed:*** Sometimes we see something in a group that needs interruption. Maybe a member has started to talk about a story she's working on, and she's been talking for over five minutes already with no sign of taking a breath. Maybe someone is talking on his cell phone while someone else is preparing to read her poem, or a person said something that insulted all the gay Latinos of the world. While it's easier to do nothing, nothing is the last thing we want to do in such cases because otherwise, we're not doing our job in serving the group. Interrupting bad behavior takes constant grace and courage, and most of all, a quick letting go of whatever anger we might feel at the behavior. If, in my nicest voice, I say, “Please, no cell phones in group,” but I'm still pissed off as hell, the whole group is going to know it, and the person I addressed will be hurt; in short, the situation will escalate, and good facilitation is about de-escalating potentially dangerous situations for a group so that the group can tune into its best work. What helps me drop the anger is to quickly tell myself that the bad behavior in 99.999 cases has nothing to do with me, take a deep breath, open my heart, and say something as calmly as I can. If I don't know what to say, I have options: I can ask the group to take a break, and then talk with the offender privately; I can name for the group what's happening (“I'm feeling uneasy about Susie's comment about gay Latinos”) and ask the group for help – including Susie herself – on how to move forward; I can even say that I don't know what to do. Easy to say these things? No. Any clear way to know exactly the right thing to say? Of course not. But this is part of the exhilarating, scary and ultimately satisfying life-long education in facilitation.

- ***Listen carefully and sit on your hands:*** There are also the reverse situations: when we might feel compelled to say something, but we really need to listen. If someone accidentally insults someone else, and now the two of them are working it out, while I want to side with the offended, the best thing for me to do is to give them my attention, be quiet, and then help move the group along. If someone starts crying after reading something, it's often more effective and more sensitive to give a moment of silent witnessing to the situation, and then move along rather than gallop across the circle and gather the crying person in my arms. Part of good facilitation is being mindful of my motivations for action, and sitting on my hands if I realize those motivations are at odds with what's best for the group.
- ***Know and don't know what to do:*** This is where we circle back to paying attention. It's up to each facilitator, in each moment, to give the situation his/her best and cleanest attention, and then do or not do what's called for. Anyone who does this work knows well that we don't always do what we wished we had done, but those moments are called "learning opportunities," and we have to be tender and forgiving of ourselves as we are of others to do this for the long run.

Being present also means facilitating with more than just our words – what to say, what not to say, how to say it with our body language, our ways of sitting in silence and breathing with the group. For me, the wake-up call came about eleven years ago when I was teaching a literature class at a Native American university. I was in a bad mood one day because I had just realized the job I loved doing here was being eliminated. I loved my students, but when I walked into that classroom, I was so pissed off that I really should have been locked up in a therapy closet somewhere. Yet I adjusted my voice, spoke to them in a kind tone, made eye contact, acted like a calm and okay-feeling person when I asked them to pull out their writing to share. The whole class crossed their arms across their chests and looked down or away from me. I tried to coax them with my words, but they wouldn't acknowledge me or what I was saying. I tried to make a joke. No one laughed. Finally I sat on my desk, and said, "Look, I'm in a really bad mood, but it's not because of you. Hey, I'm sorry." They looked up, threw back their heads, and started laughing, and soon I was laughing with them. It turned out to be a great class.

At that moment, I realized that teaching – and this obviously goes for facilitation too (which is a way of teaching, I believe) – is about our whole self, and no amount of words said the right way will work if other vital ingredients are missing. There's also so much of what we do as facilitators that goes beyond words. Someone shares something painful for him, and we pause, exhale slowly, make eye contact, let the group have a moment of silence to honor what was shared. Someone starts to interrupt, and we gently gesture to them to wait, and keep our eyes on the speaker. Sometimes I sit quietly while people write, imagining golden light encircling the group, or in a really tough group, pray fervently.

While I'm not addressing book-length considerations of facilitation here regarding working with different populations, dealing with difference (whether differences in learning styles or ethnic and physical ability differences), or many aspects of facilitation here, I want to at least touch on one vital facilitation tool we need to always use: assessment. We can learn how we're doing and how to do better through evaluation forms for participants to fill out, having an outside observer sit in and watch a session (with permission of the group of course), writing our own assessment, or just

standing up – your back to the group as you face a big piece of paper – and have them brainstorm on what worked and what didn't work. What's important is that we earnestly seek feedback on how to do this work better, and that means not making the group feel beholden to only say good things because it might massage our egos a little more. If the feedback is mean-spirited, we can shake the anger off and see if there's anything left of value. And we can use the helpful feedback, comment by comment, to learn how to be here more and to serve the work better.

3. Marketing Without Selling Your Soul to the Devil

A business man meets the devil, who turns out not just to wear Prada but to be a marketing whiz. "Sell me your soul, and I'll give you unimaginable profits," the business man – or in some cases, Rumpelstiltskin, says. Unfortunately, in just about every movie, fairy tale or reality show where the protagonist needs to choose between his soul and fame and riches, it turns out that not having a soul is a lot more important than paying a hefty mortgage, or in the case of Darth Vader, ruling the universe.

This storyline, which pits making profit against being a decent person – along with industrial and corporate practices that destroy the earth and rip apart communities – are the kind of thing that have given marketing a bad name. While it's obvious, from the mess that we're in these days, that too much emphasis on buying useless things we don't need that were made by people who had their local economics destroyed in the process, that much of marketing deserves its bad name.

What's a TLAEr to do? Well, since we are people of the word, we need to fetch that word, marketing, and reclaim it as both an ethical and sustainable business practice that helps bring great balance to our communities and culture. This means redefining marketing as a way to better do the work we feel alive to do, and conducting our marketing in ways that further strengthen community.

Marketing is about putting yourself out there, come what may, to see what comes. It's a way of saying, "Here I am, world." This means also believing in your work and yourself enough to put it out there, or at least acting as if you do. And it helps tremendously to go into marketing with the attitude that whether people or respond or not is usually nothing personal: it may just be a signal for you to retool your marketing, or the focus of your workshops or coaching or consulting, or simply have nothing to do with your work at all but forces well beyond you.

Developing sustainable business practices also means putting together marketing tools that help us keep on keeping on in livelihoods that don't swallow up too much of our energy, health and sanity. It also means doing marketing in a way that's above-board, clear, and connected to our values. For example, because I value ecological restoration, I tend to look for recycled paper for flyers. Mostly, though, it means giving the same kind of consideration to how we put ourselves out there as how we facilitate the work with people in here.

Here's my quick summary of marketing tools and considerations:

- **Go where your audience is:** If you're doing a workshop for people with HIV/AIDS, you can put out flyers at various health clinics, transgender centers, other places where you believe people interested in this workshop may do regularly. If you want to attract

middle-aged women going through menopause and other changes, put up flyers wherever they hang out in your town: bookstores, gallery openings, coffee shops, health and women's centers. If you're after teens in an urban area, try to get material distributed by teachers at local schools and be sure to get flyers up at whatever restaurants, surf shops or other places they're likely to feed and water. If you believe what you offer is a good adjunct for people in therapy, send your brochures to all the local psychologists and psychotherapists in your community. If you want to do a storytelling weekend for couples, get in touch with marriage therapists in the region.

- **Develop marketing tools that reach your audience:** Think about what kinds of marketing tools – flyers; postcards; emails; ads; articles in newsletters, newspapers, webzines; weblinks; and other ways of posting your work – reach the audience you're trying to draw. Think about what images and phrases and explanations would best reach your audience (e.g. I wouldn't use an image of ecstatic child for trying to get teenagers to a drama workshop, but I might use that image for inviting middle-age women to reclaim their creativity).
- **Marketing need not be outrageously expensive:** Many people have the mistaken idea that two main mediums will get people to workshops or services: having a website and placing ads in magazines and newspapers. watched too many people place ads at great expense with limited results. Website design and ads are probably the more expensive marketing tools out there, and they may not have the kind of draw or shelf life (how long information will hang out with your audience) as lesser-expensive options, such as flyers you make yourself, bookmarks (talk about a good shelf life!), postcards, emails, and other options.
- **Word of mouth rules:** No matter what your TLA work is, there's nothing like word of mouth to enhance that work. People are more apt to attend the performance, the workshop, the retreat, the consulting session if someone they know and trust recommends it. That's because most of us trust and listen to our friends, family and acquaintances more than we trust and listen to ads for new services or websites we come across.
- **Get moving:** The most helpful way I know to do marketing at the community level is through posting a decent flyer at every appropriate venue in town to get inquiring minds to inquire, especially people who believe enough in their own intuition to say to themselves, "Hey, I've seen that flyer six times today, and every time I see it, I want to find out more and do that workshop, so maybe I should?"
- **Do it yourself:** Flyers are low-cost to produce – and most of our computers come with programs that make flyer-making (and font-choosing – remember decades ago when we would use rub-on lettering?) a breeze. It's also fairly easy in our age of digital cameras and friendly computers to take your own photos, or use clip art (most word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word, have this art easily available) to come with stirring and thrilling images to illustrate your words. Flyers are fairly inexpensive to copy, and you can also buy your paper in bulk through source in your community or through the internet. Leftover flyers can be recycled or you can print on their backs if need be.
- **Or get help:** It's sometimes very possible and also immensely helpful, especially for the graphically-challenged, to barter design services with a designer. I got a whole website out of trading workshops for life with a great web designer, who was just getting started at the time and wanted to learn more design techniques. I've also delight in using businesses such as vistaprint.com and other on-the-web printing services – as well as

Microsoft Office and other software – that have ample templates (and sometimes access to fantastic images) to create a flyer, postcard, bookmark, poster, tri-fold brochure, business card, etc.

- **Use email:** One of the most effective ways to publicize coaching, consulting, performances or workshops is through emails. Put together an email list (carefully typing all the emails in, a comma and space between each), and then you can cut and paste them into an email, but make sure you send it out blind-copy so that you won't be giving out everyone's email addresses (which could cause confidentiality problems). Include a paragraph about the event, information about getting more information, and be considerate about not sending out the announcement too often as one person's gold is another's spam.
- **Learn from "Branding":** "Branding," a term that used to be designated for brands of products but now is used for everything from a college's image to the Dixie Chicks, makes me think of a hot iron symbol heading toward the flanks of a defensive animal or some fast food business's logo. Yet it has a useful connotation for us when it comes to marketing: By cultivating a similar look or logo or tagline (second line usually after a heading that says what you do, such as the "Writing and Singing for Your Life," the tag line Kelley Hunt and I use for our business, Brave Voice), you make your work more recognizable.
- **The rule of three....or five....or...:** Depending on who I've spoken to about this over the years, I've heard anything from 3-7 times as the average number we need to show someone something we're marketing to get them to respond. Just sending someone one postcard or one email usually won't do it: Find ways to show prospective clients the possibilities of your work for them from different angles over several times.
- **Say who you are and what you do:** Written material gives you a way to get inside someone's pocket or purse, ride in their car or sit at their table with them and explain what you do and why and how you do it. A few tips: always use your name – it helps you build your livelihood, and it also gives credibility to the workshop (would you enroll in a workshop if you didn't know how the leader was?). Tell a little about you – a few sentences about what you've done related to this work (publishing, performance, storytelling, awards, writing, facilitation). If you don't have much to write an impressive blurb, write one from the heart, letting people know that it's your greatest passion to help people find their voice or sing their own songs. Tell what the workshop or service is (what is its name, where and when it is (always check to make sure you didn't forget this!), the cost, payment information (cost, and if applicable, "payment plans accepted" or "partial bartering possible"), and then have a number and/or email people can contact for more information.

A note about competition: Many of us cannot help but have a territorial twinge when we see someone posting flyers for a workshop or performance similar to what we do. I remember that when I started doing community writing and healing workshops, my thought, when encountering flyers from "the competition" was, "This town ain't big enough for the two of us." What I realized over the years was that: 1) The more people who do TLA in my community, the more a need for TLA will grow, providing me with more opportunities; 2) The people who don't do TLA well, or ethically, or kindly won't and don't last; and 3) There's way more to be gained by pooling our resources than competing against each other.

So when you see a competing flyer, don't cover it with your own (for one thing, you don't want to invite that kind of karma in your life). Instead, make sure that you never do anything (including talking behind your competition's back) to hurt others in the market. If those doing similar work as you are really good at what they do, you might be able to learn a lot from them about how to do better outreach yourself. You might take this all a step further by calling together people doing arts-based workshops to run ads together, hang each other's flyers, sharing mailing lists, refer people to each other.

One of the great joys in my TLA life came when I realized I could no longer do all the workshops coming my way, and I needed to train someone else to do those workshops. Luckily, there was a great facilitator-in-waiting, who I met for coffee over the next year or so, and now she's doing the workshops I used to do. It's outrageously satisfying to find that my work not only supports me, but creates opportunities for others, and at the same time, I know that I'm indebted to the people who did writing workshops here and there over the last 20 years in my town, who helped create the market for what I do.

By marketing with our mind and heart in gear, we can change business as we know it, and creating the kinds of community connections that will help our own cups runneth over.

4. Ground Rules for Workshops

Here are three sets of ground rules/agreements you may choose from, adapt and consider when putting together your own ground rules or agreements for workshops.

a. Ground Rules for Workshops, by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

1. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, and most of all, making sense.
2. Write what you know as well as what you don't know.
3. Follow your writing, not the suggested exercise, the facilitator or what you think you should write. Write what wakes you up the most.
4. Feel free to experiment with poems, stories, dialogues, essays, letters, and whatever other form the writing wants to be.
5. Practice trust. Trust yourself to write what you need to write, how you need to write it.
6. Remember that all revealed in this workshop is confidential.
7. Treat all newborn writing with great respect and tenderness so that it can grow.
8. Reading your writing aloud is always optional.
9. No self-deprecating remarks allowed (especially when preparing to read your work).
10. Strive, as much as possible, not to compare your writing with the writing of others, and not to critique, interpret or analyze away what your writing is trying to show you.
11. Witness others. Listen carefully with your full attention. It will enhance your ability to listen to your own words.
12. Please share your responses to one another's work—what moves you, what stands out for you – but please refrain from critiquing or analyzing the work.
13. Treat all you do as a delicious and invigorating experiment. Play. Take chances. See what way leads to way, and what words lead to words.

b. TLA Workshop Agreements and Guidelines, by Patricia Fontaine

This is challenging work in the best of circumstances. So that we can feel safe enough to be honest and true to our experience, we agree on the following:

- **Confidentiality** – We agree to share what we learn but to not repeat anything said by anyone in the workshop without their permission. Same applies for talking outside the workshop to someone about what they said without their permission.
- **Amnesty** – The companion to confidentiality. We agree not to treat others differently, blame them, or hold what they said against them after the workshop.
- **No Put-downs** – We agree not to put down, make fun of, minimize, or attack others in the workshop – or ourselves (i.e. “this may sound stupid, but...)
- **Right to Pass** – Each person has the right to pass if you don’t want to talk.
- Please **Speak from your own experience**.
 - Use **“I-statements”** - we agree to speak for ourselves and our own experience and not speak for others unless asked to. This means using “I” instead of “You,” “We,” or “They.”
 - No Cross-talk or Piggy-backing**. Each person has the chance to say what they want without having it debated, denied, or attacked, OR agreed with or supported. The statement gets to stand on it’s own without being taken over by someone.
- **Feelings** – Each of us will experience feelings about something said or done in this workshop – it’s part of the healing process. Each of us agrees to respect and allow expression of those feelings, *including our own*.
- **Respect / Listening** – Each of us agrees to listen to others and be listened to. One of us talks at a time. We are resources for each other.
- **Practice Compassion** for self and others – we’re all learning.
- **Check Assumptions:** Privilege and differences are not always visible.

Customized from *Helping Teens Stop Violence: A Practical Guide for Counselors, Educators, and Parents* Allan Creighton and Paul Kivel. Alameda, CA: Hunter House Inc., 1990.

c. TLA Workshop Agreements, by Vanita Leatherwood

It is important that each of us participate in creating a safe space to explore, share and create. In that effort, we agree to:

- **Confidentiality** – “What happens here stays here.” We agree not to repeat or describe anything that is said here by anyone without their permission.
- **Safety & Grace** – We agree not to hold what others have said against them, not to blame or treat others differently after the workshop.
- **Respect & Compassion** – We agree to listen and honor our own and others’ experiences, stories, perspectives and work. We agree not to put down, laugh at or minimize ourselves or others.
- **Honor** – “Whatever you write is right.” We agree to honor the emotional and creative expression of ourselves and others. We agree not to judge or critique. No one has to justify their feelings. We agree that each person has the right to “pass” when they do not want to speak.
- **Speak from our own experience** – We agree to speak from our own experience, to speak from a place of “I,” not “you,” “they,” or “we.” We agree to let each person have his or her say, not to debate, put-down or argue.