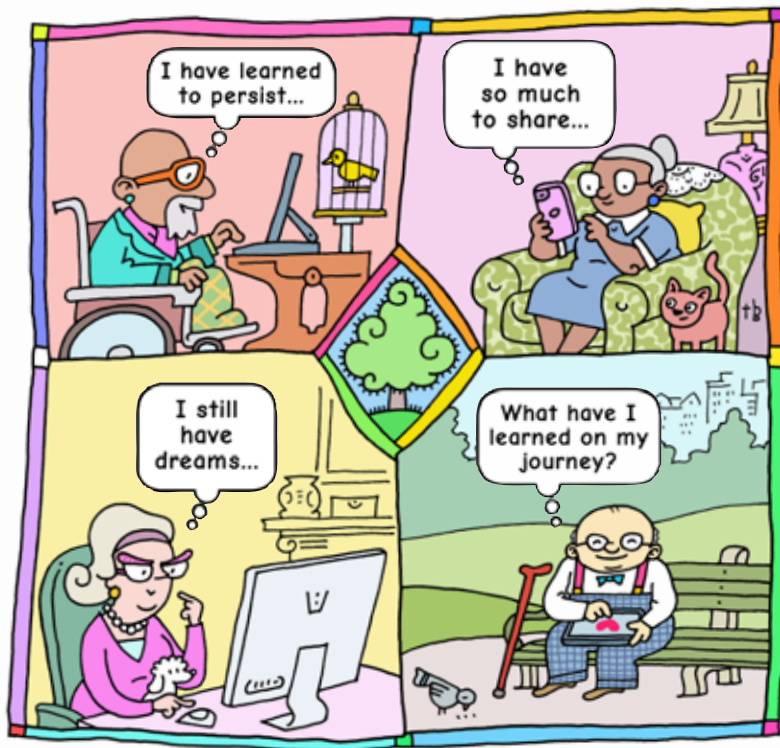


Writing to Find Comfort

A way for elders to reflect on our lives



Created by Bill Zimmerman
Art by Tom Bloom

And featuring the poem, *"TREE OF LIFE (A TESTAMENT)"*

*This book of reflections
belongs to:*

Type your name here

Date begun

An Interactive Digital Journal from MakeBeliefsComix.com

Writing to Find Comfort

A way for elders to reflect on our lives



*And featuring the poem,
"Tree of Life (A Testament)"*

Created by Bill Zimmerman

Art by Tom Bloom

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Dedication

For my love, Teodorina

Dear reader,

The other day I came across the expression “full of life” and it rang so true to me.

You see, some time ago I was diagnosed with advanced liver cancer and given a prognosis of seven months of life. Drug therapy so far has extended my life and I am so very grateful to have more time. I look upon each new day as a blessing and take nothing for granted.

I tell myself that there still is so much life in me, that there are many things I want to accomplish, to say and to experience. **I use my precious time to imagine and hope, to dream and work.** Each day I strive to write and create new things to keep busy and productive. From my illness comes this book of writing prompts which I hope will encourage you to write personal truths and reflect on from your deepest self your life.

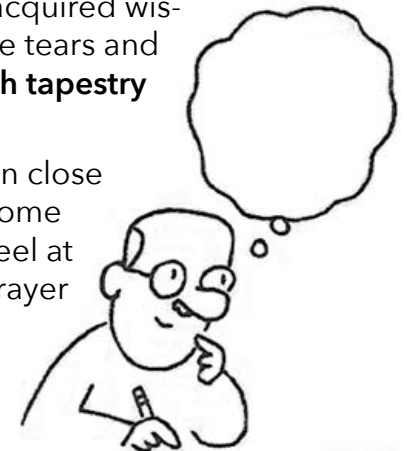
In developing this interactive journal I wanted to create a book that would **provide comfort and inspire hope for those like me who are aging or dealing with difficult health issues;** but it is also for



those of us who are just bewildered by life's events and seek clarity. Its purpose is to help readers assess and articulate the important things in their hearts. **Despite the hard times each of us faces, we also are filled with life.** We never stop having hopes or dreams just because we grow older or more frail.

This book encourages you to pause for a moment to take stock and provides you with a place to record your written reflections that come from deep within you. Writing prompts appear on each page to spark your thoughts. Think of these prompts as “friends” who seek to elicit your deepest feelings and concerns. These “friends” want to know you better. **They encourage you to write about what you have learned on your life's journey** and reveal your acquired wisdom and deepest thinking—even the tears and frustrations. **All this is part of the rich tapestry which makes you, you.**

By writing in this book you can get in close touch with yourself and help ease some of the pain or discomfort you may feel at times. For me, writing is a form of prayer and provides peace and comfort. I hope it will be that way for you, too.



In this book, too, you also will find a poem I have written—"Tree of Life (A Testament)"—in which I share with you what has been most important in my life and where I express my wish to cling to life, rather than let go. It, too, is a prayer which I desperately needed to express. Perhaps there are thoughts in it that will resonate with your own love of life.

Full disclosure now: I finished writing the poem in the early part of 2020 when I was making good progress in my chemotherapy. But, then, things changed abruptly and I started to suffer severe side effects from the chemical infusions and felt beset by family problems; by midyear I was deeply depressed and felt I could not continue living. It was at that point, feeling overwhelmed, that I tried to take my life and was rushed to hospital where I was revived and given a second chance. With good treatment I am feeling much better now and have resumed my life and changed my medical treatment. **I do not know what the future will hold for me, but I still cling to life with full passion and hope you will accept my poem in that same spirit.** I try to live fully. I ask myself if I can get on with my life. Can I overcome myself?



Can I make amends to my wife and daughter for my selfish action? Can I make it up to God and gain His/Her forgiveness? **Can I find it in my own heart to forgive me?** I am so grateful to still be alive.

I try to convey a sense of hope with my book. Whether we are old or young, ill or healthy, we always have hopes and dreams—they travel with us. We have things we wish to achieve. **Each day brings with it the chance to find joy if we look carefully**—there is always a tiny miracle to be experienced, whether a kind deed extended to us or the **sighting of the morning star.** This book's writing prompts encourage you to write about such joys. They also will help you recall some of your buried hopes and some of the laughter you experienced over the years. Feel free to write about your memories, happy as well as sad ones.



Taking time to reflect on our lives can be healing and comforting. Perhaps this book with your written thoughts will become a legacy gift you want to pass on to someone you love. Your words, reflecting your life experiences, will have value for future generations. This book will help preserve them.

I also created this book for elders as a way to try and calm my own fears, to tell myself that there is still time for me to partake of life, that I am still here, not gone, and that if I work at it, I can squeeze even more richness from my days. I know that if I can keep creating new things, then I am well and alive. **I know, too, that I must learn to live more fully, with more purpose.** That way I can continue growing in what time is left for me. **I want to be as full of life as possible.**

Do you feel that way, too?

Sincerely,

Bill Zimmerman

Bill Zimmerman



P.S. To get your own copy of the book, you first need to download it from the website. You can fill in the answers to the questions on each page by typing on your computer screen and saving the file, or you can print out any pages and fill in the answers by hand. If you wish to share all your special thoughts in the completed digital book with someone, you can email the file to them.

Take Your First Steps To Find Comfort

In
Your
Journey



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
THE SUPERPOWER YOU SEEK



TYPE HERE

[illegible]

16 WRITING TO FIND COMFORT

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. There are 20 blue lines in total, evenly spaced. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The paper is otherwise empty of any text or markings.

WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 17

A cartoon illustration of an elderly woman with short grey hair, wearing a large tan hat decorated with pink, purple, and green flowers. She has large white-rimmed glasses and a yellow earring. She is wearing a pink and white checkered shirt under blue overalls. She is holding a small, grey, handheld electronic device with a screen and buttons, and her finger is touching the screen. The background is a simple light blue and white.

A cartoon illustration of a man with dark hair, wearing a blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a bright pink tie. He is holding a grey handheld calculator with both hands and looking down at it with a slight smile. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. There are 20 blue lines in total, evenly spaced. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The paper is otherwise empty of any text or markings.

[illegible]

Write About:
A BLESSING I OFFER FOR TODAY

A cartoon illustration of a person with brown hair and a pink headband, looking up at a whiteboard. The whiteboard has the text "Write About:" and "A BLESSING I OFFER FOR TODAY" written on it.

24 WRITING TO FIND COMFORT

[illegible]

WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 25

A cartoon illustration of an elderly man with a balding head, grey hair on the sides, and a mustache. He is wearing glasses and a green t-shirt. He is looking down at a small, dark-colored laptop computer with a focused expression. His hands are positioned near the keyboard. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

[illegible]

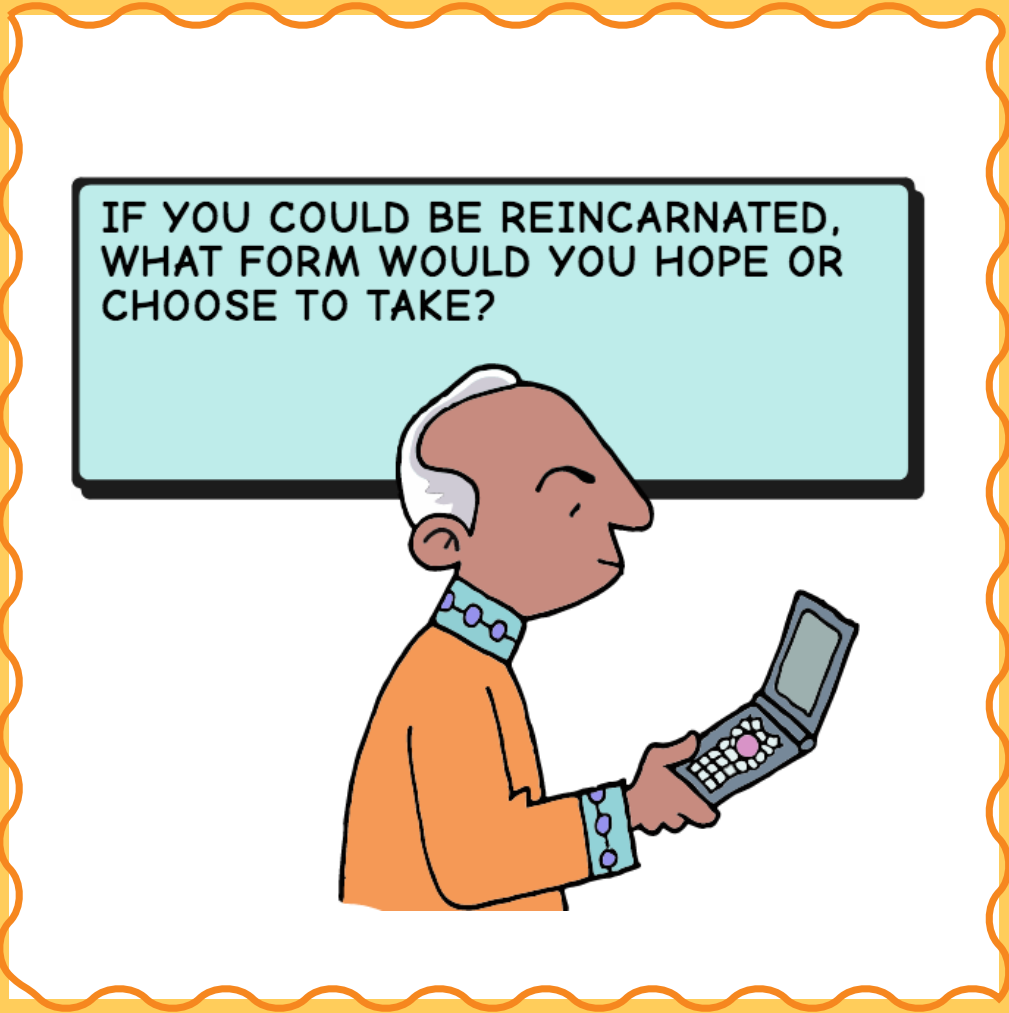
A cartoon illustration of a woman with grey hair tied in a bun, wearing glasses and a green patterned shirt. She is holding a pink flip phone to her ear. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

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A cartoon illustration of a woman with short, curly brown hair, wearing glasses and a red shirt. She is holding a pink flip phone in her right hand and a yellow envelope in her left hand. She has a green and white striped sleeve on her right arm and a yellow watch on her left wrist. The background is a simple light blue wall with a black horizontal line.

[illegible]

IF YOU COULD BE REINCARNATED,
WHAT FORM WOULD YOU HOPE OR
CHOOSE TO TAKE?

[illegible]

Write About:
A HERO IN YOUR LIFE

[illegible]

Write About:
THE BEST PEP TALK YOU COULD
GIVE YOURSELF



36 WRITING TO FIND COMFORT

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. There are 20 blue lines in total, evenly spaced. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The paper appears to be a standard notebook or writing sheet.

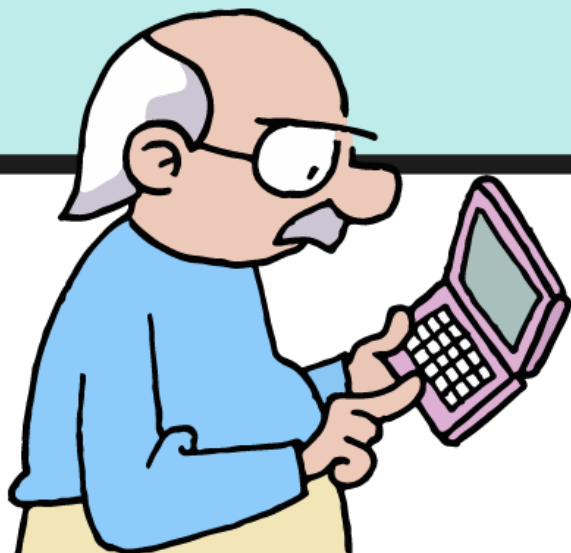
WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 37

Write About:
A SHOPPING LIST OF ALL THE
THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines. There are no markings or text on the paper.

Write About:
WHAT YOU KNOW FOR SURE

A cartoon illustration of a man with a large, balding head, wearing glasses and a white shirt. He is looking up at a large, light blue rectangular sign with a black border. The sign contains the text "Write About:" followed by "WHAT YOU KNOW FOR SURE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The man's expression is one of contemplation or perhaps a bit of frustration, as he looks directly at the sign. The background is a solid light blue color.

40 WRITING TO FIND COMFORT

TYPE HERE

[illegible]

WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 41

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a man with a large nose and glasses, wearing a red baseball cap with a white baseball logo and a red jacket with a yellow collar and a white baseball logo on the sleeve. He is holding a black mobile phone with a blue screen and a keypad. The background is a simple light blue and white gradient.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a woman with short, wavy brown hair, wearing glasses and a purple top. She is holding a laptop and looking at the screen. The background is a simple light blue wall with a black horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. There are 20 blue lines in total, evenly spaced. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The paper is otherwise empty of any text or markings.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

A cartoon illustration of a young woman with short, wavy blonde hair. She is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and a small pink earring. She is holding a grey flip phone in her left hand and looking down at it with a slight smile. Her right hand is raised, with her index finger pointing towards the phone's screen. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

A cartoon illustration of a man with a large nose and a wide smile. He is wearing a red and black plaid hat with a small bow on top and a blue sweater over a light blue collared shirt. He is holding a calculator in his right hand and looking at it with a thoughtful expression. There are three small, stylized clouds or thought bubbles above his head. The background is a simple light blue and white gradient.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of an elderly man with a large nose, glasses, and a mustache. He is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt and is looking down at a small, handheld electronic device that he is holding with both hands. The device has a screen and a keypad. The background is a simple light blue and white.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a woman with short, wavy red hair and pink-rimmed glasses. She is wearing a light green shirt with colorful polka dots and a yellow collar. She is sitting at a desk, looking at a yellow computer monitor. Her right hand is on a yellow keyboard. The background is a simple light blue wall with a black horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

A cartoon illustration of a man with a mustache, wearing a blue cap with a red logo, glasses, and a blue shirt. He is holding a flip phone and looking at it.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
A PERSON YOU HONOR AND AFTER
WHOM YOU MODEL YOUR OWN LIFE



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

YOU ARE DANCING WITH JOY AND
ABANDONMENT IN YOUR
IMAGINATION. WHAT MUSIC
ACCOMPANIES YOU?

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a woman with short, wavy red hair and glasses. She is wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt with an orange collar and a pink wristband. She is sitting at a desk, pointing her right index finger at a large, grey computer monitor. The monitor is on a stand and has some vertical lines on its right side. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line near the top.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a man with a mustache, wearing a brown checkered hat and a grey trench coat over a blue and white striped shirt. He is holding a pink flip phone to his ear with his left hand and looking at the screen with his right hand. The background is a simple light blue wall with a black horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. There are 20 blue lines in total, evenly spaced. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The paper is otherwise empty of any text or markings.

A cartoon illustration of a man with a balding head, wearing glasses and a green shirt with a white grid pattern. He is looking down at a blue flip phone he is holding in his right hand, with his left index finger pointing at the screen. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Write About:
YOUR DEEPEST HOPE



TYPE HERE

[illegible]

TYPE HERE

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WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 79

A cartoon illustration of a woman with grey hair tied in a ponytail, wearing glasses and a green and blue striped shirt. She is holding a black flip phone to her ear with her right hand. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. There are 20 blue lines in total, evenly spaced. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The paper is otherwise empty of any text or markings.

A PRAYER TO WHATEVER SPIRIT IS THERE FOR YOU.



TYPE HERE

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of an elderly man with a grey beard and glasses, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. He is holding a tablet computer with both hands and looking at the screen. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, looking at a tablet computer. She is wearing a light blue shirt and a red and blue plaid skirt. She has a red watch on her left wrist and a blue earring. The background is a simple light blue and white gradient.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

ASK FOR FORGIVENESS



TYPE HERE

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
SOMETHING SO BEAUTIFUL IT
ALMOST BREAKS YOUR HEART

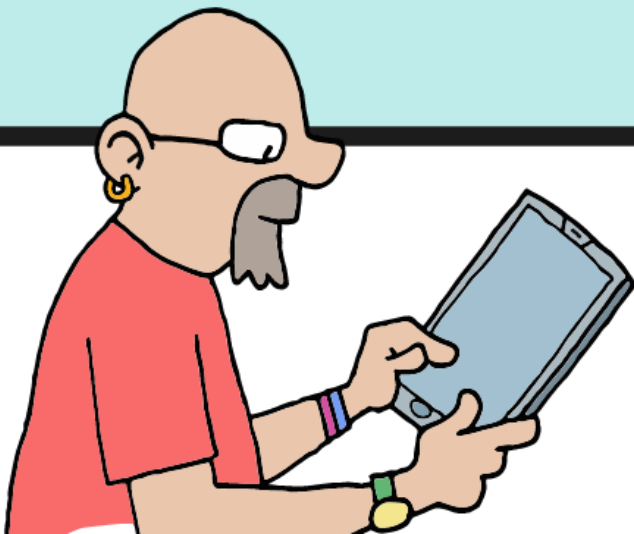
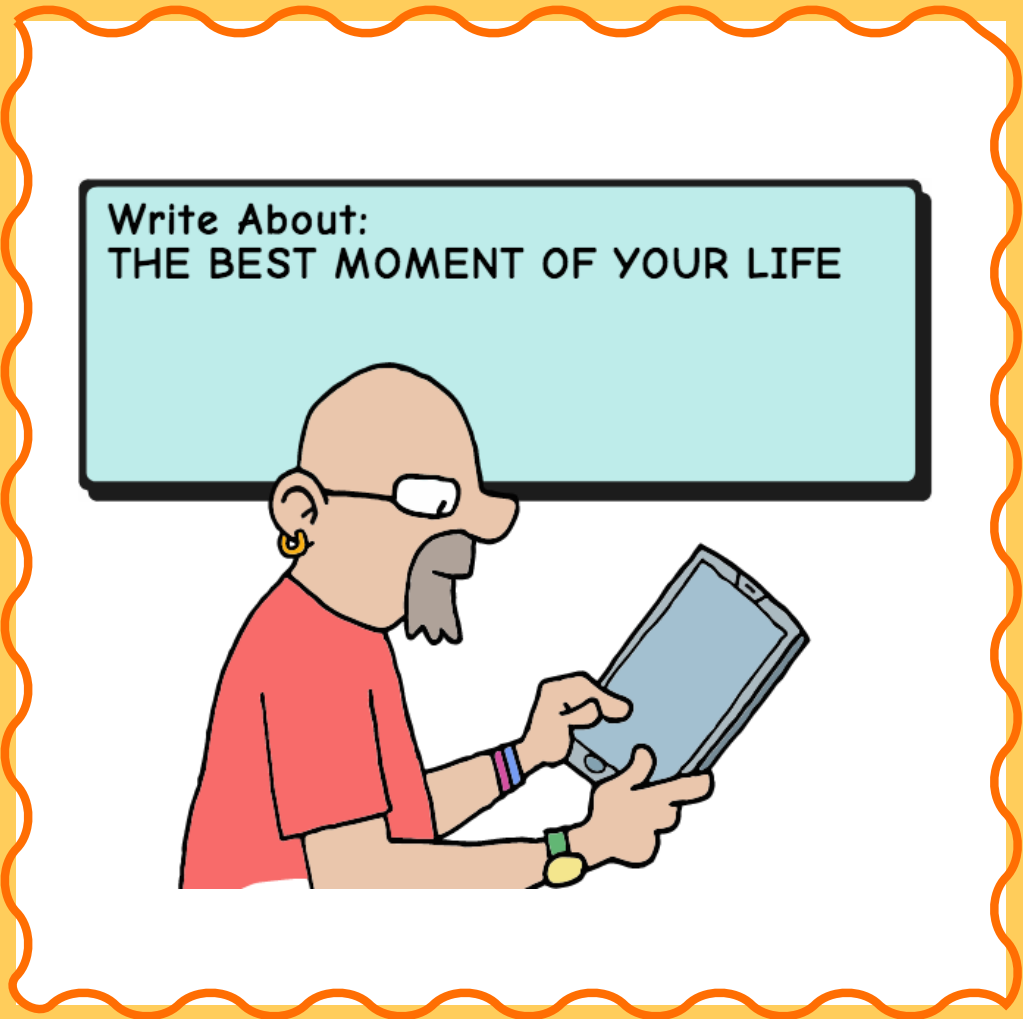


92 WRITING TO FIND COMFORT

[illegible]

WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 93

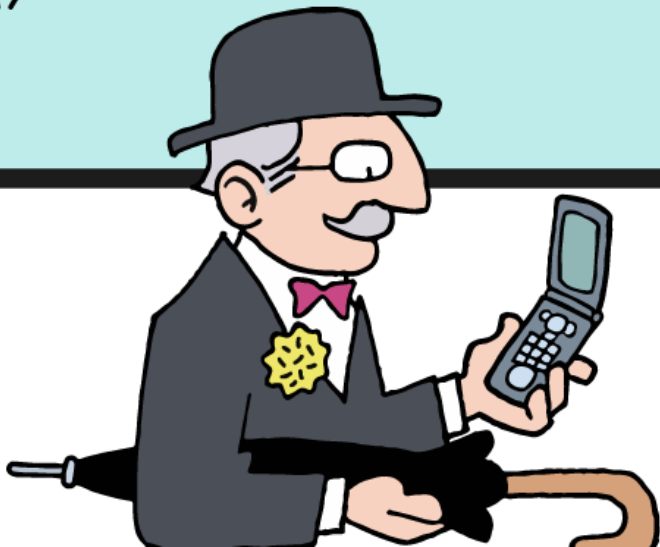
Write About:
THE BEST MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE

A cartoon illustration of a man with a bald head, a grey beard, and glasses. He is wearing a red t-shirt and has a yellow earring in his left ear. He is holding a blue tablet with both hands and looking at the screen. He is also wearing a purple and pink striped wristband on his right wrist and a green watch with a yellow face on his left wrist. The background is a light blue rectangle with a black border, containing the text 'Write About: THE BEST MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE'. The entire scene is framed by a thick orange wavy border.[illegible]

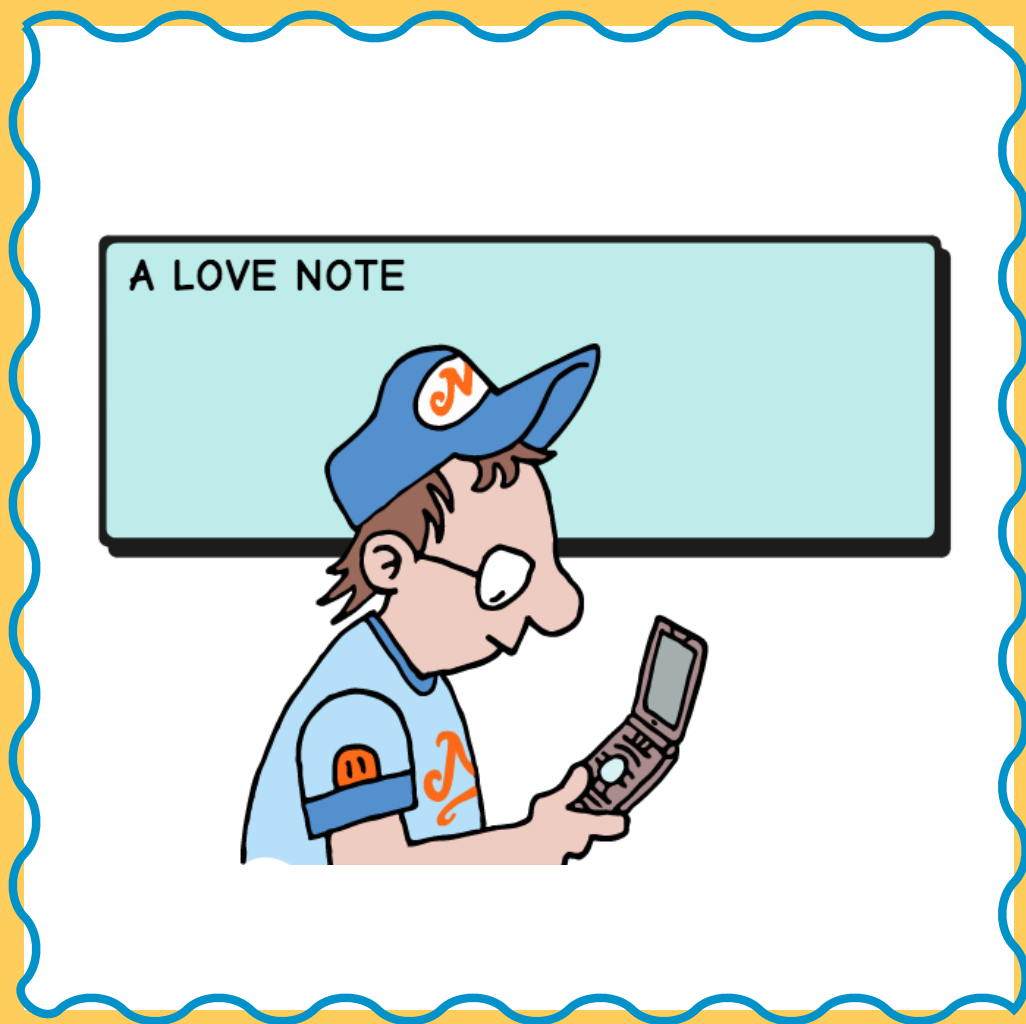
A cartoon illustration of a construction worker with a beard and glasses, wearing a yellow hard hat and a high-visibility yellow and orange safety vest. He is holding a blue laptop with a yellow keyboard and looking at the screen. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

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Write About:
SOMETHING IMPORTANT I NEED TO
SAY

A cartoon character with a large head, wearing a dark grey bowler hat and round glasses. The character is looking down and to the left with a thoughtful expression, their hand near their chin. Only the top of their head and their face are visible.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a middle-aged man with a balding head, wearing glasses, a pink checkered shirt, and a blue striped tie. He is holding a tablet computer in his left hand and looking at it with a slight smile. He is also wearing a yellow wristwatch on his right wrist. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

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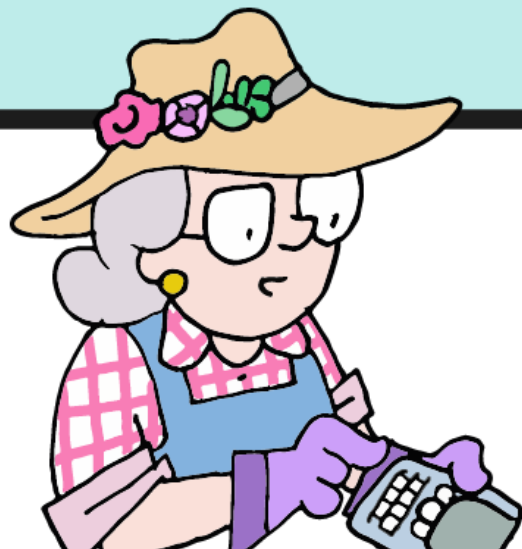
A cartoon illustration of a bald man with a mustache and orange glasses, wearing a blue shirt and plaid pants, sitting in a wheelchair and using a laptop. The man is shown in profile, facing right, with his right hand on the laptop keyboard. The wheelchair has a large black wheel with spokes and a red seat. The background is a simple white wall with a black horizontal line at the top.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. There are 20 blue lines in total, evenly spaced. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The lines extend from the left edge to the right edge of the page.

A cartoon illustration of a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a pink jacket and blue goggles. She is looking down at a pink laptop computer. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

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Write About;
I MEET A GUARDIAN ANGEL AND
THIS IS WHAT WE TALK ABOUT...



TYPE HERE

A cartoon illustration of a man with a large nose, wearing a blue suit, white shirt, and pink tie. He is holding a calculator in his hands and looking down at it. The background is a simple light blue and white wall.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a person with spiky orange hair, wearing glasses and a green camouflage tank top. They have a green circular earring and a small rainbow heart tattoo on their right upper arm. They are holding a grey flip phone with both hands, looking at the screen. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

[illegible]

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

A cartoon illustration of a woman with grey hair tied in a bun, wearing glasses and a green patterned shirt. She is looking down at a pink flip phone she is holding in her hands. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

[illegible]

Write About:
WHAT GIVES YOU COMFORT

A stylized illustration of a hand with pink skin and black outlines. The fingers are curled into a fist, with each finger having a spiral or curly shape. The hand is positioned at the bottom center of the page, appearing to hold or point towards the text above it.[illegible]

Write About:
WHAT I STILL WANT TO LEARN

A cartoon illustration of a person's head and shoulders, shown from the chest up. The person has a large, rounded head with a prominent white hair curl on the left side. Their eyes are closed in a content or thoughtful expression, and their mouth is slightly open. They are wearing a dark, possibly black, garment. The background is a solid light blue color.

124 WRITING TO FIND COMFORT

[illegible]

WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 125

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
WHAT CONFESSION YOU WOULD
LIKE TO MAKE



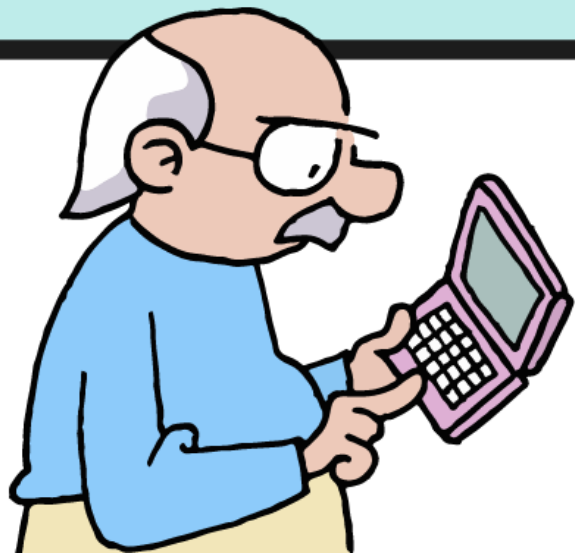
This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
WHAT GOOD DEED YOU WOULD
LIKE TO PERFORM



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

MAKE BELIEVE YOU COULD
CHANGE ANYTHING IN THE WORLD
YOU WANT TO MAKE IT A LITTLE
BETTER. WHAT SIMPLE THINGS
WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO DO?



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A cartoon illustration of a man with brown hair, wearing a red baseball cap with a white baseball logo, a red jacket with a yellow collar and a white baseball logo on the sleeve, and a yellow wristband. He is holding a handheld electronic device with a screen and buttons. The background is a simple light blue and white gradient.

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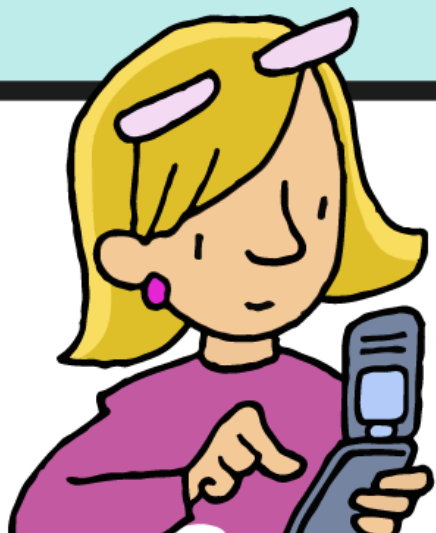
A cartoon illustration of a woman with short, wavy brown hair, wearing glasses and a purple top with a white ruffled collar. She is looking at a laptop screen, which displays a green square. The background is a simple light blue and white.

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[illegible]

Write About:
IN MY HEART OF HEARTS THIS IS
WHAT I WANT, WITH ALL MY
PASSION, WITH ALL MY SOUL

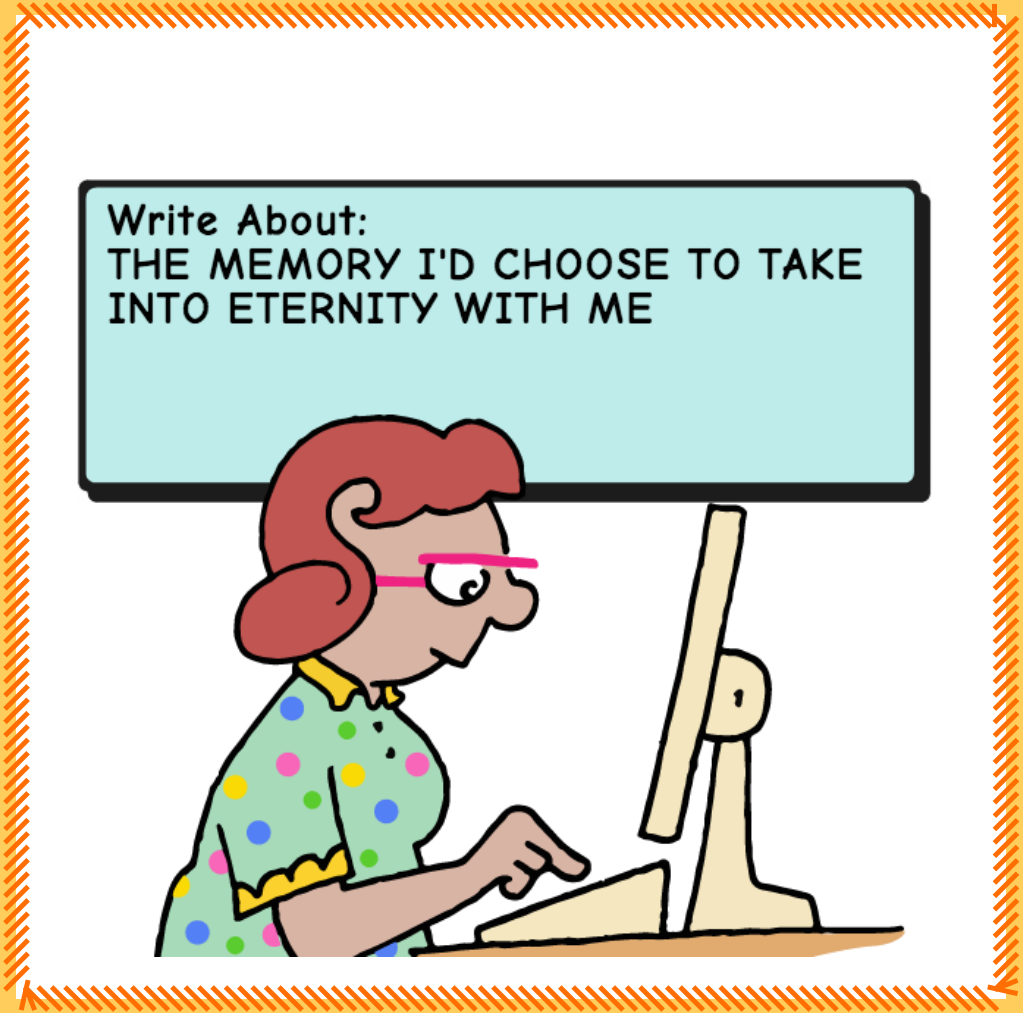
[illegible]

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a middle-aged man with a balding head, wearing glasses and a mustache. He is dressed in a light green long-sleeved shirt. He is holding a silver flip phone in his hands, looking down at it with a focused expression. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

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Write About:
THE MEMORY I'D CHOOSE TO TAKE
INTO ETERNITY WITH ME

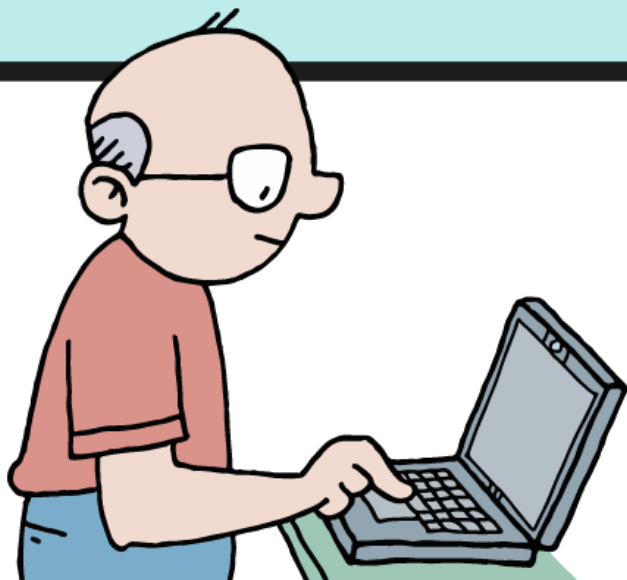
[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a man with a mustache, wearing a blue cap with a red logo, glasses, and a blue shirt, holding a flip phone. The man is looking down at the phone. The background is a simple light blue and white gradient.



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
YOU HAVE COME THROUGH MANY
TOUGH TIMES IN LIFE. WHAT ARE
THE WORDS YOU SAY TO YOURSELF
TO HELP YOU?



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines. There are no markings, text, or other graphical elements on the page.

A cartoon illustration of an elderly man with brown skin, white hair on the sides, and a white mustache. He is wearing white-rimmed glasses and a light green long-sleeved shirt. He is holding a red smartphone with both hands, looking at the screen with a focused expression. There are small curved lines around the phone, suggesting it is vibrating or ringing. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line near the top.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

A cartoon illustration of an elderly woman with short, wavy grey hair. She is wearing large, white-rimmed glasses and a green square earring. Her top is yellow with a green swirling pattern and a green collar with a red and white scalloped edge. She is holding a small, blue, flip-style mobile phone in her hands. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

A cartoon illustration of a woman with short, wavy red hair and glasses. She is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt with an orange collar and a green belt. She is sitting at a desk, pointing her right index finger at a large, grey computer monitor. The monitor is on a stand and has some vertical lines on its right side. The background is a simple light blue wall with a black horizontal line near the top.



158 WRITING TO FIND COMFORT

[illegible]

WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 159

A cartoon illustration of a woman with curly brown hair, wearing a pink headband and a green tank top. She is holding a blue flip phone to her ear with her right hand. The background is a simple light blue wall with a black horizontal line.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a man with a mustache, wearing a brown checkered hat and a grey trench coat over a blue and white striped shirt. He is holding a pink flip phone to his ear with his left hand and looking at the screen with his right hand. The background is a simple light blue wall with a black horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. There are 20 blue lines in total, evenly spaced. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The paper is otherwise empty of any text or markings.

A cartoon illustration of a man with a balding head, wearing glasses and a green shirt with a white grid pattern. He is holding a blue flip phone in his right hand and pointing at the screen with his left index finger. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
THE MESSAGE I WOULD HOPE TO
BEAM TO THE UNIVERSE



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
THE GREATEST DAY OF YOUR LIFE

A simple line drawing of a notepad with a pencil resting on it, positioned at the bottom center of the page. The notepad is tilted slightly to the right, and the pencil is lying horizontally across its surface.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

A cartoon illustration of a man with a brown face, wearing a purple fedora, dark sunglasses, and a purple suit jacket over a yellow shirt with black polka dots. He is holding a silver mobile phone in his right hand and a black cane in his left hand. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

[illegible]

A cartoon illustration of a woman with grey hair in a ponytail, wearing glasses and a green and blue striped shirt. She is holding a silver flip phone to her ear. The background is a simple light blue wall with a dark horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

[illegible]

IMAGINE THAT THE SECRET TO HAVING A GOOD LIFE CAN BE SAID IN SIX WORDS OR LESS. EXPRESS THEM!



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

Write About:
SOMETHING I NEED TO GET OFF
MY CHEST



178 WRITING TO FIND COMFORT

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.

WRITING TO FIND COMFORT 179

A cartoon illustration of a woman with blonde hair, glasses, and a light blue shirt. She is holding a tablet computer with both hands and looking at the screen. She is wearing a red and blue plaid skirt, a red wristband, and a blue watch. The background is a simple light blue wall with a black horizontal line.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. A single green line runs horizontally across the page near the bottom edge, creating a margin. The rest of the page is filled with evenly spaced blue lines.



The Tree of Life

(A Testament)

by Bill Zimmerman

(I wrote this poem while undergoing treatment for cancer; it conveys my love of life and my desire to survive. I took much comfort in writing it.)

I cling to the Tree of Life

I don't want to let go
—so much do I want to remain on this earth
and partake of life and what the world offers.
This blessed Tree of Life, and all trees which protect us
and save the world from our folly, they shelter us and
inspire us to be our best selves; they bring beauty and
nurturing to our lives. They offer us sanctuary.
Oh, precious tree, I adore you. Protect me, I beg you!

Hear me out, my tree:

I have tried not to be just a taker, squeezing life
for my selfish end,
Instead I have tried, when able, to repair the world
and to help those in need
I have offered love and caring to others
I, too, have nurtured, and in my own quiet way have tried
to shore up the Tree of Life and water it with my tears
I now find myself so afraid of dying and being
no longer here.

In living my last days I ask big questions:
Have I used my precious time well?
Did I do a good job?
Was I a responsible person?
Was I a good husband?
A loving father?
Was I kind to others?
Did I help in some way to heal the world?
God gave me the gift of life. But did I live a deserving
one for Him? Was I worthy of His love?
It all comes down to this question: What could I say
I achieved with my life were it to end today?
I want my answers to be pleasing to God.
I want, too, to be proud of what I answer.

What makes the Tree of Life so important?

Its branches protect and shelter us,
Its trunk anchors us,
Its roots steady and sustain us and other creatures.
It brings beauty to our lives.

The Tree's Branches

I look up at the tree's branches. I want to climb
to the top to touch the sky, embrace the clouds
and sing, "Hallelujah!"

I wish to signify that I have been here on Earth,
that I have seen its beauties and experienced
its wonders, that I am alive.

What a great gift from God!

I revel in Life's munificence

"Holy, holy, holy," I sing "Holy!"

Oh, what a wonderful life this is. Sing Hallelujah!

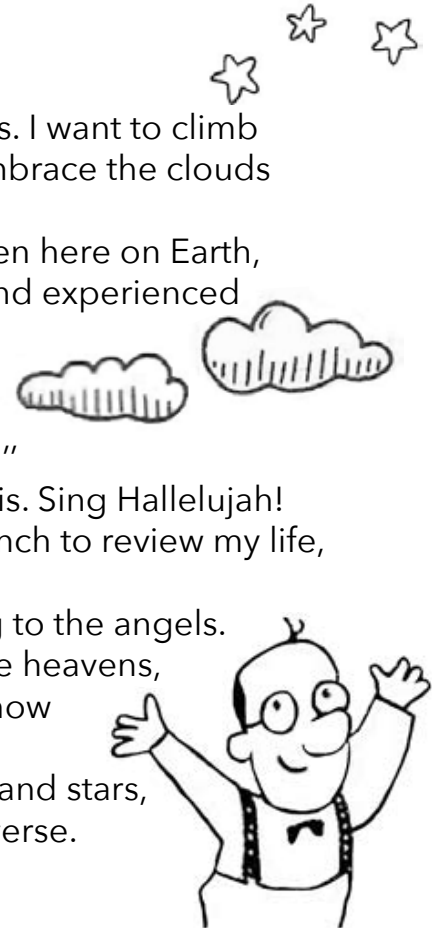
I climb the tree branch by branch to review my life,
to replenish my soul.

I hug the tree to pray and sing to the angels.

I climb the branches to see the heavens,
to reach for God although I know

He is within me, too.

From the top I look to the sky and stars,
I enjoy the mystery of the universe.





I talk to the birds and ask
where have they been.
"China," sings one.
"Africa" says another.
"America," another tweets.
I wish that I knew how
to fly, too, but I would
always want to return

to my beautiful Tree of Life.

I want my spirit to soar and yet I cling
tearfully to the tree's branches.

I put my hands around the tree's trunk
and hold on with all my might.

I whisper, "Let me live."

"Let me continue."

"Let me be."



I want the branches to display the entirety of my life. I want
to remember my steps where I have journeyed. It has
been a wonderful adventure that I wish would never end.

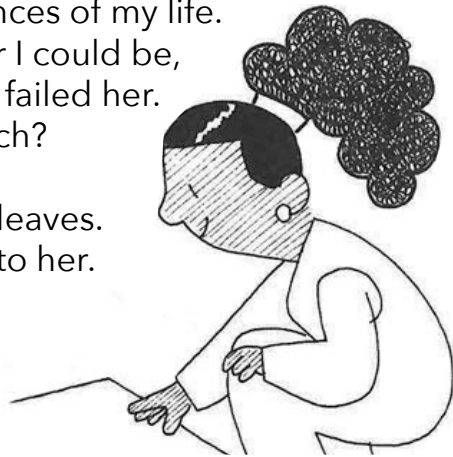


The highest branch is dedicated to my wife
who has loved and comforted me
throughout our many years together.
Like a little bird perched in the branch,
she sweetly croons
as the branches sway in the wind.
To ease her pain she sings for me
the song, "I Remember Sky."
So beautiful, with so much feeling
and sweetness.
She makes my heart weep
with love.





The next branch is for my daughter;
it is adorned with all the dreams and hopes
I had for her when she was born—
she was my future.
Seeing her arrive, holding her tiny hand
were the greatest experiences of my life.
I tried to be the best father I could be,
but I wonder if somehow I failed her.
Can one ever love too much?
I am no longer sure.
Her restless spirit stirs the leaves.
I pray that life will be kind to her.




On this limb are vessels holding the tears I have shed
over the sadness and pain that came with the years.
This is a branch where I have wailed many times.

The underlying branch holds some of my smiles and
laughter for the pleasures which are always part of life,
too. I can hear my laughter echo in the leaves.
“Holy, Holy,” I sing “Holy!”



This limb honors the people whom I have loved and
lost as Time came for them; their spirits linger forever in
my heart. The sparrows nestling there signify all those
who have departed. The branch carries memories
of my mother, my father and brother—all lost to me now,
but still in my heart. I can never give them up.
I miss them so.

On this branch below are placed the shoes 
I walked in to discover the beauty and magnificence of our
world. I have also felt great loneliness throughout my journeys.



On another branch I store some of my life force which has sustained me through days of woe and loss. I will need my strength for the remaining days ahead. And what may be left I offer to those whom I love.

This next branch carries my hopes and dreams, many of which came true—to have a wife, a child; to do good work; to write and publish; to travel; to find happiness; to overcome my many fears; to have good health; to make a better world; to help young people find their way and realize their potential.

And on this small branch

is a resting place for the spirits of my beloved dogs who comforted me.



The leaves on this limb are heart-shaped, signifying the love I have felt toward others and the love which was granted to me, too. The leaves turn color, blaze and surrender their beauty. Nothing seems to last forever.

This is a branch of consciousness, signifying my being able to navigate the world and my attempt to comprehend its wonder and immensity.



And here is a branch that celebrates my life's work of writing and creating new, wondrous things. Without my imagination I would never have survived—it has sustained me. I have been blessed with my need to create new things.

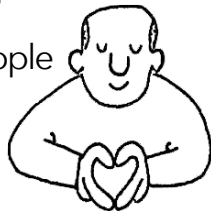




On this branch are shards of glass. They represent some of the sadness I have felt in seeing inequality among people in the world and the terrible sufferings of others. How do we awaken ourselves to others in need? How do we make life fairer to all?

And on this branch rest the kindnesses of most people who want to do the right thing. These are the people who know we must come together and that we share a common humanity. It is not hard to love others, is it, if only we will look fully into one another's eyes and hearts? If only we will feel for one another?

These lower branches are set aside for the people who have shown me great generosity and friendship and who helped me survive. I will never forget their good spirits. I have tried to honor them by offering kindness to others, too.



Another branch holds some of my secrets, my dreams, my hopes, my stories, my prayers, my blessings, my misery, my lamentations and joys. They are what I am made of.



This sturdy, encompassing branch is dedicated to Bach who has been my savior over the years. He is the highest of humans. His music has seen me through my terrible times of need. He offers me succor.





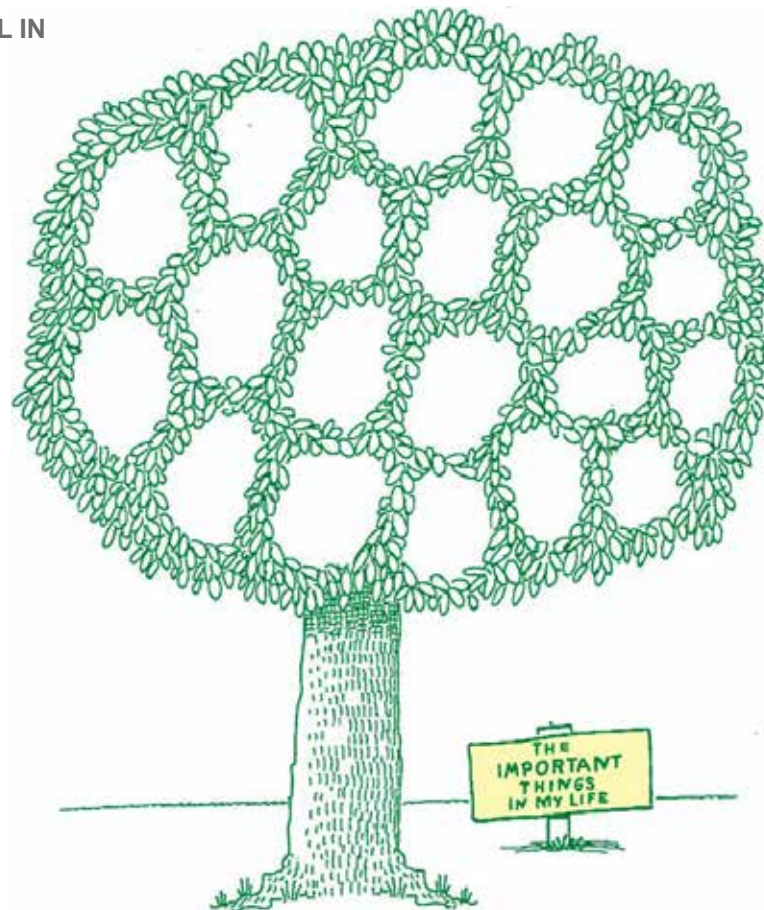
On this other branch I place some of my books. They comforted me as a frightened boy and also brought pleasure and wonder to me when I was grown. Without the written word all is lost. The books have fed my hunger to learn and experience new things. I bless them. When I was a child I never thought that one day I would write books, too.



And on this branch hang colorful flags signifying the moments of ecstasy which are always present in our lives as we share the pleasures of life and this world. Would you like a turn now? If so, then answer me:

What are the important things that you would place on your branches of the Tree of Life? Are they so different from mine? Name them.

FILL IN



How do we nurture the Tree of Life?

We do so by offering our love, with our tears of hope and sadness.

We and the tree are bound to each other for some time until we are called to let go.

What is our responsibility to life?

To live well

To do no harm

To love, to care, to help others

To repair what is worn and torn.

Meanwhile, I cling tightly to this tree of life

I embrace and hug it

I give it all my gentle kisses.

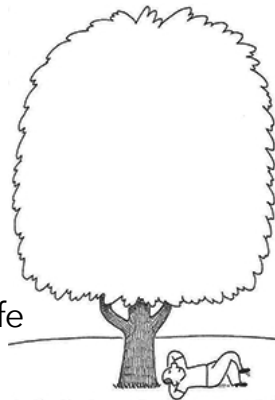
I want to embrace the tree with all my passion

as long as I can, but I know, most unwillingly, that

the time will come when my hands and arms

will weaken as they encircle the trunk and I will need

to let go and rest under its branches.



I beseech Thee, my God:

Do not pry my hands loose from this tree until I am ready to let go.

I ask now whether something of me will live on when I am gone. Will my spirit, my body mix with all other things and be part of the universe? I just want to hold on a little longer! How can I let go? When do you know life is over?



Why I don't want to let go of the Tree of Life:

I want to be with my loving wife and care for her till the end of her time.

I want to see my child lead a fulfilling life.

I still want to create so many new things.

I want to experience more days—they are all so beautiful, even when it rains.

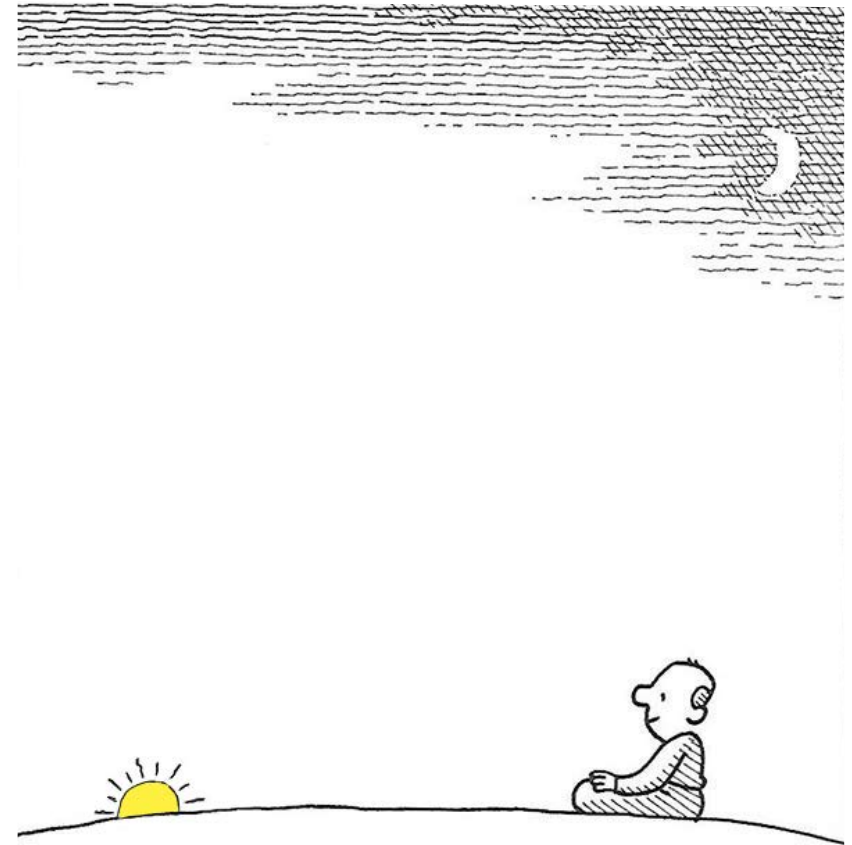
I want to keep my fierce spirit.

I want to experience joy and happiness, even if that means I must also suffer pain and illness and loss because they are also part of life.

I am so afraid of Death and yet, somehow I must
learn to accept humankind's fate, to let go at last.
I am thankful for the time, the so precious time,
which I did have living under the Tree of Life.
Oh, precious tree, I adore you.
I bless my God who has given me life.
Never, not ever, have I taken my time here for granted.
There never is enough time, is there?
I thank God for my life. But why, oh why, does
our time here have to be so short?
I stubbornly, selfishly pray for more days to come.
I come to rest under the tree's branches.
"Let me live. Let me live," I cry.
Let me stay. Shelter me, tree.
Nurture me, tree.
Comfort me, tree.
How does one know when to let go?
For never have I loved life more.
Thank You, my God, for what You have given me.
I say Amen.



—Written in the years 2019-2020



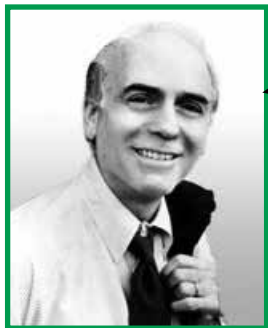
**Here is space for you to write
your own testament to your life:**

TYPE HERE

**Here is space for you to write
your own testament to your life:**

TYPE HERE

[illegible]



May each day provide a new beginning for you. Be reborn!

In his many books as well in his work as a newspaper editor, **Bill Zimmerman** has pioneered innovative writing techniques to help people express all the important things within them. His books and web sites are used in literacy and English Language Learning programs around the world and to encourage creative thinking and expression.

His web sites are:

<http://www.billztreasurechest.com>, which features excerpts from all his books; <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com>, which enables visitors to create their own online comic strips, and <http://www.somethingtowriteabout.com>, a writing-prompts blog for students.

Among his popular books are:

Pocket Doodles for Kids; Pocket Doodles for Young Artists; Make Beliefs: A Gift for Your Imagination; Lunch Box Letters: Writing Notes of Love and Encouragement to Your Children, and How to Create Instant Oral Biographies.

Zimmerman's work has been featured on The Today Show, on the acclaimed PBS Ancestors Series, and in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and such magazines as Family Circle, Esquire, Business Week, Reader's Digest and Essence.



Tom Bloom is an artist who has brought joy to the world with his cartoons and illustrations which have appeared in many publications, such as The New York Times. He has collaborated with Bill on many other books.

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Writing to Find Comfort

A way for elders to reflect on our lives

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