

Book Reviews

Spicer, P. M. (2005). *The therapeutic value of creative writing*. State college, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc. 76pp. \$15.95. ISBN 1-892132-56-7

Reviewed by

Stephen C. Anderson

Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management
University of Florida

The author of this short workbook states the focus is not to develop a skill in writing, but to use writing as a method to express your feelings, hence the therapeutic value of creative writing. He further suggests to keep writing—the more one writes, the more at peace one will feel. His thesis explains how “writing helps maintain the mind, just as exercise maintains the body.” (p. xiv) Therefore, the book is intended to encourage creative self exploration and expression through a series of writing exercises and be used as a vehicle to gain further insight of oneself. The workbook contains 54 examples of writing activities divided into four chapters that focus on finding a theme, developing ideas, expanding those thoughts, and then verifying them. Some of the suggested activities were new and interesting. For example, one suggested writing exercise was to create a newspaper advertisement where you would advertise your own qualities. Aside from the risk of being confused with an exercise in writing for a match making service, this approach seems rather interesting. Another example is the suggestion to write about your next life.

I accept the premise that writing can be of therapeutic value, and therefore believe the book could be used by therapists and others to bring about self exploration and expression. However, I find the greatest potential use for this book as an educational tool. As educators, we are accustomed to the one minute creative writing exercise at the beginning of class and many of us have utilized it. This workbook could be used as a facilitation tool for one minute (and longer) writing exercises, and in so doing, both faculty and students could benefit from it.