

WELCOME TO THE WORDS' WORTH PROJECT

with Melody Richardson

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The vitality of words. They enlighten us, empower us and entertain us. We use words to express ideas, share experiences and bear witness to our past. While there are stellar literary artists among us, the ability to communicate isn't limited to a chosen few. Over the years I've led writers' circles and facilitated workshops for thousands of authors. I know that everyone who can read can write. Everyone.

Writing is a learned skill honed through exercise. The Words' Worth projects I'll share on the Bracebridge Public Library's website are designed to challenge all writers interested in developing their craft. They will change the way you think, create and work. You will be expected to try new genres of writing and incorporate new art forms in your creative process. Why? Because staying with the familiar won't help you grow. You develop your art by moving beyond your comfort zone.

A word to the wise: don't bypass parts of the project. Find the courage to follow all instructions. Some of my suggestions will strike you as childish. That's intentional. Our child within is the gatekeeper to our imagination, our daring and our need to explore new possibilities.

Suffering from writer's block? The Words' Worth Project will help. It's time to break down the barriers to creativity that you've constructed. All that insecurity, procrastination, self-loathing and unproductive staring have got to stop. Whether you're a novice or a published author, the rules of engagement are the same: use it or lose it. In other words, writers write!

So, pick up your pen or power up your laptop. Get ready to write. Right?

WORDS' WORTH FOR JANUARY

What's in a Letter?

Humans have long valued monograms; we display our initials on towels, jewellery and even tattoos. This project uses a letter to lead you to words and on to story ideas.

You'll need: glitter pens, coloured pencils or paints & brushes; stickers, one sheet of construction paper; one sheet of legal-sized paper; writing paper and pen or laptop.

Pick a letter of the alphabet. Draw it on your construction paper. Now glam it up by decorating with pencils or paints. Add stickers if you have them. Remember, this isn't about perfection – it's about creativity. Be bold and go crazy.

Put some thought into this part of the exercise. Draw that same letter in the centre of a legal-sized sheet of paper. Cover the rest of the page with words that begin with that letter. Aim for at least 20 words. Don't stick to nouns; include verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Study them. Pick 10 words that matter to you. Use them in a composition of your choosing.