

### **Marcia Meier's (and some borrowed) Tips for Journaling:**

- When you sit down to write, set a timer (your watch or smartphone) for 20 minutes and don't stop once you start.
- Even if you have nothing in mind to write, just begin with "I remember..." or "I regret..." or "I resent..." or even "I don't know what to write today..." Then let your mind open up and write whatever comes to mind.
- Don't stop to edit; just let it all flow out. Don't take your pen off the paper for the entire 20 minutes.
- If you get to 20 minutes and have time, keep going.
- If you get blocked, use one of these prompts:
  - Write a series of 10 short, three-line poems. Begin each one with a title that you choose from something your eye falls on, i.e. glass, salt, water, light reflecting, the window. Without thinking, write three deft lines in less than three minutes. Then write another. Be economical in words, and make sure you do not repeat the title in the poem. (From Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones*)
  - Write about a time you were in the mountains.
  - Write about a time that involved the color purple.
  - Describe one of your grandparents in detail. Use all the senses – smell, touch, taste, hearing, seeing.
  - Write about someone you really hate.
  - Begin with "I get nostalgic when I think of...."
  - Write about loss.
  - What is your earliest memory?
  - Write about your first car.
  - Write about your son or daughter.
  - Describe your father.
  - Describe your mother.
  - Write about a time when your sibling shunned you.
  - Finish the sentence, "I wish I had known this before...."

### ***Remember Natalie's rules for writing:***

1. Keep your hand moving
2. Lose control. (Don't worry about correctness, grammar or what your mother would think if she read it.)
3. Be specific. (Use cherry red '67 Mustang instead of sports car.)
4. Don't think. Write what first comes to mind.
5. Don't worry about punctuation, spelling or grammar.
6. You are free to write the worst junk in America (or the world, or Santa Barbara)
7. Go for the jugular. If something scary comes up, go deeper into it. Face the fear and let it flow out. Don't avoid painful subjects – that's where the energy lies in writing.

***Now, go write!***