

Writing Together

a year of
meaning-making
and friendship

"Writing Together is a unique dual-memoir that guides readers to pen their own creative journeys. A real gift. It's a beautiful model of the kind of friendship that can make us better people and make the world a better place."

—Parker J. Palmer, author of *Let Your Life Speak*, *A Hidden Wholeness*, and *On the Brink of Everything*

What happens when two unlikely friends—separated by age, gender, profession, and geography—commit to writing together for a year? Penny Williamson—a facilitator and leadership coach—and Darcy Shaw—a veterinary professor—found that our most profound insights emerge when we create a safe, nonjudgmental space to listen—to ourselves and to each other. Using poetry as a catalyst for carefully crafted prompts, they created a process that anyone could use. Ideal for professionals, creatives, friends, and anyone feeling stuck or seeking renewal, *Writing Together* is writing not for publication, but for the most important audience of all—yourself. **Sharpen your pencil, charge your laptop, and prepare for a journey of unexpected discoveries.**

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PENNY WILLIAMSON
DARCY SHAW

WRITING / CREATIVITY / FRIENDSHIP

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hello@creativecouragepress.com

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Penny Williamson, ScD, is an internationally recognized facilitator, educator and coach for leaders in health care and other serving professions. She is retired Associate Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and a founding facilitator and mentor, Center for Courage & Renewal. Her work focuses on living and working with authenticity, courage, and heart. Her other joys include cooking, hiking, reading and travel.

Darcy Shaw, DVM, MVSc, MBA, Diplomate ACVIM, is an award-winning veterinarian and Professor Emeritus of Small Animal Internal Medicine at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada. His work spans clinical medicine to communication skills teaching and leadership development. He sees animals as guides to integrity and wholeness. Darcy's other passions include cooking, cats, cycling, and travel.

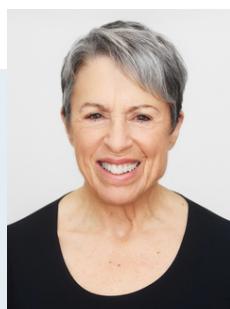
CHAPTER TWO

A Day in Our Writing Process

To give you a more detailed experience of our writing process as well as an example of how we showed up on a certain day, we share the specifics of one writing session that stood out to us as we looked back on the full year. This is what happened to be three months into our year of writing together. It was a particularly memorable one we hope will inspire you, as well as inform.

By this point, we were looking forward to these writing times with anticipation. After some awkward sessions at the start, often needing to remind ourselves of our process and figure out how best to get ready, we had settled into a comfortable pattern and rhythm. We found a flow that worked. It was so much like the steps before retreat, except here we were readying ourselves to show up for writing instead of preparing to welcome a group. We were readying ourselves to be fully present, to welcome each other and whatever the writing brought. In retrospect, it feels like we were doing warm-up exercises and gently stretching our writing muscles.

The questions and writing prompts—those that serve and those that don't; the meaning of full hearts; and encounters



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732 35 6/10 Road, Palisade, Colorado 81526 USA
hello@creativecouragepress.com (970) 812-3224