



BOOK
Write Your Way Home

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When the idea of this book first occurred to me

Eight years ago, I began training as a therapeutic writing facilitator at the Center for Therapeutic Writing. Once accredited, I began giving workshops at my home in Yerushalayim, and later, internationally.


A few years ago, one of my workshop participants mentioned that she wanted to buy a journal with therapeutic writing prompts and couldn't find anything Jewish. "You know, you really should write one," she told me.

That's interesting, I thought. I'd love to do that.

The idea percolated in the back of my mind for a while, and then one day, during a *shivur* by Mrs. Dina Schoonmaker, I was talking to other women about how much wisdom there is in the Torah, and wouldn't it be nice if we could have more of that wisdom presented in self-help books. And suddenly, I decided I was going to do it.

Significance of the title

This book is about using writing as a tool to ourselves, to our *neshamas*, and to Hashem.


In Bloom
The graphic artist who designed the cover didn't know how appropriate it is. In the image, there's a vase of flowers next to the book. In my live classes, I make a point of laying the table nicely, a new setup each week, with flowers a dominating theme in the center of the table.

Advice I'd give my younger writing self

Before I knew about therapeutic writing, I wrote endless poems, essays, and stories, which helped me heal from challenging life experiences. If I could meet my younger self today, I'd tell her, "Keep going! You're doing the right thing. You're letting your writing lead you. Keep at it — it will be a stepping stone to healing and will help you uncover your inner power, your inner essence and glow."

Who this book is for

I've taught therapeutic writing to women from all walks of life and all ranges of observance, from teenagers to octogenarians. The one thing they have in common is their desire to grow and their willingness to put in the effort it takes to do it. This book is for anyone who wants to gain from therapeutic writing, whether they've taken my classes or not.

Many women have told me that they were in therapy for years, but these tools helped them more than therapy did. For those who are currently in therapy, writing exercises are an excellent companion to therapy and can speed up the healing process.

This book is not only for women. Plenty of women have shared the exercises with their husbands, who also found them helpful.


Surprises along the way

I was surprised by how long the process took.

Last summer, I hosted a gathering for workshop members in Eretz Yisrael. I told them about the book I was finishing, and assigned them some of the writing exercises from the book, asking for feedback. I really thought I was almost finished!

Last Eilat, I scheduled fewer classes so that I'd have time to finish the book. I could not have imagined that I'd be working on it for another full year.

By the time I sent the book to print, it was anticlimactic. I'd been saying "I'm going to print next week" for so long that it was boring already.


From Guide to Guide
This isn't actually my first book. When I moved to Eretz Yisrael 22 years ago, I started an annual publication called *The Newcomer's Guide*, a phone directory and information guide for the Anglo community. It eased the transition of Anglos coming to live here. The publication morphed into a business, which I ran for 14 years, before I sold it and trained as a therapist. I see similarities in the books — they're both built in a way that you can open it and find what you need; the first guides the reader technically and my new book guides them emotionally and spiritually.

What I left unwritten

I had been adding more and more to the manuscript, but my editor pointed out that it was becoming far too much to include in a single book. We had to cut a quarter of the material — and we're still left with 368 printed pages.

The story behind the book

The stories of the hundreds of women whom I have gotten to know through my workshops and classes, women who took the plunge, looked at the difficult parts of themselves, and mustered the courage to heal. Their stories were my underlying inspiration, they pushed me to share this incredible healing and growth with the rest of Klal Yisrael.

An author who I wish could mentor me

The *paytanim*, authors of magnificent poetry about Torah, saturated with *ruach hakodesh*. I wish I could also write poetry of kedushah.

What I'd like readers to walk away with

Tools for life. Rabbi Zelig Pliskin *shlita*, who read through the entire book, said that although he found it inspirational to read, the real growth only happens if the writing exercises are done. He compared it to a cookbook. One can read a cookbook and find it relaxing and informative, you can learn how to combine foods and get ideas for cooking, but unless you get up and start cooking, you won't properly benefit from the book.