

## **Introducing—The Temple Sholom Memoir Writing Group**

Moderated by Rabbi David Hartley Mark, MA, M.Phil.

**Meeting on Wed., 1/20, at 4 pm, and all Wednesdays thereafter**

Dear Friends,

Our Wed. 4pm discussion group began with Adult Hebrew for Tourists. We progressed from there to Bible/Tanakh, focusing on the prophet-priest Samuel, King Saul, and his successor, David.

With the New Year 2021 full of hope and expectations, it's time to switch this time slot to Memoir Writing—the greatest drama of your life, with yourself in the main starring role. We hope to cover:

1. Coming of age
2. Poverty, Wealth, or Middle-class?
3. The Importance of Education (or did you go to work at an early age to provide for the family?)
4. The Excitement of Young Adulthood
5. War and Peace: National Service
6. Marriage
7. Parenthood: The Toughest Job We'll Ever Do
8. Friendships Old and New
9. Leadership: in Family or Profession
10. Making Choices: Some Easy, Some Tough
11. Compassion
12. Survival
13. Dealing with loss
14. Self-Esteem

PLEASE NOTE: Your choice of the above is only a suggestion. The group does not wish to probe any confidentialities.

### **Group Guidelines—**

We are here to offer support to one another. We will keep criticism encouraging. If a fellow writer is sharing a tender, sensitive, or tragic moment, we will remember the confidentiality of the group. We do not judge; rather, we offer support to our fellow writer.

We will listen actively, to really hear what the speaker/writer is saying, rather than being lost in our own thoughts about our writing.

We envision in our hour-long session that perhaps three writers will have time to read their selection; there may be more.

For the first session, on Wed., 1/20 at 4pm, please jot down a few notes to answer the following questions, by way of getting acquainted:

Why are you here? For whom are you writing your life stories?

I have heard many times the main excuse why people are reluctant to write down their life's stories: "There's no need to write my stories down. Everyone in the family knows them; I've told them many times."

Believe me, the kids and grandkids don't know all the stories. Besides, you (or your parents and grandparents) are the ones to whom these stories happened. No one can tell them the way you do, and they are a priceless legacy to leave to one's family and friends.

Two final caveats: you do not have to write about your entire life (unless you want to). Begin with the best stories, and take it from there.

Also, this is a Writing Group—not Oral Storytelling. Participants will **not** be permitted to tell stories; they must read from a manuscript, whether typed or handwritten.

Welcome to the Group!

## **BRAINSTORM**

### **Memoirs from Life**

A good memoir will tell a story that reveals something unique about you. Here are some writing prompts to get you started thinking of a good topic for your memoir:

1. One of the happiest times in my life was...

2. One of the saddest times in my life was...
3. I came to the important realization that...
4. I realized that I was no longer a child when...
5. The best birthday present I ever received was...
6. My favorite holiday is...because...
7. My favorite place is...
8. When I was little, I used to...
9. I was proud of myself for...

10. I was ashamed of myself for...
11. I have never been so engrossed in learning as when...
12. I spent time with someone who was much different from me when...
13. A time when I decided to do something differently from everyone else around me was...
14. The person who has had the biggest influence on me is...

15. An experience that challenged me was...
16. One of my biggest successes was...
17. One of my biggest failures was...
18. I realized that I had a talent for...
19. The worst thing that has ever happened to me is...
20. I was in grave danger when...