

## Some Tips for Responding to Workshop Writing

- Respond to the writing with encouragement and respect.
- Identify words, phrases, or passages that you find important, moving, beautiful, interesting, and tell the writer why you like that part of their writing.
- When you learn something from the writing, let the author know.
- Encourage the writer with questions that could help them develop their story: ask them to tell you more about a particular person or place; or ask them to elaborate on a story or event that they refer to in passing, for instance.
- Encourage specific and detailed writing from the person's experience.
- When a writer turns in a vague and abstract piece of writing on something like "friendship" or "the importance of family," ask them to tell a story from their own lives or experience that makes their point. Remind the writers that what they know comes from their own unique experiences.
- Never tell a writer they have written something wrong or made a mistake, or that they have written something the wrong way. When people write from their experience they are the experts; they can't get it wrong.
- The writers' own work contains all you need to develop the craft of writing in the group. Look for tendencies or patterns you find across the participants' writings for the week to discuss some facet of storytelling or creative writing during the next class:
  - If a few writers use similes or metaphors in their stories, you might point that out in discussion. You can do a mini-lesson on those figures of speech.
  - If stories include lists or sequences, vivid details, or perhaps engaging dialogue, you can draw attention to those features.
  - If a story has a compelling opening, you can talk about different ways people start their stories.