

28 DAY

Songwriting Challenge



The
Village
Hymns

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INTRODUCING THE 28 DAY SONGWRITING CHALLENGE

This 28 day challenge is designed to jumpstart a daily writing habit. It's very simple and also very powerful: write 10 minutes for 28 days. Those are the only rules, and you decide how it plays out!

The goal is to create something new every day over the course of the challenge. This is incredibly powerful because, at the end of 28 days, you'll see just how much creative capacity you really do have. You'll see just how much was stirring inside of you that needed to be put to words and music.

When the challenge is over, you'll be amazed to see how much 28 days of writing produces! You will likely create more music this month than you have in a long time, and that alone is a win.

This challenge is designed to break down creative blocks and get you writing. If you need topics to help get you started, skip down to the section called **Writing Prompts** and you'll find some questions and themes to spark ideas.

You'll see your own capability of writing daily whether you feel like it or not. You'll learn a lot about yourself, what you like, what you don't like, and how your songwriting process works. The best part is, you can do this challenge with a friend and share your music with each other along the way. Go find your voice and write some music!

1

YOU ARE A *Creative*

Let's remove the pressure when it comes time to create something new: you were made to be a creative. Every person has the capacity to think in new ways, try new things, explore new combinations, and create something new. When this is fully realized, there's a lightness to the process as you lean into the knowledge that you were made by God to be creative. Creativity is a part of being a healthy and whole human; you are not fully living if you are not alive in your creativity.

IT'S TIME TO BEGIN TO SEE CREATIVITY
AS AN ESSENTIAL EXPRESSION OF YOUR
SOUL.

Your life is filled with experiences, skills, and ways of thinking that only you bring to the table in your unique form. Make it your life's work to take that beautiful creativity and express it in as many avenues as you can. In this 28 day challenge, you'll work on developing the art form of songwriting. Enjoy the next few weeks living into your God-given identity as a creative!

2

YOU ARE AN IMAGE OF THE GREAT ARTIST

The artistic nature of God is incredible. The dazzling intricacies of nature are so apparent; no two leaves are quite the same, as patterns and colors leap out of landscapes to catch your eyes. The endless beauty and variation in the form of animals and people is captivating.

There's something inside of you that leaps up when you see the beauty that He has created. In some way, you were made for it. You were made to enjoy it and to imitate it in your own unique expression.

THE WAYS THAT YOU FIND YOURSELF ECHOING GOD'S DESIGNS ARE ENDLESS.

In fact, He is the one that is the original Creator. You simply take the raw materials that He has made and put them into new forms with your hands. When you create, you reflect who He is. You walk in His footsteps and follow His lead. This is why it's so important for songwriters to become unblocked and to move forward in skill: when you create, you experience the nearness and the presence of God.



3

HOW CAN I OVERCOME A CREATIVE BLOCK?

It's very likely that in your journey as a songwriter you've felt the brick wall of a creative block. There is something before you that you'd like to do, and maybe it's something that you've always wanted to do, but you're stuck. A giant mental obstacle is looming in front of you. It feels too strong to overcome and so you sit, wait, and hope that it will disappear. You tell yourself "I'll wait for inspiration or a better time."

IN REALITY, YOU ARE ALLOWING YOUR EMOTIONS, PAIN, AND FEAR TO HOLD YOU HOSTAGE.

Don't stay locked inside that prison, but remember that the grace of God has set us free to overcome those mental chains. This truth can give us the courage to take baby steps forward toward the thing we are fearing. So, pray for the Holy Spirit to journey with you as you gently write your way through a creative block.

4

Momentum OF CREATIVITY

There is a ripple effect when creativity is exercised. Once you push through the roadblocks and begin to write consistently, you will see creativity flood into the rest of your life. You'll find your mind working more sharply, you'll be able to solve problems more quickly, and good ideas become abundant. You'll look around your home or your environment and see things that need to be repaired or brought to life in a new way.

YOUR LIFE WILL BEGIN TO MOVE WITH CREATIVE ENERGY AND YOU'LL TAKE JOY IN BEING THE ONE TO MOVE IT ALONG.

When you stop viewing creativity as "magically inspired" and begin to see it as a skill that can be cultivated daily, then you'll begin to practice creativity everywhere. Creativity begets more creativity, and pretty soon you'll have the ability to create things in brand new ways. What if you could become more creative and productive than you ever thought possible?

5

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

The first step is always the most difficult. Taking action on anything, especially art related, feels almost painful. There is so much anxiety and fear because there is often some obstacle in the way that needs to be addressed.

However, the pain of not taking action is much worse. The prospect of wasting away, not moving forward with your art, and having tons of untapped potential sitting under the surface becomes unbearable. This “breaking point” is the levy that must be pushed through in order for creativity to flow, and the concrete holding the levy in place is the fear of failing.

LIMITING THE CREATIVE
FORCE IN YOURSELF IS LIKE
PUSHING THE GAS AND THE
BRAKES AT THE SAME TIME.

Once you decide that the cost of not trying is higher than the cost of failing, the fear begins to crumble as you allow the creativity that already exists in you to flow. Expect some failure along the way and see it as a foundation to build on; children walk (and fall) before they run. Accept the fact that for every ten drafts there may be one great idea. Embrace the repetition that it takes to make good art and take a step forward!



6

HOW TO START A SONG

Prolific and award winning songwriter John Mayer has a radio interview where he does a live demonstration of how he starts to write a song. He grabs his guitar and begins to jam a little bit. He said the most important part is to begin putting words to the riff right away, in a stream of consciousness. If not, he says, the whole writing session will simply be a courage-less jam session. There are really just two steps to getting started:

1. GRAB YOUR INSTRUMENT OF CHOICE AND START TO RIFF.
2. BEGIN TO SING WORDS, PHRASES, ANYTHING.

If you're at a loss for ideas, look at your environment and sing about that. Look out the window and sing about what you see. Listen to your soul and put words to what you feel. Don't worry about rhymes, don't worry about how you sound. **Let yourself feel totally crazy and silly, daring yourself to keep doing this for 10 minutes.** It's very important to let go of the mental hurdles at this step. You may feel ridiculous at first, but open yourself up to the creative possibilities of this simple practice. Editing is a necessary part of the songwriting process, but it comes later. It is an enemy at this stage. Do not allow yourself to "pre-edit" before words even come out of your mouth; let them flow, write them down, play wrong notes, and sing weird melodies to enjoy this uninhibited stage of the process. Avoiding mistakes means never starting, so embrace this. If you find it impossible to ignore mistakes, try celebrating them when you notice. You'll be amazed at the little gold mines of melodies and words that you come up with when you let go of judgment.

7

STICK TO A *Central Theme*

The most helpful songwriting tip to get you started is to have one central theme. This is an overall idea of the “one thing” you really want to say. Sometimes when you start you don’t know exactly what you want to say, but it becomes clearer after you start to write. If that’s the case, employ the phrase “simple is better.”

**DON’T TRY TO OVERPACK YOUR THEME;
KEEP IT SIMPLE AND SPECIFIC.**

You can always dive deeper into a theme, but if you spread out too much you run the risk of not really saying anything, or saying too much that it doesn’t pack a punch. It’s really important to keep the central theme, image, idea, verse, or story in the top of your mind as you continue to write. It’s a fun exercise to come up with imagery around that idea. Sometimes journaling out a list of words, rhymes, or key thoughts can help you fill a page with possibilities to choose from as you write.

8

CREATE YOUR SONGWRITING SPACE

It's important to have a designated place where you can regularly write. There's something about being in the same place and associating it with making music that solidifies a habit. It's helpful to say "this is where I like to write," and return there to do your creative work day after day. This is not meant to limit you or put you in a box, but

HAVING A CONSISTENT SPACE CREATES A "FLOW ZONE" FOR YOUR BRAIN.

When you sit in that chair or at that piano bench, it becomes a cue for your creativity to kick in. You don't have to have a perfect studio setup; just find a quiet place where you can be alone to think, sing crazy things, bang loudly on your instrument, and have courage to take risks as you write. As long as you have a designated and consistent place for yourself, you have a perfectly good environment for songwriting. If you're struggling to write on a given day, you can sit on that piano bench and take heart knowing that you have chosen to show up for the process. Resolve yourself to press on with courage in your songwriting space, getting your work out on paper or in a voice memo. That bench is your creative battle ground; that chair is your sacred space.



9

HOW TO FIND YOUR AUTHENTIC VOICE

There is no better song that you can write than the one that flows from your own experience. Even if you want to branch out and write a song that stands in someone else's shoes, there must be a common thread of emotion that's connected to your own personal journey.

TO ATTEMPT TO WRITE SOMETHING
BASED ON WHAT YOU ASSUME OTHERS
FEEL IS NEVER GOING TO BE AS
POWERFUL AS SOMETHING THAT YOU
KNOW TO BE TRUE.

When writing, make sure you come from a place of authenticity and honesty. There are some days when you'll write and realize that you're not bringing your own soul into the process, and that's okay. Step back and reset, writing about what's really on your mind and heart no matter how trivial or "bad" it may seem. Writing about what's authentic to your current experience is a great way to get back on track. You'll find a well of creativity, as words flow out simply because you're giving voice to what is going on right now. Writing about your current state will allow you to unlock a wealth of images, feelings, memories, and rhymes because that is where you're "mentally living" in that moment anyway. Just go with it!

10

SONGWRITING AS A *Habit*

Habits don't always seem significant in the moment, but when they stack up over time, they're powerful. Writing for 10 minutes won't get you a symphony; it may not even get you one complete song. But what it will do day after day is give you hundreds and thousands of songs and creative works. It's amazing to see what the compounding effect of habitual songwriting can do. You'll find that over time your lyrics and melodies become much stronger and ideas flow more rapidly. If you write daily, you will be overwhelmed at the fruit of what you create over time. People often think that creative inspiration comes mysteriously in intense spurts and we often wait around for that feeling in order to write. However,

THE BEST WAY TO ENSURE THAT THESE BURSTS OF INSPIRATION COME MORE FREQUENTLY IS TO RIG THE SYSTEM.

You need to inject creative time into your daily routine. Not only does it make time for writing, but it also provides an avenue to experience life and joy every day when you practice your art. When you sit down to songwrite everyday, chances are you'll have more musical and lyrical ideas on paper than you would if you had waited around for creative feelings. This daily rhythm unlocks your creativity and gives you a chance to use your gift more than you may have otherwise. Not only is it healthy for the soul to write everyday, but it's also wonderful to establish a creative habit; a baseline of joy to return to each day.

11

WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

Where does inspiration come from, and how does it disappear? It seems mysterious, like a force you can't control but desperately depend on. You may often get stuck waiting for inspiration, but if you're honest, you probably don't spend too much time searching for it. What if you could call upon inspiration when you needed it most? What if it was as simple as turning on a faucet when you need water?

You've probably spent most of your creative life waiting for a spontaneous flash of inspiration in order to create anything. It often feels scary to create when you don't feel inspired because there's a deep fear that your uninspired work will be garbage, discouraging you from continuing.

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE
INSPIRATION
CONSISTENTLY, IT MUST BE
PURSUED.

The counterintuitive nature of inspiration is that it needs to be cultivated consistently. If you show up day after day to write for 10 minutes, you will discover that your faucet of ideas will begin to flow more freely. Pablo Picasso said it best: "Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working." Your work is not to make creativity happen; it's to show up consistently and trust that you'll be met with everything you need.



12

CREATIVITY AND COMPETITION

When you are creating something new, you have the opportunity to speak from your soul. No one has lived your experience, and no one ever will. It becomes your superpower when you realize that the only person capable of creating the art you create is **YOU**. You are the only one who can express your history, musical influences, unique imagery, and lyrical style through a song.

IF YOU CREATE SOMETHING IN YOUR OWN VOICE, YOUR WORK WILL BE UNIQUE.

A problem arises when competing with other artists, as it takes your eyes off of your own creative work. You can never beat someone at their own game, so why would you try to copy their unique style? You'll never do it as well as they can. Besides, doing this leaves a vacuum in the world that only you can fill with your unique artistic expression. Don't sell yourself short by competing with others.
"Escape competition through authenticity." - Naval Ravikant

13

Creativity AND SELF-CRITICISM

There is always this pull between creating something that's authentic and creating something that's made for others. The questions of "who will see this?" and "what will they think?" can completely paralyze your mind as you create. This is difficult to manage if your art form is part of your profession. If you're a worship leader, for example, you may often think, "Can this song be sung in church on Sunday?" This skips steps in the songwriting process, as assuming the context for the song can create overwhelming pressure.

WHAT IF WE TOOK OUR SONG SEEDS
AND NURTURED THEM KINDLY WITHOUT
HAVING A PREPLANNED IDEA OF THEIR
"USEFULNESS?"

What if their primary use is to help us put in "songwriting reps", feel our souls, sing out honest thoughts, or connect us to God? When the process of writing becomes just as important as the outcome, your ideas will be free to flow.

14

GETTING OUT OF A RUT

Make it a practice to ask yourself: “Am I getting stuck in a rut? Do I need a new challenge?” This can open up new creative avenues for you. For example, if you’ve been writing songs on piano all of your life, learn guitar and begin writing with it! A change in instrument can open up completely new sounds and musical textures.

Remember to keep chords simple and repetitive as you learn a new instrument, focusing on the lyrics and a unique melody. You get to direct your focus to a new aspect of writing, and before you know it, you’re out of that rut!

AS YOU TRY NEW THINGS
YOU HAVE THE
OPPORTUNITY TO GROW
AND FLEX DIFFERENT
CREATIVE MUSCLES.

Caution: You must guard against the false idea that it is the routine of daily writing that is boring you. A routine is simply the vehicle for your creative expression, so don’t ditch the car on the side of the road when you’re having a hard time seeing the way forward! Instead, look at the substance of your 10 minutes a day writing routine and infuse new life into it. Having a regular practice of “mixing it up” in your creative time will strengthen your skill and enjoyment in writing.



15

DONE IS BETTER THAN PERFECT

In our results-oriented culture, perfectionism is often glorified and presented as a humble brag. However, the truth is that perfectionism is just a mask for fear. We're afraid that others will not like what we have made, we're afraid that our best work is behind us, we're afraid that we'll be discovered as "fraud artists"... the list of fears is infinite. For some reason, we've set the bar so high thinking that songwriting success means platinum albums and we can't even finish a song. Here's a saying that will help you get unstuck: "Done is better than perfect." When you look at all the songs you haven't finished, think about that. It's better to work on something, call it done and move on than to chase the fantasy of one masterpiece that never gets written. In reality, you don't get to that "hit song level" until you write a LOT.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO ONLY PRODUCE A
MASTERPIECE WITHOUT RISKING SOME
BAD SONGS ALONG THE WAY.

After all, who are you writing for? If you write only for the approval of others, that will suck the life out of you. Write for your soul. Write for God. Maybe the song you pushed through and finished was meant to stay in your living room to be enjoyed by you alone. Maybe it was meant to teach you something, or maybe it's meant to be shared. Either way, remember: "done is better than perfect."

16

Celebrate YOUR PROGRESS

Pushing forward on a creative project and completing it can be an incredible feeling, but it can also be tiring. It's so important after a big creative endeavor to take time for celebration and reflection. First of all, give yourself some appreciation for making your idea happen! No matter how insignificant it seems, most great ideas stay locked inside someone's mind, so the effort you took to share your art deserves to be celebrated. Secondly, take time to reflect on the emotional journey and execution of your creative project. How was the process? Was it enjoyable, stressful, or fulfilling? Was the outcome of this project what you expected, or is there a big gap between your imagination and the reality of the project? If so, how can you close that gap for the next time and get better at executing on your idea? Remember,

ALL CREATIVE WORK BRINGS WITH IT AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND MORE ABOUT YOUR ART FORM.

Pro tip: If your completed creative project doesn't produce a sudden, magical feeling of accomplishment, remember that the beauty of art is found throughout the journey. The more art you make, the more you'll learn that the true joy is in the process of creation.

17

SONGWRITING WITH AN ABUNDANCE MINDSET

Another benefit to writing frequently is that stress and anxiety dissolves when you know that every song is not the most important thing you've ever written. The habit of daily writing frees you to write without pressure or judgment.

The moment that you approach a song to be a hit or assign some great value to it is the minute that the song is no longer freely moldable in your hands. However, when you understand that the song you're working on is one of the many songs you'll write over the course of your life, you are able to give the song the breathing room it needs as you write.

WHAT IF YOU BELIEVED
THAT YOU HAD UNLIMITED
SONG IDEAS AND THAT
YOUR BEST CREATIVE
PROJECT IS IN FRONT OF
YOU AT ALL TIMES?

Your songs aren't made from a fixed amount of resources that will run out if you don't "get it right." It's time to abandon that poverty mentality and embrace abundance instead.

18

SONGWRITING IS AN AVENUE FOR PLAY

How often do you think about songwriting as an opportunity to have some fun? The phrase “playing music” actually captures this idea well. Writing lyrics or coming up with a new musical idea on your instrument is an invitation to enjoy the process of making art.

Many times in life people don't allow themselves to take risks, make mistakes, to be silly, or even laugh at themselves. What if you threw all of your conventional ideas of successful music making out the window and just enjoyed writing something totally out of the box? Give it a shot! Doing this on a regular basis will begin to break down your perfectionism, quiet your ego, and dissolve your ideas of how you “should” write.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO REMOVE THE WEIGHT OF WRITING.

Use this time as exploration, imagining yourself heading into a cave with no idea what you will find. See what you pick up along the way, taking note of your observations. Most of all, enjoy your songwriting today! Let yourself have fun with a new genre of lyrics you've never written before, a new chord progression, or even a sampled melodic hook from a catchy song inserted right into the middle of yours. Sometimes you may accidentally stumble onto something that contains a spark of genius. Have fun!

19

CREATIVITY IS *Energy*

Sometimes there is overflowing joy that comes when you're swept away in a creative work. It's as if you know deep in your soul that you are working in the way that you were always meant to. Your nature alligns with a creative task and there is an undeniable synergy. The surge of energy comes and you realize that making creative work is something you were purposed to do.

WHEN YOU EXPRESS CREATIVITY IN THESE MOMENTS, THERE IS A SENSE THAT YOU ARE TAKING YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE WORLD.

This comes with a new force and a renewed sense of life. It is as if the heaviness that marked your soul is now lifted, and stepping back, you see something out in the world that originated from your soul. There's also a sense of accomplishment that comes from overcoming the physical and mental obstacles that held you back. Once those obstacles break down, you gain back the energy that was lost while your creativity was blocked. Now you can enjoy the reinvigoration that comes with embracing judgment-free artistic expression.

20

SONGWRITING IS SOUL CARE

Songwriting is an incredible refuge and a place where we can go in the middle of the chaos. It is an outlet to feel our souls connect to God, grounded in what is real and true while we “talk out our lives.” Somehow putting melodies to our words and being more mindful of lyrical phrases draws our brain and heart together in alignment.

WHEN WE WRITE SONGS,
WE ARE MAKING SENSE OF
OUR OWN EXPERIENCE.

We can often explain our feelings better in lyric and melody than conversation, as music touches into spaces where words may fail. Even in the middle of the mess we can find clarity through writing. There is something so powerful about making meaning out of the difficulties of life by creating music, as it not only taps into authentic expression, but builds a bridge to redemption.

Songs can not only give voice to your journey, but can also connect to another person’s experience through themes of suffering, confusion, joy, worship, and more. When we use songwriting as a tool to get our souls on paper, we find healing both for ourselves and our community.



21

SONGWRITING IS PRAYER

Songwriting is a great avenue for processing life, as it creates a beautiful doorway into real conversation with God. Looking at the Psalms, we see David processing his innermost thoughts through song as he pours out his heart before God. It seems that this is the place that the drama in his life is most deeply felt and expressed. This is the space that he goes to talk with God through his deepest wrestlings, to cry out to Him, and to remember Him.

SONGWRITING IS AN INCREDIBLE GIFT THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US TO ENGAGE WITH HIM AND TO SORT OUT OUR EMOTIONS IN HIS PRESENCE.

He welcomes it and He inspires it. God meets us in our writing, and there is no sweeter gift than to look back and hear your prayer answered by God in time.

22

SONGWRITING IS *Healing*

Taking creative steps can be incredibly healing. When you take action on a creative idea in the middle of your pain, you are communicating to yourself, "Yes, you can get up and make something beautiful." There is such freedom that comes with simply taking creative action.

THE FEAR THAT LOOMS OVER YOU THAT SAYS YOU CAN'T MAKE ANYTHING GOOD IS A PHANTOM WITH AN EMPTY THREAT.

The moment you begin to walk directly toward that phantom, it begins to dissipate. Surround yourself with people who regularly overcome their creative blocks so that you can be encouraged to work on your own obstacles. Ask other songwriters how they push through and create something meaningful to them. This will give you hope and solidarity in the midst of your challenges. When you take a step toward action, you open yourself up to the possibility that you may experience healing through music.

23

SONGWRITING IS A REFUGE

Often songwriting serves as a solace, a refuge from the world around. It's comforting to know we have a direct avenue to experiencing God's presence when we meet Him with our music. As we pour out our hearts to God in song, we realize that He is the strongest refuge that we have from the chaos of life.

In Him all of life is held together and finds its meaning. Meeting God in songwriting means that we bring every part of us forward, our mind (lyrics and structure), our body (physical act of singing and playing), and our hearts (the substance of our prayers and the marriage of lyrics, melody and passion).

IN THESE SACRED TIMES OF WRITING, WE SEE HOW OUR MUSICAL GIFTS ARE SIMPLY AVENUES TO MEET WITH GOD.

They are His grace so that we can come to Him, writing and praying, and receive His grace. The refuge that we long for is God Himself, and as we relate to God through song, we find that His refuge is a strong tower.



24

SONGWRITING IS SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

When you write songs about your life, God, and your internal experience, challenges will always arise.

HOW CAN YOU TRULY SING ABOUT THE GOODNESS OF GOD WHEN YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A SOUL DESERT?

It is healthy to spend your writing time wrestling with what God says is true. It's amazing to see just how much theology can come to life through songwriting and how much Bible study can go into completing lyrics.

David wrote hundreds of Psalms over the course of his life, and his knowledge of the scriptures from a young age helped him write about God and even wrestle with Him. The ancient scriptures he memorized as a young Jewish boy became a rich toolbox of truth and expressions for his soul in times of need. Let this be an encouragement to allow the word of God to sink deeply into your soul. The more that you meditate on it, the more that it will come to life in your heart as you write.

25

SONGWRITING IS *Connection*

The incredibly powerful thing about songs is that they can be shared. They serve as a bridge between the heart of the writer and the heart of the listener, connecting them in a meaningful way. A well-crafted song brings the listener into a shared experience as it puts the human condition to music, resonating in powerful ways.

SONGS CAN BE LIKE NORTH STARS,
POINTING THE LISTENER TO WHAT IS
REAL AND TRUE.

Oftentimes you have no idea how the song that you write will be received by others (and during the creative process it really doesn't serve you to think too much about it). However, once the song is finished and shared, the impact of that song can be surprising. People long to be known and understood, and a song that speaks directly to an authentic experience can be such a powerful tool to understanding themselves and to share their experience with others. Music connects communities in powerful and authentic ways.

26

SONGWRITING IS A TEAM BUILDER

Songwriting can be a powerful tool for team building and connection. When your worship team gets together to talk, share what's on their hearts, and communicate the heart of their Church through song, it knits everyone together. As the team puts words to the work that God is doing in them and in the church,

THERE IS UNITY IN
CONNECTING DEEPLY
THROUGH CREATIVE
EXPRESSION.

When co-writing, it is crucial to listen and honor the others in the room with you, valuing each writers' contributions. This is essential to a healthy songwriting team. There's also something so unique about creating together as a team. Once the song is played between team members, there's a spark that ignites and a common satisfaction in what has been created. If sharing the song with the Church is an option, it can be powerful to see the song that you made together take shape and reach other people. When a song born out of the Church is played for the Church, the whole team can be proud to be a part of that experience.



27

SONGWRITING IS YOUR MUSICAL JOURNAL

Songs serve as monuments and pillars of thought set in time and space. They can mark seasons, struggles, joys, and are able to convey thoughts and feelings in powerful ways. The wonderful thing about songwriting is that it is a practice that can be continued through any season.

YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG OR TOO OLD
TO WRITE A SONG.

Journals are spaces where messy thoughts and feelings come together on a page into definable words and sentences. As writing takes the mental mess that exists and sorts it into a more tangible reality, songwriting can serve this same purpose. Much like a journal entry that contains a date, a song has a time stamp in history as it chronicles thoughts and feelings.

Imagine in five years looking back on the song that you wrote today? Surely you would remember what stage of life you were in, what you were going through, and what you were feeling. Listening back to your song during a difficult time in life is almost like your past self is reminding your present self of the truth. It's incredible to have songs pave the journey of your life, grounding you while serving as a gift to others. Consider your daily songwriting habit as little melodic journal entries and enjoy chronicling your life as it takes its course.

28

SONGWRITING IS A *Lifelong Journey*

The beautiful thing about songwriting is that there is no expiration date. There's no reason why songs written at 80 years old won't be better, richer, with fuller depth and beautiful melodies. Creating a 50 year vision for you and your creativity will put everything into perspective. What would your life look like if you simply wrote for 10 minutes a day for the next 50 years? How many journals full of lyrics and melodies would you store up to tell the story of your life and legacy?

CULTIVATING A SONGWRITING HABIT NOW WILL BE A GATEWAY TO A RICH, CREATIVE LIFE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME.

What if you released the pressure, saying to yourself: "I have 50 years to get this right?" Your musical gifts, passions, and creativity are yours to enjoy until your dying breath. Commit now to keeping the creative flame alive through all seasons of your life. Remove creative blocks by cultivating a songwriting habit of 10 minutes a day, living into your identity as a creative, and connecting deeply with yourself and God. If you write from now until you're 80, you will not only improve your skill tremendously and write some incredible songs, but you will also have the quiet joy of knowing that you've been a songwriter for decades and that your life has always been full of music.

SONGWRITING PROMPTS

8 YEARS OLD



Write something today that describes who you were at age 8. What did you love to do? What was your favorite food? How did you feel about your life? What did you think about your future? Put yourself back in the shoes of you as a child and see what melodies and lyrics arise.

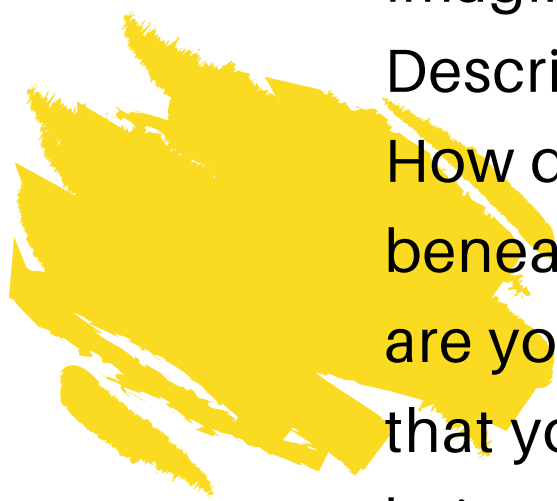
80 YEARS OLD

Put yourself in the shoes of 80-year-old you. What are you grateful for as you look back at your life? What are the moments that mattered the most to you? How did God weave His story of grace in your life? What matters most to you now? Take a few moments to fast forward to the "you" that exists at the end of your days.



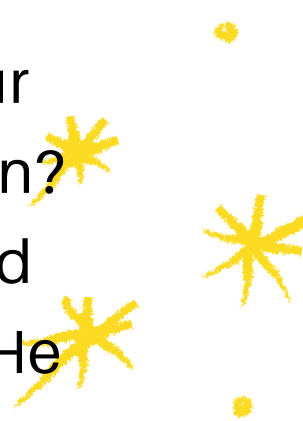
FAVORITE PLACE

Imagine yourself in your favorite place on earth. Describe the scenery around you. How do you feel? How does the air smell? How does the ground feel beneath your feet? Are you hot or cold? What continent are you on? Who is there with you? What is the song that you are singing in this place? Is there a melody or lyrics that begin to flow that you can capture in the next 10 minutes?



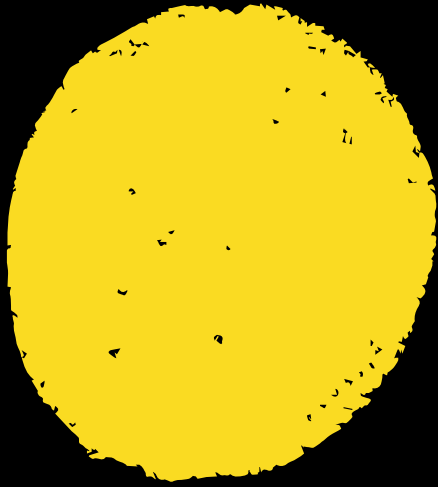
GOD'S CHARACTER

What is your favorite aspect of God's character right now? What does that mean to you in the midst of your life? Does this aspect of God speak to you in your pain? Does this characteristic of God call forth gratitude and joy? Write a song to God and tell Him honestly what He means to you right now. This is how David wrote such honest and powerful Psalms. Spend 10 minutes writing a psalm of your own.



SONGWRITING PROMPTS

ANTHEM



What is your anthem? If you had to write a “pep talk” to yourself right now, what would it be? What truth do you constantly need to be reminded of? What are the themes in your life that keep surfacing? Creating a song, a personal anthem, can be a powerful tool because that song can pop up in your head throughout your day. You’ll be able to call upon this melody in a moment of weakness and be reminded of what you know to be true and real. Take 10 minutes and write your anthem!

CHRISTMAS SONG

Think about your favorite things about Christmas: the lights, the tree, the food, the family, the music, and whatever else comes to mind. Draw upon your senses to create a Christmas scene. Put into words what Christmas means to you. Is it beautiful, messy, stressful, or joyful? Express Christmas through your eyes and experience. Take 10 minutes to walk through a Christmas-y scene in your head and capture what you hear.



FIRST SONG



Think back to your first time trying to write a song and put yourself in those shoes. What did you feel when you wrote down your first lyrics or sung your first melody? What would you say to yourself about your journey as a songwriter? If you are a brand new writer, what would you want to say to your future writer self? Take 10 minutes to write about your songwriting journey.



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