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Cover Art: “Bear,” by Kelly Terrell

Artist’s statement: I am a graduating student of the MMDP program. “Bear” is an intaglio print made from one of my wildlife drawings.

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Becoming an Artist
Diana Korpi

I'm a student currently enrolled in the Engineering Graphics program. My love of art has influenced many aspects of my life, such as my career choice, how I see the world around me, and how I spend my free time. Art will always be an important part of my life.

I don't remember exactly how old I was, maybe eleven or twelve. I just remember seeing my sister Mary, who is eight years older than I, with a pencil and sketch pad in hand, drawing one of my mom's dining room chairs. I was amazed by her ability to recreate the image on paper. She drew pictures of all kinds of thing around the house: people, vases with flowers, and a chest of drawers. I was in awe of her abilities. I would pore over her sketchbooks, studying every one of her beautiful pencil drawings. I wanted to be able to draw just like her. I decided at around this time that I was going to become an artist.

I had no idea that Mary would be an obstacle to my achieving this dream. She said things like "I'm so talented! Not just anybody can draw". She made me question my own abilities. Mary has a very competitive nature and I was worried that art might become a competition between us, so I delayed pursuing my goal.
The years passed by. I graduated from grade school, high school, went to work at Boeing, and got married. However, I still hadn't taken one step toward becoming an accomplished artist. After repeatedly hearing that little voice in my head saying "you need to learn to draw," I finally did, but with a paint brush, not a pencil. It was a total disaster - oil paint everywhere, on my face, on my fingers, and on my shirt sleeves. Was Mary right? I could hear her voice inside my head, "I'm so talented! Not just anybody can draw". After my failed attempt, I decided that I should learn to draw first, before picking up the paintbrush. I enrolled in a drawing class at The Kirkland Art Center. Over the years that followed, I took numerous drawing and oil painting classes, but I never felt truly happy about my work. Had failure taken root in my mind? I needed to come to terms with my sister’s competitiveness since it was playing a major role in my attitude and keeping me from becoming a well-balanced and happy artist. I became determined to find a way to fix this problem. Thus, I decided that whenever possible, I would help her with her art. If I had extra art supplies, I’d offer them to her. And most importantly, I would praise her. As I developed this strategy I continued to pursue my art education.

I knew my strategy was succeeding when, my sister Mary told me about a Charles Bargue drawing course her instructor was having her class do. The course consists of a set of highly complex drawings, used in the Atelier
Studios in Europe in the 1800's. They were developed by Charles Bargue (c. 1826/1827 – April 6, 1883) a French painter and lithographer. I took one look at them and thought "no way will I ever be able to do those". Mary offered to make me copies of the plate drawings and told me the steps I needed to follow. I told her how grateful I was for the copies and for her instructions. Later. I learned that Vincent Van Gogh had used Bargue drawings to assist him with his drawing. I loved the idea that Vincent had looked at and copied the very same drawings.

Finally, my art education is starting to take shape. I've completed several of the Bargue drawings, I continue to take art classes, I'm learning everything I can about the masters' personal lives, and I'm also visiting art museums. At the museums, I can get up close and observe the artists brush strokes and how they blended their colors. It's fun to get them into my head. I'm especially inspired by the impressionist painters, such as Van Gogh, Matisse, and Monet. Viewing what the masters and other successful artists have accomplished remains a great source of inspiration for me. I've begun to develop a true love of art. Now, my eyes have been opened to the beauty of nature; I see its shapes, colors, atmosphere and light more vividly. As often as possible, I go to my easel and throw some paint down or I grab my sketchpad and draw.
Whenever I get together with my sister Mary, she is totally supportive of my work. We can spend hours talking about our art, encouraging each other. These are some of the happiest times I've spent with my sister. I'm now on my way to becoming an accomplished artist.

Art by Diana Korpi (Copied from: Plate 1, 41. The Capitoline Ariadne from the Bargue-Gérôme Drawing Course)
Mixed Marks
R. Houser

This is a screen print on top of a collagraph I made in Jason Sobottka's printmaking class. The collagraph process is very new to me and very intriguing. I consider myself a multi-medial/mixed-media artist, so it was only natural that I printed something else over the top of it. I just wanna see what stuff looks like together.
Ascension
Sabrina Bradley

"Ascension" was written as a narrative essay for an English class, but treated as an outlet in dealing with tragedy and loss. In writing this essay, I have come much closer to being at peace in losing my life long hero, my Grandmother. I am driven to still make her proud in the afterlife. Every word that I write will always be for her.

I dedicate this to her with all of my heart, energy, and soul.

I hope to always be your shining star, Grandma.

Swede Heaven has always been my favorite place. It was my Grandparent’s retirement property on a quiet back-country road, nestled under White Horse Mountain, on the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River. It was their favorite place too. I visited my Grandmother often there after my Grandfather’s passing to make sure she had a kept house and decent meals, and wouldn’t be too lonely. She enjoyed it though, the quiet. She wasn’t able to drive herself anywhere, so she had a lot of help from the locals, her friends from the Senior Center, and the family. My wife and I planned a visit to her on the next Saturday, but Grandma decided she would rather come down and see the family—something I always welcomed. This time it would turn out to be more than a blessing, but a complete change to the lives of everyone Grandma loved. Her favorite
place, my favorite place, would be the place we wouldn’t be able to go to for some time.

The morning of March 22, 2014 was like the beginning to any other Saturday. The city of Oso, just south of Heaven was still sleepy and quiet. Little was happening and the residents were only beginning their day. A cable repair man working on the roof of his house. A couple planning their wedding to happen in the next few weeks. A little girl’s slumber party waking up. A mom making her son pancakes. The ground began shaking at 10:33am. The rumble was getting louder and harder, shaking the houses, getting closer, gaining momentum, screaming. It was upon them now. At 10:37am, the trees, rocks, and debris crushed them without warning. Now there was just quiet… now there was only darkness. No way in and no way out. No way of going home. Heaven was now unreachable.

The news reached Grandma almost instantly. The reaction of my Grandmother is not one I would ever wish upon anyone. I could hear her heartbreak wondering about friends lost and their families. I could see the fear of her not knowing where she would go and whether she would ever make it back to Heaven. I was lucky Grandma was with me and not at home when this event happened, because it would have been impossible to get to her. If she had an emergency no responder could get to her, nobody
would be able to. The time it would take to clean up the landslide was indefinite. She had no place to go.

Without hesitation I asked Grandma if she would want to move in with my wife and me. The idea thrilled the family because this was their way out of not having to take on the responsibility of a senior. I basked in this idea. I had my Grandmother every day to be with... I considered this an honor. She meant everything to me and I wanted to return my love to her the way she gave it to me my entire life. I wanted her to be cared for, looked after, and protected. We fell into a routine easily, just as I had planned. I only asked Grandma to do what she enjoyed while living with me and not to worry about anything else. I would do the cooking, cleaning, laundry and she would go out and garden, fill her bird feeders, or just lounge in her sleeper chair with her dog in her lap. She would gaze out into her garden, watch her birds, admire her tomatoes. But as much as I knew she appreciated all the beauty outside that window, it still wasn’t Heaven.

As time passed I noticed Grandma was getting more and more tired. Keeping her awake for more than a couple of hours at a time became a chore, so I let her sleep. Her color got a little duller and she remained tired. I took her to the doctor, who ordered a battery of tests to see what was happening with Grandma and if it would be something that could be taken
care of. She had the answer within a week. A blockage in her heart, cutting the oxygen off to her brain, my worst nightmare. The family decided—surgery.

I knew surgery was a horrible idea, but I couldn’t get the words out to protest what had already been declared to happen. I was her granddaughter and caretaker. How did I not say anything? I wanted to take her home, to Heaven. I wanted her to live out her days where she loved to be. She needed the river, the mountain, the beauty, her peace. I surrendered any opinion and went along with the family and prayed the best would turn out. Even though I knew praying wasn’t going to work, I had to hope for the best and I did. Grandma came out of surgery and I was delighted to see she looked surprisingly well. She had some pink back in her skin and seemingly felt better. She responded to everything the nurses and doctors asked of her and she understood fully what she had just been through. Then, I watched it happen—the stroke.

The right side of Grandma’s face became lazy suddenly as her speech became slurred. I told the nurse immediately and a “Code Stroke” was called. The room flooded with doctors and nurses and became a scene of urgency. I could only do one thing. I kissed my Grandma as they took her away. Thinking it would be the last time I saw her, I collapsed in disbelief.
This couldn’t be happening. Why didn’t I say anything? Why didn’t I fight harder for her? Why didn’t I take her back to Heaven?

Grandma was returned to her room sometime later that day. She was lucid, but I could tell she was different. The doctors showed me her brain scan image and I saw what they call an Embolic Stroke. This is one large stroke that exploded into hundreds of tiny little strokes. Looking at her brain scan was like looking at a starry night sky—beautiful, but dangerously mysterious and unpredictable. That moment was when I knew, this was the beginning of the end.

I spent every day with Grandma during her rehabilitation at the recovery center. Each day was different as I watched my Grandmother deteriorate in her hospital bed, miserable, wanting to go home. She kept asking to go home to Heaven. I fought hard with the family in wanting to take her back so she could live out her final days at her favorite place. My favorite place. She ended up in hospice. I remember walking into her room on my birthday and not even recognizing the woman in front of me anymore. She writhed in pain and could only moan and grunt by this time. There was nothing I could do to help her anymore. The only thing left for the family to do was wait for her to leave, for her to begin her ascension. I was the last one to be with her. I stayed with her all night and slept with her in her bed.
until early in the morning. Grandma was still breathing, her body was working, but she wasn’t there anymore. I was looking at the capsule that used to hold the woman I loved most in this world. I couldn’t stand the pain anymore and knew that she would not leave me had I stayed. I kissed the top of her head and said to her, “It’s okay to go home now. Everyone is waiting for you. Don’t be scared. I love you so much and will see you again soon.” I left after that. I received the phone call from hospice an hour later—Grandma had passed.

The following week, I received Grandma’s remains, which I held onto, along with my Grandfather’s remains, until it was time to take them back to their favorite place. August 12, 2015 was the last time I would drive my Grandparents home to Swede Heaven. We traveled together down that quiet back-country road, nestled under White Horse Mountain, on the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River. They were delivered home together, under their mountain, into their river, among all that beauty, where they were most at peace. Back home where she always wanted to be—Heaven.
Holding On
Winston Eken

I created this piece with graphite and watered down acrylics in my Human Life Drawing class.
Red Water
Shantha Pathak

Shantha Pathak is currently a full time mom and an aspiring writer. She is a Washington State licensed early childhood professional who ran her school for 7 years in Kirkland area. She has a MS in molecular biology and worked as a researcher at University of Washington at the School of Public Health. Currently, a student of Lake Washington Institute of Technology and the author of “Red Water” and “An Attempt to Write.”

One hot and arid February night just a couple of weeks before my exams, I woke up and I was restless. Something was telling me life was soon going to change dramatically. I experienced a rush of anxiety and extremely depressing negative thoughts flowing through my brain. It was very unusual. Generally, I am optimistic. So, I went to the dark corner of the house where pictures of Goddess Durga were kept. I was not particularly religious; nevertheless, I prayed. Surprisingly, that night I prayed to Maa Durga\(^1\) for strength. Thought of Baba was in the back of my mind. After the short prayer, I was anxious to find out how Baba\(^2\) was doing so I called the hospital to find out. The doctor who picked up the phone was quite annoyed. With an unusually rude voice, he asked “Who are you?” “I am his daughter”, I quietly answered. His voice mellowed

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\(^1\) Maa Durga: a deity of the Bengalis

\(^2\) Baba: a term used to mention father in Bengalis.
down. With melancholy in his voice he replied” He is dying.” Then he paused and gasped... and said, “I am sorry ... he just took his last breath.”

No one knew about my Baba’s demise at this point. Even my little sister, Sumi, who stood beside me tried to gauge what had happened. I did not want to shock her. “Let’s go the hospital,” I told her. I was very attached to Baba, so I wondered why tears hadn’t rolled down my cheeks. I was lacking emotion.

In the hospital, I saw Maa³, who was outside the emergency room and was still praying with her rudraksha mala⁴ for my baba’s recovery. She had been just informed but refused to believe it.

She wanted me to check if Baba was still breathing. Ranjini, the nurse who was taking care of Baba, had finished her duty and was in a hurry to go back home. I didn’t want to hold her back.

Maybe her kids were waiting for her come and make breakfast for them. What an awful night! Was it just a dream? Usually I am faint-hearted and

³ Maa: a term used to mention mother in Bengali

⁴ Rudraksha mala: a kind of beads used in Hindu prayers.
docile by nature. I couldn’t believe my composure about what I wanted to do. Several people gave me random advice, but I was clear about what I should be doing. I almost felt surreal as if someone else was in my place.

My family hails from the north where a few great rivers originate from the icy glaciers of the Himalayas. The water was beautiful, clean and translucent as it could be. People had fresh drinking water and abundant supply of freshwater fish. We were a simple, middle-class family of five with my Baba, Maa, my sister Sumi, I and my Dadu. Baba an engineer, worked for the government. Top government officials were provided with housing and other amenities wherever they were posted. We were posted in the south in a particular drought-stricken town. So access to abundant drinking water in the government housing was a privilege in an area usually plagued by drought. Maa was a god fearing woman, who offered fruits and sweet smelling flowers to Maa Durga every day. She used to work as a school teacher, but after she got married she quit her job and she remained as a homemaker.

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5 Dadu: a term used to mention in Bengali.
I was an overprotected child of my parents. I went to the nearby local school. I was very curious, and so I often spent my time after school investigating bugs and animals around our home. I watched them endlessly and wrote about my research finding in my little notebook. I loved to help Maa with her chores. I was the ‘official babysitter’ and I was responsible for taking care of my little sister. Baba was a busy official, so he did not have time for chores other than going to the Sunday bazaar. I always accompanied him. He loved my company at the bazaar, and I enjoyed going with him. He was good at picking the right produce and he taught me the art of grocery shopping. I was a little girl who was often timid and amenable. In my early years I got bullied because of my timidity others often took advantage of me. Baba was the backbone not only for us but for the entire extended family.

Baba’s demise was on the front page of the local newspaper. He was like a celebrity in the town. Everybody liked my father, and our family becomes the talk of the town. I wanted to perform the last rituals for my dad, but Indian girls were not usually allowed to go to the cremation grounds. I did not believe in superstitions and now I became rebellious, so I went to the cremation grounds nevertheless. At the cremation grounds, I managed to

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6 Bazaar: a term used for Market in Bengali
do the last rituals. Soon, I saw my dad’s body covered with sandal wood. The Hindu pundit\footnote{Pundit: a Hindu scholar learned in Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy and religion, typically also a practicing priest.} loudly chanted the Sanskrit\footnote{Sanskrit: A sacred language of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. Sanskrit continues to be widely used as a ceremonial language in Hindu rituals and Buddhists in form of hymns and chants.} mantras\footnote{Mantras: it is sacred utterance, a numinous sound, a syllable, a word or phonemes or group of words in Sanskrit believed by practitioners to have psychological and spiritual powers.} effortlessly. In no time, plethora of flames turned my dad’s humble body into ashes.

“He was good soul and he will go to Moksha,”\footnote{Moksha: Sanskrit word used for the heaven emancipation, celebration or release.} the pundit reassured me. After that, when we were going to wash my Baba's ashes in the river banks, a ritual often followed by Hindus, I noticed that the town’s often-dry basin flooded with tides of water. It came as a surprise to the people of the town since that dry river had never flooded in the last two decades.

Earlier, as I had gone to cremation grounds, I had noticed the streets of the small town where we lived, were flooded with people. Waves of people showed up, trying to catch a glimpse of my Baba’s body. Most of them
had gotten beautiful garlands to pay homage to my Dad and had spent the evening talking about him.

One of his secretaries said that Baba had motivated her to pursue her career and to achieve something bigger than she had ever imagined. Another lady said how he had helped her find a job when her husband died. For the next few days, people endlessly praised my dad. Everybody said he was witty, and intelligent and talented. Some others said he was a fine officer of the highest caliber. But after a few weeks the talks about my Baba had died down and things began to change as everybody become busy with their own lives. Before our tears could dry out, the water in the river trickled into shallow stream and then dried out.

After that, our lives became very different from what I had experienced. My family wanted me to get married and move on with my life. But, marriage was not my priority anymore. At that time, I had a dual responsibility taking care of my sister and my mom. Since my father had died, we found it extremely hard to live in that small town. Our memories of the past choked us. I thought it would be a good idea to move out the town and go to the nearby bigger city where my sister and I could pursue
higher education. I also hoped it would provide my mom better job prospects and help us forget the past and move on with our lives.

Months later when we were all studying and trying to decide to on the right career move, we remembered our childhood days when our house was flooded with people. Often in the evening, when my dad came back from office, we had lots of unexpected visitors who came to our house. Baba would have his usual cup of tea and answer a series of questions. Or sometimes he would ask a series of questions to a confused teenager, trying to help him choose a career.

There were few others who came to him to seek help to prepare for competitive exams. He was good at solving problems, everyone remarked. Now in the new reality, we realized we had no one to help us or provide career advice. In the ocean of darkness our favorite guiding lighthouse was no more. We had to find our own path.

Later, no one talked to us, including friends and family. It seemed like people pretended as if they didn’t know us. People probably thought they would be held responsible for us. Years before, when Baba was around, the phone rang nonstop to the point that I hated it and felt like getting rid of it. Someone would call my dad on his phone to ask for a piece of advice, or an office colleague would call and discuss the nation’s political situation.
Baba would patiently listen and answer questions. He occasionally had no time to eat. “Baba spends precious family time trying to solve others problems,” I told Maa. She quickly replied, “One should always help others.” She immediately lectured about “good karma.”

Now, ironically, the phone remained silent. I felt like we were in the deep ocean, not knowing how to swim. As a child, I was always scared of failure and Baba often reassured me. At times when everybody was upset, now I had the role of motivating my family. I asked them not to dwell on the past and move on, and I often reassured them he is around and watching over us. I told them we must remain determined and prove to the world we can do it. We were like birds with broken wings. Those wings needed to heal and also needed willpower and determination to attain great heights.

One day I had a terrible headache and I came home from college, hoping to catch a nap before the usual evening chores began. The house didn’t have a single tap, and therefore there was no running water. Every day we had to acquire water from the nearby rusty, antique tube-well. The city was hot and drought stricken. We had to pump water from this wobbly tube well. Absolutely stunning bloody red water trickled through
that old tube-well. Soon gushing red water came out. It was un-consumable, mixed with soil and other contaminants. We had to go through the usual process of boiling the red water and then using traditional filtering techniques before we could consume it. We often used alum to settle the sediments down. We couldn’t afford to install a fancy filtering system or buy clean drinking water. No one at that time was receiving a paycheck. We had to live frugally out of our savings. Life was insanely difficult and hope was our only best friend.

My grandfather, who was 91 years old, usually opened the door with a sigh of relief when the bell rang. He had loved my dad and had been
depressed since my Baba's demise. That day I rang the bell, my grandfather was nowhere to be seen. He was usually bored during the day, and he often pleaded with us to stay home. There were only two keys for the lock. One was with the house owner, and the other was given to us. The lock was very old, heavy and rusty. My grandfather had been excited to see the lock when the owner of the house handed over the house for rent. My grandfather had said, “This is a real lock. It is made of iron and hard to break in.”

Our family had only one key and usually it was with my grandfather. He kept it on his bedside table. Every day he loved to go to the park to meet other senior folks and practice yoga. I saw a small window on the side of the house open and I tried to peek through it. I noticed the key lying on the floor under his bed. Now, I thought, he was probably inside somewhere. Surprisingly, he did not answer my call. I wondered if he was dead or if he had lost his hearing.

I tried to break the lock. No duplicate keys could be made. The house owner, who had the other key, lived in another city. It would take days before we would get it. Soon my mom and sister came back. We attempted once again to break the lock. It was an old house, very sturdy depressing, and dark. I noticed my neighbor coming back from work. After much
deliberation, I decided to try my luck to see if he could help us out break the lock or help me find a locksmith. To my astonishment, he said,” I have spare key.”

Life moved on with its treacherous twists and turns, and then our determination paid off. Finally, success was at our doorstep. Years later, I graduated out with flying colors and found a good job. Sumi got good grades and graduated. Subsequently, she found a prestigious job with a good salary. My mom too went through the usual grind of re-training herself and competing with fresh college graduates and secured a job for herself. Amazed by our success friends and extended family once again wanted to reconnect with us. Now, the tables turned. Once again, they came to us to seek help and advice. As I pen my thoughts I realized how history repeated itself once again.

Today, I live in my dream house. It has a few taps, and water flows incessantly, as clear as crystal. My son, unaware of worldly issues, likes to sit in the bathtub full of water and relax after a tiring workout. But I find it difficult to use so much water to bathe oneself. I ask him to save water and use the shower instead. My old memories haunt me. I still remember water as red and un-consumable.
An Attempt to Write
Shantha Pathak

*Shantha Pathak is currently a full time mom and an aspiring writer. She is a Washington State licensed early childhood professional who ran her school for 7 years in Kirkland area. She has a MS in molecular biology and worked as a researcher at University of Washington at the School of Public Health. Currently, a student of Lake Washington Institute of Technology and the author of “Red Water” and “An Attempt to Write.”*

An attempt to write is a process, to write effectively through a self-discovered process. It is effective when writing doesn’t come naturally. For a non-native English speaker, the ability to translate ideas is no child's play. By systematically taking baby steps, it is achievable. I can associate it with my very own experience when I got enrolled in a college level English class. Given a personal narrative as an assignment, I struggled to write. Eventually, in the process of writing the essay “Red Water,” a family history portrayal, and currently as I am working on this very essay, I have discovered the technique that works for me.

1. Brainstorming - a chaotic affair

For some, creating ideas could involve reading a book, watching a movie, listening to music, taking a stroll in park or writing few keywords.
When I was brainstorming for this essay, I wrote verse, and then changed it to prose, and finally incorporated some verse into my prose. So do whatever brings magic to one’s writing.

My writing process in a verse:

_I try to pen my words word by word,_
_my train of thoughts with utmost care…_
_I carry a notepad everywhere…_
_In house of knowledge the creative juices flow with…_
_great speed that I hardly bear to keep up with …_

_With jumbled words…_
_I scribble my pad…_
_I read, I read, I add more and more…_
_Till my creative juices pour…_
_I never think of it as a chore…_

_I add characters and vocabularies…_
_As I look up in my dictionaries…_
_I find a perfect spot for my plot…_
_I find a suitable topic which is more aptic…_
_I write it down; I break it down…_
I type it up; I jumble it up…

Every now and then I add to it, I edit it…

I improve it.

I look for structure, I look for humor…

I look at it as a magical chapter…

Every word I try to nibble…

I add a riddle…

I add passion; I add emotion…

I blend a little…

Like a fine fiddle, meddle a little…

As I think of it as a masterpiece - I pull out my piece…

It gives me immense pleasure to read my own piece…

I chatter, I shriek, I whisper in an empty room…

Till I clean all the errors with a broom…

For the pleasure of writing is too good…

I don’t want to leave it for good.

Irrespective of one’s occupation, the ability to write well is a powerful skill anyone can acquire. For a non-native speaker, competence in writing involves cultivating the habit of writing meticulously. Occasionally, as a
child I wrote small verses and small stories but did not try to intentionally practice it. Now, I often remind my children to practice the art of writing.

First and foremost, the ideas are written on one’s notepad without much thought process. During this phase it might sound quite chaotic. Sometimes there could be nonstop flow of ideas; while at times there may be no flow of ideas, making one feel desperate. Due to lack of creative ideas, I derived inspiration by reading essays from my English textbook, 75 Readings. Initially just noting few jumbled keywords helped.

The other day my 10-year-old came back home with no mood for a writing assignment. I asked him to write a few keywords on paper. In no time he had flow of ideas. Before we knew, his assignment was ready and good to go.

Carry a notepad everywhere, for one never knows when they would get the urge to write. Recently, as I was driving down the street I had an outpour of ideas, so I pulled over and wrote whatever came to my mind. I even put my notepad and pen under my pillow, and I get up in the middle of night and write a few lines or verses whatever comes to my mind. Generating a plethora of material is the preliminary step to one’s writing. At this stage it might sound more like a scribble or babble or even a
rumble. There is no need to worry about grammar and spelling because often they can be outsourced to the computer. It’s enough to simply pen one’s thoughts with a humble pen.

2. Revision - bringing structure and clarity

The next step is bringing clarity to the rudimentary writing. With outpour of ideas, articulating them into a useful piece of writing could be a totally different ball game. With my “Red Water” essay, initially I felt it lacked a structure and direction. To bring clarity, I wrote keywords and made flow-charts for myself. This technique helped me to steer the essay in the right direction. Starting with an introduction, characters and conclusion was essential at that stage. I developed characters by adding attributes over days and weeks and then building it little by little over time.

Reading and reflecting on one’s initial drafts can make them refined. For non-native writers, writing in another language is often much harder. Nevertheless, it is feasible to be a competent writer if one is ready to pitch in the necessary effort. In one of the peer reviews that we had in class I heard from another non-native English speaker that she wrote down all the ideas in her mother tongue and then translated them. Whatever style works for one, to write without interruptions is all that matters.
Through editing and proof-reading, ideas become clearer and take shape. From the chaos emerge clusters. In molecules in the atmosphere, chemical reactions take place to create clusters, and multiple clusters together form molecules that combine together to form a substance of significance. In the same way, one’s writing can be looked upon as a set of keywords which forms sentences and then cluster together to form paragraphs, which subsequently join together to form a rudimentary essay.

It is essential to sketch the plan of the essay. Some authors have the uncanny ability to pick the right word or a phrase as they draft, while it can a treacherous task for others. Dictionaries often help one plant words in the right spots, and appropriate vocabulary makes it interesting to read. Frequently, rearranging the words cause greater impact. For the “Red Water” essay I wrote earlier, I followed this process. During the exercise, I was excited to discover the term “atychiphobic,” which means “fear of failure.” I incorporated this word into my writing, but then during revisions I felt a simpler word sounded much better so I soon reverted back.

Once the paragraphs take the shape, blending into one cohesive piece can be quite challenging. Smooth transitions and with detailed descriptions is the key to an irresistible literary piece. Dribbling a little wit and humor
can add contrast to the content. Think of fun and pun --as double fun. Metaphors can make a passage memorable. Adding emotions will add essence to one’s writing. I often sprinkle my writing with verse:

As I write I bring my fears
I bring tears
As I think of history
I think of mystery
In my story.

By reading one’s writings, one’s thoughts gets echoes. For, it would help if, like me, one has special fascination for words and phrases. It is preferable to be optimistic and believe in oneself even if writing is uncharted territory. Being confident and pretending as if you are creating a masterpiece is the key to success. Off and on I thought of my writing as a masterpiece, for if I didn’t I would lack the motivation for editing and proofreading.

In my book of dreams…
With my words of streams…
I pursue my craft relentlessly…
As I read it endlessly…
I thought of mine as an art piece - a masterpiece…
That will last forever…
In my heart forever.
At this stage one’s essay or writing metamorphoses bit by bit like pupa in a chrysalis. With a mission in my head, the vision evolves with my every revision. The writer needs to tweak their story bit by bit making it crisp. Preserving manuscripts is crucial. For one never knows when one might need to look back.

Last but not the least, picking someone’s brain is essential to get suggestions and advice. With help from family, friends and my instructor I fix my shortcomings.

All night I rumble…

I tumble, I scramble…

I type and retype till it is dawn, as I yawn…

I go through the daunting process of editing and proofreading…

Word by word sentence by sentence…

--- Whatever makes sense…

I fit it like a jigsaw puzzle, Every dazzle…

I fit in my puzzle with all my muscle.
3. Polishing

Following the revisions, polishing will make one’s writing shine. Deliberately omit irrelevant repetitions. I have learnt to polish and archive my writing too. For all you know, an omitted piece could often become another piece of writing.

The rigorous process of editing and proofreading is like removing weeds from a beautifully landscaped garden. However, the words need to mean exactly what the writer wants to convey. With the advancement of computer software’s, editing and proofreading one’s writing has surely become much easier. Microsoft Word and Google Docs help with editing documents.

With a wide variety of materials at one’s disposal it is easy to research on a particular topic. The writer may be tempted to copy, leading to plagiarism. But authenticity, originality, and creativity make one’s writing unique. In some cases, one might need to write for one’s survival. Years back, once I wrote a job interview essay with great effort and it got me a job when needed it badly:

I can bring originality…
I can bring creativity…
I can bring authenticity…
Why become a copy machine?

When I can use my brain machine…

Why deliberately mimic?

The essence of writing involves reading and mulling over one’s writing, editing and revisiting it as often as possible. It might become a treasure for oneself. I can say that very well since my own personal narrative essay “Red Water” means so much to me since it went through a dozen revisions and now it feels polished and refined.

Once one has mastered the skill of writing, one can pretty much write anything - the possibilities seem to be endless. Frequently, writing is like living one’s life. Each has its own beginning and its end, its own twists and turns. For me, it takes me out of the daily hustle and bustle, and transplants me to my own Zen garden. Getting engrossed into writing might be quite meditative and take you to an imaginary land free of worldly pain and suffering.
Birthday Party Game Board
April Gabbert

My team was given the task of creating a board game. Our inspiration was a very obscure bag of toys and trinkets. Based on the "party hat" trinkets we were given, we came up with the concept for "Birthday Party," a game vaguely reminiscent of the Candyland game we all played as kids. I created the board using Illustrator.
How to Lose Friends and Alienate People the Natural Way
April Gabbert

I don't really consider myself a master of anything, so coming up with a topic for my process analysis essay was difficult. I made the decision to try something humorous that also held a small bit of truth for me. I was pleasantly surprised by my instructor's comments. I never would have thought that my sense of humor would score me a good grade. Go figure...

We’ve all been there. You suddenly find yourself surrounded by people that you don’t recall inviting to the party. They’re those annoying siblings or friends from your childhood that just don’t seem to go away. They send you cards and gifts for your birthday and holidays. They call to offer their condolences when you’ve found yourself in a period of grief. They inundate you with offers of help and advice just to see you happy. How annoying, right?

Well, fear no more, my unintended friends. Through much personal sacrifice and years of implementing this step-by-step process, I have developed a way for you to free yourself from the burden of relationships. I call it “How to Lose Friends and Alienate People the Natural Way.” Why “natural,” you ask? Through my own powers of observation, I’ve found that mistreating and ignoring people comes far more naturally to us human
beings, than being kind and sympathetic does. This process should be very effortless for you.

First, it’s important to understand that this method works so well that it is not easily reversed. You must be sure that you really want to be rid of these bothersome people before you begin; otherwise, you may find yourself feeling a bit melancholy when those cards and checks stop rolling in on your birthday. Having said this, step one of my foolproof process is to make sure you really want to do it.

Once you’ve moved beyond step one, you will embark on the surprisingly short journey toward blessed seclusion. Yes, dear reader, you will find yourself alone with your thoughts within a year or two, completely un-guaranteed. If at any time you are not satisfied with your progress, you can ask for your money back. You will not likely receive any refund, but we all know that it never hurts to ask. I digress, my steadfast reader, please continue to step two.

Step Two: Don’t answer the phone. Every time your phone rings it is undoubtedly someone that wants something from you. Who are these unsolicited callers that believe you should get out of your comfy bed at 3:00 in the afternoon just to answer the phone? So presumptuous!
Whether it’s your knowledge about growing your own petunias, or whether the caller is asking for your hard-earned money just because you happened to use their wattage last month, or because you allowed them to pick-up your garbage from the curb, what these callers want is most likely not something you care to produce. There is no need to let it bother you, anymore. You can stop the madness by ignoring the ring of the phone; just don’t answer it.

If you’re truly committed to this process you could even go so far as to stop carrying a phone altogether. I personally would not give up the phone entirely. You may have an emergency of your own, in which you will need to be that bothersome person on the sending end of the phone call. If you find you’re in need of making a call, and the person you’re calling does not answer, he or she may have already purchased this book and be well on his or her way to the freedom of solitude. You’d better catch up quick.

Step Three: Alienate. If someone is trying to speak to you, conversing in what some people refer to as “small talk,” stop them immediately by walking away, fast. Nothing will keep a person from speaking to you more than their realization that you have no interest in what they say.

Unfortunately, you will need to communicate at work, and you may find yourself having to speak to your kids or your spouse on occasion. If
you find it necessary to communicate, do so with brisk, no-nonsense language that gets to the point, and stays there. Avoiding eye contact while speaking will help to ensure a brief, though awkward, conversation. Be diligent, my student - this is an important part of the process. A few uncomfortable conversations now will give you countless thoughts to keep you up at night once you’ve succeeded in losing your people. We all need those memories of past blunders to keep our brains entertained at night; otherwise, we might fall asleep quickly, and comfortably, when we go to bed. No one wants that.

Step Four: Do everything yourself. Not bothering yourself with the company of other human beings can be daunting. Who will mow the lawn, or help you move to that stunning new cave you found while hiking? Who will tell you that yes, your butt does look fat in those jeans? You can’t have it all, my reader, you cannot have it all. You will need to become used to the idea that it takes great sacrifice to achieve your dreams. If you don’t want any form of human contact to distract you from your oh-so-important life, then you must do things for yourself. Do not ask for help from anyone.

Step four can be very difficult for some. Remember to be sure not to alienate your cable company. You will need internet access and, possibly,
the DIY Network to complete this step of the process. Whatever you do, don’t give up. If you can’t figure out how to change the tires on your car, or remove that ruptured appendix, then you just didn’t need it done anyway. If you can’t tell whether you do, in fact, have a large derriere, then throw away your mirror. I like to refer to this shift of priorities as “pivoting.” This is very different from the process of giving up entirely. Don’t lose sight of your goals, young grasshopper.

Step Five: Enjoy your creation. You have now rid yourself of every undesired form of human contact. You may be sitting alone every evening, wondering how you ever managed to endure a life shared with others. You eat nothing but Ramen and Taco Bell. You might only shower when your dog is offended by the smell, and, chances are, you’ve gained some weight and you don’t care about your appearance anymore. It’s a good thing you threw away that mirror, huh?

Congratulations, my lonesome apprentice, you have successfully lost your friends, and alienated your people. You did this yourself, so relish it. Learn to appreciate the beauty of loneliness. If you’re lucky, you might even lose the ability to put together coherent sentences, removing the desire to even make an attempt at communication. This is the true picture of leading a life alone. You did it! You live the glorious life of a hermit.
If you find that you want to reverse this process, and to re-gain your family and friends, you are in luck, my smelly, unspeaking, pupil. I have just begun writing my new book “How to Apologize and Beg Your Family and Friends’ Forgiveness in Just One Easy Step.” For a mere $299.99, you can purchase this untested wisdom, written in plain, incoherent, English. Look for it on Amazon, Barnes & Nobel, and Gas Station book racks everywhere this fall.

Look for my other titles, “You Have a Big Butt, and I Cannot Lie,” “Yes Virginia, Santa Claus Doesn’t Like You,” and “How to Cook Ramen with the Flavors of Taco Bell,” now available at garage sales everywhere.
Vern Nelson
Sandpaper Study

In Figure Drawing 305 winter quarter, I was disappointed in how I had blended away the fine detail lines in my drawings to give my images smooth value. I wondered if I might be able to use different grits of sandpaper to create shading. I started out on an old CD to see what might happen, then I moved to an old piece of Plexiglas I had lying around to "scratch" out the image of this torso. I was not very excited with the results until I realized the shadow the sun made on the wall! The result, a print!
Collagraph 1
Sharon Clark

Created for Art 124 (Beginning Printmaking)
Collagraph 2
Sharon Clark

Created for Art 124 (Beginning Printmaking)
How to Avoid the Rock Bottom Routine
Monica Shoemaker

As a former hair stylist of 14 years I’ve never had the need to attend college, for I was lucky enough to have found my passion while still in High School. Things took a turn for the worse when I developed a widespread disability in my upper body due to my career. The only thing that made sense to study after my job as a cosmetologist was taken away was something else I had a great passion for: helping people understand addiction. I am a recovering addict and alcoholic and am using those struggles to my advantage as I attend college for the first time ever, in hopes of becoming a chemical-dependency counselor.

“If you have the courage to begin, you have the courage to succeed.”

— David Viscott

Source: http://www.slideshare.net/constellationsrecovery/10-quotes-to-inspire-you-in-addiction-treatment-recovery

What connection does the title of hair stylist have with that of an addiction counselor? Seems like an interesting comparison of job titles, right? The answer is human connection. While working as a hair stylist for the last 14 years of my life, I have had hundreds of clients that have sat in my chair and opened up their hearts and souls to me as a way of releasing emotion they felt wasn’t appropriate elsewhere. My role, not just as their hair stylist, but as a listening ear, was to hear what they had to say. I learned
a great deal about reflective listening and how much that can validate someone in knowing that they were being heard and understood. Those actions are also imperative to the addiction counseling profession. Maybe, in this role, it will be a bit more challenging. It will also carry heavier weight with the need to use calm, non-judgmental discernment when communicating with the clients.

The one-on-one-relationships that I built in the hair business are similar to the ones I hope to develop as a counselor. There will hopefully be a level of trust and transparency that the clients will grow to find, helping them to open up in healthy ways so that I may assist them to the best of my ability. A good description of a counselor’s role, in just two words: sympathetic listener. The clients won’t know that I actually have more empathy than sympathy (being as I am an addict, myself, and completed a 2-year treatment program). That’s something that I will bring to light later on in our relationship. The reason I feel so confident in my assessment of what it takes to identify addiction and at what point treatment is necessary is because of my personal experience in needing that help myself. I went through the process (though with the court’s thumb on top of me) of seeking help from a reputable treatment center that would suit my needs.
The struggles in finding the right center for you really depend on a number of different things. My hardships that I ran into were the fact that I was low income, I was working a full time job, and I didn’t have insurance. Let me tell you right now, the courts have absolutely no compassion for any of those road blocks. The important thing for me, though, was that I identified my own desperate need in seeking treatment. I needed to heal, and it started with the realization that I was slowly hitting rock bottom...again. Now, the identification process will not be the same for each individual struggling with addiction. Many addicts will continue living in denial for years to come, sometimes even for the span of their lives. But once the problem is realized, that’s step 1 in the healing process of recovery and redemption. My personal opinion: this is the most important step.

The starting point of finding treatment (after identifying there’s a need) is to search around for organizations that have payment plans, accept specific health insurance, or go by a sliding scale based on your income. This process takes patience. I contacted no less than ten facilities searching for a program I could afford with my income, as I didn’t have insurance. When one center excitedly informed me that I qualified for a 50% discount, I was stoked to hear that! Until the actual figures came in, I had been hopeful. They wanted $300 a month for 24 months (the amount of
time I would be in treatment.) That was over half of my monthly rent. As most people can identify, that wasn’t a number I was willing to commit to.

Luckily, after much communication with friends who knew others attending treatment, I was given information about a place in Bellevue that would work with me as a low-income client. I followed through with the paperwork, met with their intake specialist to confirm that I did in fact need treatment, and then we discussed finances. Because of how low my income currently was, I was going to be responsible for 0%. That’s $0 total, for 2 years. UA’s (urinalysis) were typically about $40 apiece; for me they would be free. Tuberculosis testing was around $50; for me it was free. The 2-year treatment program on average runs about $6,000 (minimum), for me it was free. I felt extremely blessed. Maybe it was more luck? Whatever it was I knew not to argue with it. I was committed. To others that are in the process of searching for a treatment center I would advise this: don’t give up, remain patient and trust that the right clinic will be found, provide detailed information as well as ask for the same in return, and be diligent in chasing commitment, for that is one of the most important parts of the process.

Once I committed to the program and signed up to start by a specific date, there was a lot of mental preparation that I was responsible for if I
were to complete this program without error. I had to convince myself that this was what I needed to live a happy, healthy life. Drugs and alcohol, although fun, were the chains tied around my ankles as I tread water day in and day out. What did my worth look like to me? What did it look like to others? In my mind, it looked dirty and needed cleansing. It needed a sense of renewal that only I could be held responsible for. My mental commitment is what got me through the hardest part of this process: showing up.

However, most people don’t think about things the way I do, considering how different my story of addiction is from theirs. My unique outlook, however, doesn’t take away my confidence in being able to help guide someone through the correct steps of starting their own journey. Many addicts who aren’t ready for help, or aren’t committed to it, will make up a million excuses to not follow through. They may visit a center or two, give hope to their loved ones that they were actually doing it this time, only to turn around and fall back into whatever substance was holding them hostage. In addition, added stress could possibly develop because of the expectations from the court system. How much time were they given to find a treatment center? Is their family supportive? How steep are the consequences if they don’t go? An addict doesn’t just recognize what others see and agree to the process of fixing it to better their lives. It
doesn’t happen that way, as much as we tend to hope it does. Addiction doesn’t discriminate; it will continue attacking its victims endlessly until it either wins or loses. Even after the process of becoming clean and sober, addiction will continue to pull at your temptation strings and attempt to coerce you back to its position of power and control.

Throughout the program at a treatment center, there are multiple tactics used to treat the diverse group of addicts attending. Treatment makes many requirements of its clients. First of all, the client must be present. Much like school, there will be markdowns reported for those absent. Clients should take their attendance seriously, both physically and mentally. The only part that cannot be monitored in any way is the client’s participation and commitment outside of the treatment center. About half of my own group in treatment were still using. Some were caught throughout the duration of their program because of dirty UA’s or failure to show up for their UA appointments. Treatment centers take this idea of self-commitment very seriously. If you aren’t committed to change, they have no responsibility to continue to try and help save your life. You have just removed any level of trust that the counselors, or treatment center as a whole, had built up with you.
There are, of course, other resources to assist those in their walk with recovery. The most well-known organization available to the public is called Alcoholics Anonymous, or “AA” if you will. AA follows what is known as the “12 step program” which is a set of commandments that attenders commit to in order to fully reach their potential in their sobriety journey. On top of meetings provided by AA, there are others that branch off into other categories such as: NA (narcotics anon), SA (sexaholics anon), MA (marijuana anon), CA (cocaine user anon), and many more. With a little research, any of these meetings are easily found and are mostly open to anyone seeking help. They do have some “closed groups” that are only open to a certain group of people (male/female/etc).

During my time in treatment I had to meet certain criteria when it came to AA meetings. So along with my 3 days a week of treatment, I also had to provide proof of attending 3 AA meetings per week. I felt so much pressure because of my schedule with work and treatment, so how was I supposed to now fit in 3 more meetings during my weeks? It frustrated me more the longer I went and didn’t find AA to be a significant help with my addictions. I love that it works great for a huge percentage of addicts, but it isn’t for everyone. So if ever you hear the phrase “if you don’t work the program, you’re bound to fail,” just think about this: I’ve been drug free for almost 9 years, and alcohol free for 4.5 years, most of that time without
AA. I don’t encourage other addicts to skip out on this helpful resource, but it definitely isn’t the cure-all for addiction like some people say.

Another great resource for addicts in recovery is the support of family and friends. If that’s missing and someone has to go through the process alone, there is much higher chance of failure (relapse.) I wouldn’t have been successful had I not been blessed by the response from my family and friends, and I want to be a strong support system for those that have no one. One of the biggest aspects of my sober success has been the importance of transparency. I remain open and optimistic about my continuing recovery, despite the shame and embarrassment of it all. As I inch closer to becoming an addiction counselor, I’m excited to support and encourage clients' growth and honesty, even though I know they’re likely struggling with guilt they will carry, very possibly, for the greater part of their lives.

At the end of the day, I think about my experiences leading up to my involvement now in a Social Services field of study. I’ve had a lot of practice up to this point because of a handful of friends that spoke up in private about unknown problems they have/had with abusing different substances. They weren’t ready to commit to treatment, but just wanted a listening ear and a trustworthy response. Does this completely qualify me
Does this completely qualify me for a job with an important title? Not necessarily. But it does allow me to play the most important role in their lives at that moment, which is being a good friend and embracing their vulnerability and not taking my own success for granted. Rather, I get to celebrate their personal achievements and continue to keep an open dialogue for when they need a little extra support. It has become one of the most rewarding experiences in my life, and I look forward to being able to continue providing safe support wherever it may be needed.

Source: http://www.marylandaddictionrecovery.com/sustainable-addiction-recovery

Interesting Facts:

- Most people use drugs for the first time as teenagers
- About 10% of Americans suffer from addiction
- Binge and heavy drinking are more widespread among men than women
- In 2013, an estimated 22.7 million Americans (9%) needed treatment for drugs or alcohol. Only 2.5 million (0.9%) received treatment at a specialty clinic

Information available online at the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) homepage website

Source:
http://www.bellwood.ca/blog/addiction-treatment/the-importance-of-hope-in-addiction-recovery/
Vern Nelson
Coffee Packaging

My first class at LWTech was a design class, Beginning 2D Design, where I learned the fundamentals of design. It remains one of my favorite projects of my four years at Lake Washington Institute of Technology. I started in the MMDP program in the fall of 2012 and graduating June 17th 2016 from the BTAD program.

This packaging started off with the vary basics in design—figure ground, symmetry, and gestalt centered on a bird of our choice. I chose the Pileated woodpecker as my inspiration for this project. Anyone looking for an art class should consider taking Art 102!
This is my first time submitting my work to any publication ever! I’m proud to submit my first paper to the Lion’s Pride during my first quarter at LWTech, thanks to the support and encouragement of my wonderful English 101 instructor, Wes Mantooth!

I cannot tell you how many times I have heard this sentence: “Oh, I wish I knew you when I had my baby!” Some tell me this before I even say a word, just as soon as they hear that I am an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). It always makes me sad, because what these mothers are really saying is that they wish they had someone who would support them and their choices when they began their journey as a mom.

So why are women today experiencing so much difficulty with something they “should” be able to do naturally? Many mothers in our society feel like they are not good mothers if they cannot breastfeed their baby—they think something is wrong with their body or their ability to mother. I don’t blame them for feeling this way. Mothers today are often pressured to breastfeed because “breast is best”. But how can we expect new moms to know how to do it themselves while we live in a culture that doesn’t expose them to other breastfeeding moms? We no longer live in tight communities where the females raise the kids together and the young
girls learn and experience firsthand the behaviors that older women model. Our culture doesn’t naturally show or give a new mom the tools, yet she is still expected to instinctively know how to mother her baby. Many moms find it difficult to trust their own instincts and they need support and guidance.

Every mom’s journey is her own and it will never be exactly like anyone else’s simply because every mother and every baby are different. There are no two identical people in the world, let alone a pair—mom and baby—that are identical to another mom-baby dyad. This is why I believe that every mother can write a book about her own experience; if she has more than one child she can write a series.

I will never cease to be amazed by the natural wonders that the human body was created to perform. Most female bodies are equipped with nearly everything that is needed in order to create, grow, birth and feed another life. From the beginning of time, mammals have reproduced and survived thanks to the females who nurture their young.

It sounds simple: making milk is a natural female body function, and babies are born with reflexes that allow them to instinctively latch on to their mother’s nipple to feed. However, breastfeeding is not always a simple skill to master. Oftentimes, both mom and baby need to learn how to work
in sync in order to allow their bodies to connect like puzzle pieces. This requires attention, communication, patience, and lots of work that cannot be practiced before you hold your baby in your arms. Some breastfeeding dyads manage to master their skills in a few days, but most moms and babies need a few weeks of practicing before breastfeeding becomes effortless, like second nature.

We know that breast milk provides babies with the best nutrition for optimal growth and development. We also know that there is an endless list of benefits for both mothers and babies to not only the breast milk itself, but also the act of nursing. So this is something that you may want to seriously consider trying. If you have already made the decision and are determined to learn how to nurse your baby, be prepared for it to be a process that may take some trial and error and lots of practice. But as soon as you master the skill, you will be able to nurse as easily and instinctively as balancing on a bike. Here are some things you may want to consider and techniques that you can learn and apply:

First and foremost, I recommend finding a supportive professional who is an IBCLC. Nowadays there is a lot of information online, and you can find providers with an array of different credentials related to breastfeeding and even well-meaning individuals who care about you and think they
know how to help you. But every situation is unique, and only a trained IBCLC is qualified to tailor your care to your specific circumstances. She will be able to provide you with current evidence-based information and proper support.

One of the most important messages I try to relay to my clients is to trust that they know what is best for themselves and for their baby. Many moms stop breastfeeding just because they receive misleading information. In order to set yourself on the right path it is most beneficial to meet with an IBCLC during your pregnancy. Preventing complications and avoiding obstacles that can occur is always better than trying to fix a situation or stop a snowball effect from escalating. Reaching out once your baby arrives is fine too, but do not delay or wait for something to go wrong.

Regardless of where you birthed your baby, you should be seen by an IBCLC as soon as possible after you deliver your baby and at least within the first 72 hours postpartum. Moms frequently schedule an additional visit after their milk comes in. The IBCLC that you choose will become a member of your “support team”. Your team should include supportive individuals, including as many people as you feel comfortable with, who know what your goals are and are completely on board with your plan. Your team may include your partner, mom, sister, friend, or doula. Don’t
worry about not including someone, especially if you are concerned that they won’t be supportive. If they care about you they will understand; and if they don’t then they will have to deal with it, and you will be better off not having them around during this time. You should be focusing all of your attention and energy on two things only: your body and your baby. Don’t worry, this level of intensity won’t last forever. Quite the contrary in fact—in the span of a lifetime a few weeks is just a short period of time, and these are moments that you won’t be able to go back to. So you will need to fully commit to the process while leaving a lot of room for flexibility and changes. I have found that the more committed and focused a mom is, the faster she is able to breastfeed her baby with ease.

The next step is feeling confident in your body’s ability to do what it is capable of doing. Mother’s milk is species-specific. Research has shown how amazingly human milk composition continuously reacts to the environment and changes according to your baby’s nutritional needs. The “recipe” of mother’s milk is constantly being tweaked by your body to contain the exact amount of nutrients that your baby requires at every given moment—it will be slightly different at each feeding and even during the course of the same feeding. Your milk will change according to your baby’s ever-changing needs. For instance, any bacteria that you are exposed
to will appear as antibodies in your milk, in order to protect and strengthen your baby’s immune system.

Milk production is initially controlled by the endocrine system—meaning that the process is hormone driven. Within a few days (typically 3-5) after the birth there is a shift, and milk begin to be produced by the autocrine system—in other words, on demand. During this phase your body responds to stimulation, and the more you empty your breasts the more milk your body will produce. Astonishingly, even a severely malnourished mom will produce milk for her baby. And while a mom stuck in the desert with no food may starve, her body will continue to extinguish all of its resources to produce milk for her baby.

One of the most common concerns that moms share with me is: “Am I making enough milk for my baby?” During the first few weeks you will be building up your milk supply. You begin with a few drops of colostrum, enough to fill a newborn’s stomach, which at birth is about the size of a marble. Then you will continue to establish a good milk supply by signaling to your body how much milk it needs to make. Remember that frequent breast stimulation and milk removal will increase your milk production. In fact, your body is able to produce more milk than your baby needs—this is how mothers of multiples are able to nurse all of their babies.
Some moms hear of engorgement and are afraid to become engorged if they feed their baby too much. The truth is quite the contrary: engorgement is a result of milk accumulating in the breast due to poor milk removal. The best way to avoid this unpleasant condition is by frequently moving the milk out of the breasts. Milk removal methods include nursing, pumping and manual expression by hand. Furthermore, establishing a sufficient milk supply is imperative to do in the first weeks postpartum, as it is much harder to build up your supply later. Another reason why you should not be concerned about feeding too much is that it is physically impossible to overfeed an exclusively breastfed baby. So feed your baby frequently. Don’t look at the clock. Look at your baby, and feed on demand (or at least every 2-3 hours from the beginning of each feeding to the next).

Another issue that moms often struggle with is positioning their baby at the breast and getting a good latch. A good latch is important for both mother’s comfort and for efficient milk removal—which leads to baby’s growth. To get a good latch, first situate yourself in a comfortable position and only then begin to position your baby. Let gravity work to your advantage by reclining and elevating your legs—this helps relieve stress from your shoulders. Your baby’s tummy should be facing your body, and baby’s ear, shoulder and hip need to be aligned. Support your baby’s body
without restricting the head from tilting backwards. To achieve the level of physical closeness required for a good latch, it can be helpful to place your baby’s arms on either side of your breast, like a big hug. If you feel your breasts are really full and your baby is having a difficult time getting a good latch, gently massage your breast and express a little milk to soften the tissue. If you feel you need to hold and compress your breast to help your baby get a better latch, then make sure to keep your fingers well out of the way.

Slightly tilt your nipple upwards toward the roof or your baby’s mouth, but do not move your breast. Think of your breast as a target and the nipple as the bull’s-eye—moving the target will confuse and frustrate your baby. Just aim for your baby’s nose to be right in front of your nipple and wait patiently for a wide open mouth. The moment of truth is when your baby has a wide open mouth. You have a split second to react, in which you need to bring your baby’s body close to yours in one firm motion. Don’t worry about pulling your baby in too close or suffocating your baby with your breast—that won’t happen. In order to get a deep latch—one that will enable your nipple to be stretched all the way to the back of your baby’s mouth and hit the soft palate—your baby needs to be as close to your body as possible.
Once your baby is latched on, breathe and count to 5 – if it still hurts release the suction, take your baby off, tweak positioning, and wait for the big open mouth again. If the latch feels good but it looks like your baby’s mouth is not open wide enough, you (or your support person) can put an index finger on the front of baby’s chin and “roll” it in a downward motion in order to help open baby’s mouth wider and flange out the bottom lip. While your baby is latched on you can gently massage and compress your breast. This will keep your baby actively suckling and it can increase your milk production.

After feeding, let a few drops of milk dry on your nipple and then apply pure cold-pressed olive oil, coconut oil, or a nipple butter of your choice. If your baby dozes off and loses latch or if it hurts or feels like your baby is just sucking on the nipple, release the suction and reposition to get a better latch. If you feel that the latch is not deep, do not try to “tough it out” through a feeding. A poor latch will result in pain, nipple trauma and poor milk removal, which may lead to slow weight gain. Take your baby off and start over until you feel it is a good latch. The more you practice, the faster your baby will learn good habits and nurse efficiently.

Remember to always look at your baby and listen to your body—the best way to judge if you have a good latch is by how it feels! Breastfeeding may
feel uncomfortable or even painful for some moms, due to the initial sensation of your nipple stretching like it has never before. But nursing should not hurt beyond the first few seconds of your baby latching on. The slightest adjustments in your baby’s position, or yours, can make a big difference in how you feel.

I often tell moms that they are only as old a mom as their baby is a baby. They can’t expect themselves to know everything from day one. Babies are not born with a manual and as I mentioned—every baby is different. Having and raising a child is an ever-changing learning process. The more open and flexible you remain, the more you learn and adapt. Educating yourself is a key to success. But even after learning and acquiring all the tools, you remain on constant alert because you never know which tool will come in handy, or when.

It took me ten long, hard weeks of literally blood, sweat, and tears before I was able to nurse my baby. But it was worth every drop—not only for me and my family, but for the many families that I am able to support today. Through my own experience I found that my purpose in life is to help new moms learn how to nurse their babies. I left my previous career and have found one that I love and am genuinely passionate about. I understand firsthand how difficult the postpartum period can be. Having a baby brings
on extreme feelings that are often tough to manage alone, and I truly understand why so many moms give up along the way. I could not have managed to breastfeed my babies without my determination and amazing support system.

For me—like many moms—doing what’s best for my baby, my family, and myself is a difficult, never-ending balancing acts. My personal experience led me on the path to become an IBCLC and a postpartum doula so I could help new families navigate and find what works best for them. I feel that my purpose in life is to help moms have a smooth entrance into motherhood, and I am honored to guide them along their journey.
The Power of White Guilt
Alihasan Amjad

I met racism fact to face at a very early age. In elementary school I was the only student from West Asia. From there on out I saw and faced racism everyday up until late high school.

However, those hardships have helped me appreciate diversity in a new-found way, and more importantly that racism is very much alive today, stronger and crueler than ever.

White Guilt is an invisible problem silently ruining the core values that America upholds. It affects more people than just whites; white guilt has encompassed the integral aspects of society, and all of those living within it. Shelby Steele, a research fellow of the hoover institute at Stanford University authored a book named White Guilt which describes this racial phenomenon, its counter-parts, as well as the effects upon its victims. In order to properly understand white guilt it’s important to know how it originated, its effects on society and blacks especially, as well as its byproduct: white blindness.

The end of the sixties in America marked the end of the civil rights movement. This massive accomplishment ended legal segregation, but also led to the origin of white guilt. America’s welcome announcement condemning racism officially marked it as wrong, but it also gave birth to
white guilt. White supremacy – the “mandate of heaven” that had allowed white America to morally justify segregation and slavery – turned into white guilt, and because America openly acknowledged racism as wrongdoing, they also acknowledged white supremacy to be evil at its pinnacle. When white America lost the power of white supremacy, they lost their infallible God-given moral authority, and instead accepted God-given proof that they were the villains of society. Whites were officially responsible for racism, a sin they committed the most. They now carry the memory of past sins, sins they may have not caused, but people of their color did. A textbook definition of white guilt would read: America accepting racial responsibility for black and white history created white guilt, and now whites feel responsible for the historic treatment of blacks, creating a vacuum of moral authority.

White guilt has changed American society from the late sixties up until the present. Analyzing how white guilt changed through these events helps us understand this racial parasite. In the sixties, when the civil rights movement was at its peak, and racism was coming to an end in terms of moral acceptance, there was a moment when both black and white youth fought against segregation. This was a “combined” consciousness fighting against a socially and politically incorrect concept (Steele 81). As the movement scored many victories against racism, it increased the shame of
America’s admission of racial wrongdoing, introducing white guilt and black militancy. The “combined” consciousness separated the races, because as black militancy arose white America took responsibility for their mistakes. Concurrently the Vietnam War and the women’s rights movement were well under way, and Vietnam pushed American youth to question the morality of America itself. This is expanded white guilt. White guilt was caused by African American segregation, a mistake America admitted, and now the Vietnam War was added to that list of mistakes. The war wasn’t the only cause for the progression of white guilt: sexism, educational quality, imperialism, and greed were also contributors. Youth consciousness now saw a vast vacuum of moral authority in America; they formed a “counterculture” which was against traditional mistakes like racism, sexism, and imperialism (Steele 83). This counterculture went forward to change society. They turned their back on the past generations who had perpetrated the great evils of America. The new direction America was heading could be attributed to their change in consciousness, but the change in consciousness can be attributed to white guilt.

White guilt is a phenomenon that affects both white and black America, as well as other minorities. It is important to understand how white guilt has influenced the processes of society as well as those it affects. Most noticeable is the separation of whites and blacks in America. African
Americans have their own Congressional Black Caucus; they also have black churches, black professional associations, and black student organizations on university campuses across America. These exist because blacks wanted them and white guilt makes that notion easier. White guilt’s vacuum of moral authority forces whites to be indebted to blacks. This guilt and the combined need for moral authority pushed white America to “help” their black counter-parts, and if moral authority is reinstated then the cost doesn’t matter. When black militancy demanded white America take more responsibility, they essentially asked whites “to make it easier” (Steele 62). This coincided perfectly with white guilt’s purpose as white America was striving to help blacks reclaim their lost moral authority. When black America gave the responsibility for the advancement of blacks into the hands of white America, they gave it to a group desiring to “appear” helpful. When the whites “took responsibility,” they did so by lowering the standards of institutions for blacks so they could enter without having the necessary prerequisites. The manipulation of these standards disadvantaged blacks because when the information they bypassed becomes required, they’re the ones to suffer. White America benefits because their responsibility is to put blacks in an equal position; however, “white guilt wants no obligation to minority development” (Steele 63). The basis of this situation is that moral authority depends on appearance, not progress, and
white guilt’s vacuum of moral authority prioritizes “helping” blacks, who were negatively affected by lowering the standard. There are numerous situations like this in which white guilt lets blacks have what they wish for even when it is harmful. However white America has always taken the credit for that advancement, which then confers on them the same moral authority to operate as they once did in society.

White guilt was not the only racial concept that plagued America; it shed light upon a new, more specified racism. America’s acknowledgement of their racial wrongdoing created white guilt, but white guilt’s vacuum of moral authority created white blindness. This blindness can be described as a perspective; it occurs when whites see victimized minorities not as human beings, but as the face of a group for which white America is responsible. A direct visualization depicts a single black mother living in poverty struggling to raise her infant daughter, and suddenly the government steps in to provide funding for all low-income black mothers. This situation shows white blindness grouping together all single black mothers, and goes on to say, “Any black mother failing to raise her children is suffering from insufficient funds and its white America’s duty to help.” The reality of the situation may be that the twenty-nine year old mother suffered from a drug problem, not the lack of money. She could have properly dealt with her issues had she been recognized as a human being, but because she is black
then she is seen as being exactly like other blacks. White blindness ignores the humanity of the individual, in this scenario a woman suffered from a drug problem like many Americans, but white blindness misdiagnoses her problem, and groups her with people similar to her. Their only similarity is their difference; many of them have bigger problems than the lack of money. In America white supremacy equaled actual power, so when white supremacy morphed into white guilt it delegitimized their power (Steele 115).

The American government would soon be overrun by white blindness because in the sixties it faced the issue of reestablishing their moral authority. As it happened the country had a major problem with black poverty. President Johnson took the opportunity to implement the Great Society Program, a government program that gave funding to black communities to help them get back on their feet (Steele 115). This is the best example that connects white guilt to white blindness. White guilt labels whites as perpetrators of racism, and to rid themselves of this racial stigma they must act counter to racism by helping African Americans. White blindness is the perspective of seeing racial problems as a means for whites to rid themselves of guilt, not to help the victim in need. The Program was an apology to blacks in the form of money (Steele Shelby 115). This apology gave the government power because they took
responsibility over people they had enslaved in the past. This exemplifies white blindness because black poverty is an issue the government was not responsible for (Shelby Steele 176). The money did not help black children with single parents, or counsel adolescents in making better decisions, or help the children in the classroom suffering from lowered standards; it only helped the American government look “helpful” which legitimized their power. In this scenario the government was riddled with white guilt and they acted out of white blindness to selfishly solve their own problems, all while blacks continued to live in stricken poverty. White blindness is racial selfishness and white guilt is its motivator.

Racism exists all over the world, but in America racism has advanced into a deeper, more institutionalized concept. It has resulted in many changes within America, as well as causing problems that are more than just segregation. Comprehending white guilt, the effects on America past to present, and its connection to white blindness brings to light all the racism America has caused even after their acknowledgement. Racism still exists in America today, more subtle and persistent than ever.

Work Cited

LWTech Game Jam Event
Greg Bem, photographs

Held on June 1st, 2016, this event gave attendees a chance to playtest games designed by students in the Digital Gaming and Media program.