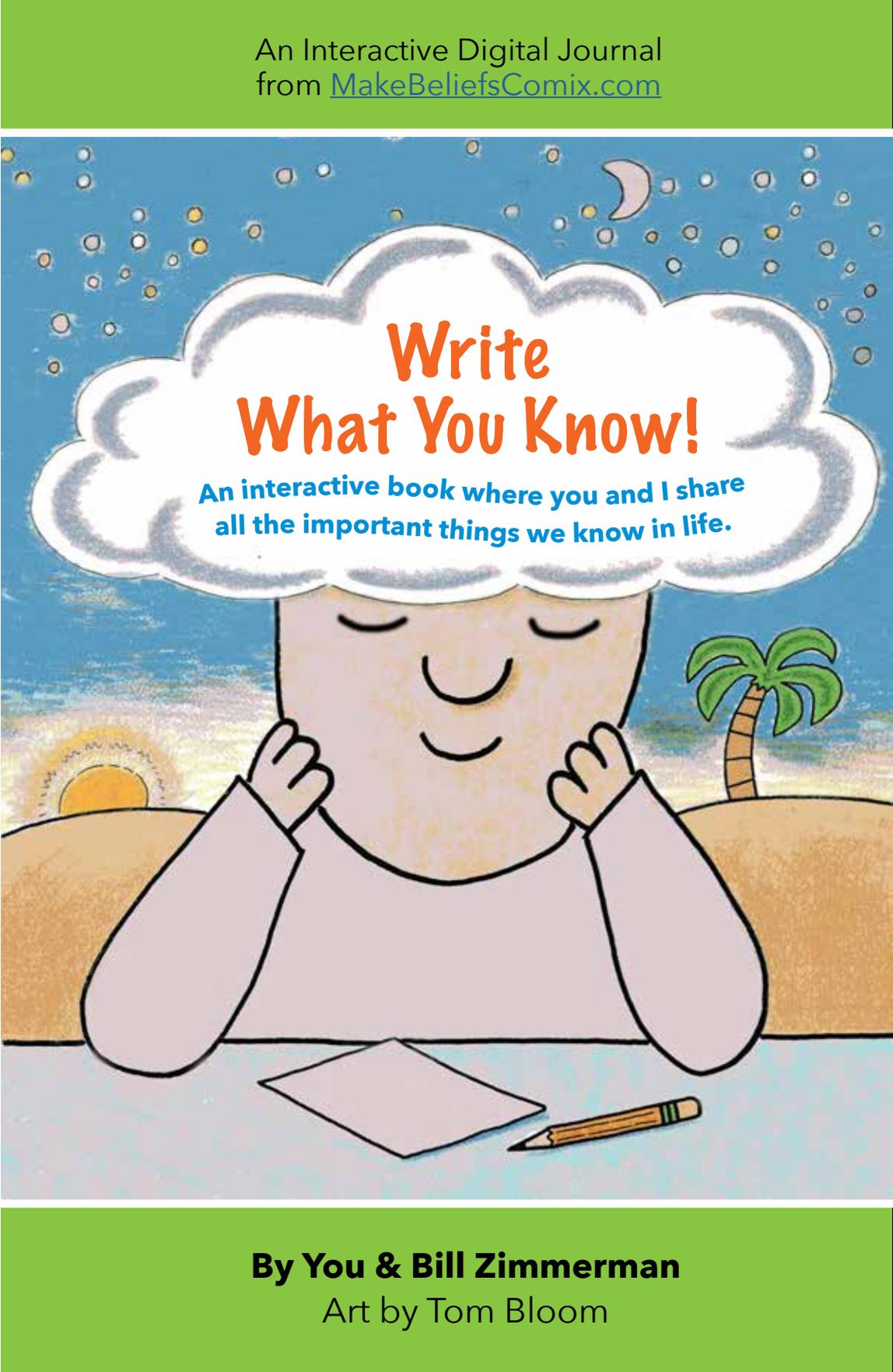


An Interactive Digital Journal
from MakeBeliefsComix.com



Write What You Know!

An interactive book where you and I share
all the important things we know in life.

By You & Bill Zimmerman

Art by Tom Bloom



*This book of personal truths
belongs to:*

(TYPE YOUR NAME)

Date begun:

(TYPE HERE)

Write What You Know!

*An interactive book where you and I share
all the important things we know in life.*



By You & Bill Zimmerman

Art by Tom Bloom



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Book design: Barbara Berasi

The author welcomes comments and suggestions that you would like to see included in future editions.

Please write: William Zimmerman, Guarionex Press Ltd.
201 West 77 Street, New York, NY 10024

Thank you.

For other books by Bill Zimmerman, visit

<http://www.billztreasurechest.com> or

<http://www.MakeBeliefsComix.com>

Dedication

For All Whom I Love and Who Love Me

*Never give up—no matter how tired,
sick or broken you may feel at times.*

*Continue to fight hard for yourself
and find the healing voice within you—
it is there if only you will
search within and listen.*

For my wife and daughter

*Remember I have loved you
with all my heart.*



To my cousin Judy and friend Paul

*Special thanks
for reaching out to me when I needed help.*

Dear reader,

This is a book to help you write down all the important things you know in life. **By the time you finish filling in its pages you will be both amazed and proud of all that you have learned.** It was that way for me after I answered this book's writing prompts.



I crafted "Write What You Know!" during some very dark days when both my wife and I were being treated for serious illnesses and I felt physically and emotionally weak. I willed this book into being because I wanted something positive to come from this frightening, painful time, and because I wanted fervently to believe that my life had meaning. **I discovered that each time I started writing a response to one of the book's question prompts asking about the things that are important to me, I began to feel a sense of peace and satisfaction.** I saw that I had something worth saying about my life.

I hope that writing in this book will be a very life-affirming experience for you, too. As its pages fill up with your written thoughts, you will be surprised by how much wisdom you have acquired and how much you know.

Everything we do or experience ultimately teaches us something and each day we learn something worth remembering. As babies we soon learn that we are dependent on others to love and nurture us.

As youngsters we learn in school that there are good people and there are bullies. We learn how important kindness is. As adults we learn how hard it can be to make our way in a challenging, often difficult world.

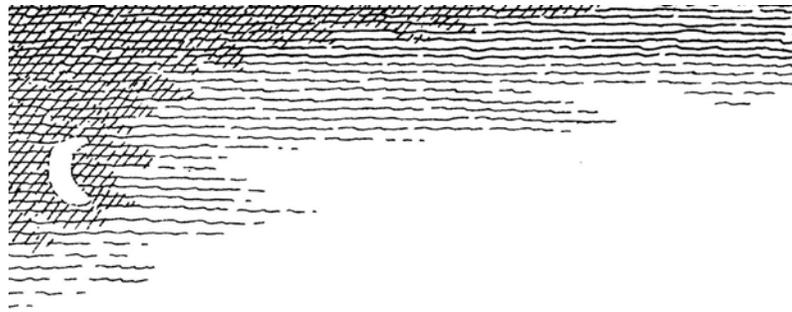
And as we age, we learn to pick ourselves up when we stumble and to persist no matter how hard the going is. We begin to realize how lucky we are to have come this far and how precious our lives are.

There eventually comes a time in life, as it was for me, when



you want to reflect on and recount what you have learned over the years. This interactive book, with its many writing prompts, helps you do that—whether you're a young or an

older person. By writing in it you are performing what might be considered a sacred act and this book becomes your personal bible about you and your life. **This book of your written thoughts and personal truths will give you something substantial to hold onto when life buffets you with its**



unexpected shocks, such as illness or loss. It will give you a core of strength that you can return to, to nourish you from time to time. And, if you are a teacher, this book will provide you and your students with countless ideas for writing and self-expression.

The front of each blank page in this book presents a writing prompt where you can answer each question. Opposite each blank page throughout the book, you will find the same writing prompt on which I have written my own personal truths in response to that prompt. In the same way that you will use the blank pages to write your thoughts, so have I written mine. **I share with you what I know to encourage you to honestly express your own truths.**

In creating this book I decided that I wouldn't ask you to do something I wouldn't do; this is why I first tested each question on myself. **While I share my innermost thoughts with you, in no way do I intend for my words to be yours.**

Your words, your thoughts, your feelings must come from you alone and may be very different from mine. Yours will reflect your own life's experiences. **Just listen carefully to your heart and start writing.** (Don't feel pressured: feel free to write only on the pages that speak to you—you don't have to finish the whole book. And there are also blank pages at the back of the book for you to feature your own writing prompts.)

If you are totally honest in your writing, as I hope you will be, you will discover that no experience in life, good or bad, is ever wasted. Each has so much to teach us. At moments, in filling in my own responses to the prompts, I felt joy in my memories and in what I have learned in life. Other times I was moved to tears because what I was writing was so meaningful to me. I found that answering the questions on these pages was a profound, maybe even a sacred experience. Perhaps, too, my words will help the people I love who may one day read this book. I would like them to remember me.

It's always good to take stock of one's life. By doing so, we come to realize that each of our lives has worth, whether we are world leaders or just simple people who work hard to get by day by day. In encouraging you to fill in this book's pages, I am, in effect, saying to you, "Take heed! Pause for a moment and become aware of what you have gained from your life, including its joys and pains. Take heed! **What you write is valuable and worth saying.**"

I hope you will enjoy this writing adventure you are about to undertake. Remember, though, to listen to your heart as you write.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Zimmerman





*Write down
the blessings
in your life*



**An Act of Kindness I Remember
Which Made a Big Difference
in My Life**

(WHAT I KNOW)

When I was learning to read in school I just couldn't put the letters together to sound out words; I was a frightened, unconfident child. I wanted so achingly to learn how to read, but I was getting in my own way, afraid I would fail and show my ignorance. My kind, wonderful teacher chose to stay after school with me day after day, helping me. She was so patient and encouraging and helped calm me down enough so that I could learn. She believed in me, she understood my fear, and she helped me build confidence each day so that I could finally relax and take in all that she was giving me. I have never met a kinder person in my life.

I did learn to read well and in so doing saved my fearful young life. Reading gave me hope and purpose; reading allowed me to enter expanded worlds of the imagination, delivering me from a life filled with family strife. Through reading I overcame the sorrows of childhood and of life. **The memory of that kind teacher remains a blessing to me today.** I will never forget her. I try to be patient and kind like her when others need my help.



**An Act of Kindness I Remember
Which Made a Big Difference
in My Life**

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Date: _____





*Never be
ashamed of
what you write*



Hopes and Dreams I Still Have

(WHAT I KNOW)

I hope my daughter finds the path that is right for her, that she has a fulfilling life, rich with many experiences and the success that she hopes for. I want her to be happy and to find someone with whom to share her life.

I hope my wife finds the good health and strength that she seeks and never loses her strong, vibrant spirit.

I hope, for myself, that I will keep creating new things to the end of my life, that somehow I can take the lingering pain and misery I feel at times and convert them into something good that will also help others. I would like as long as possible to live a creative life, to continue learning and growing. I would hope, too, that love will also remain an important part of my life.

I hope the world turns better, that war and devastation will finally halt, that man will stop fighting with man, that we can live in peace and harmony and love.

I hope we will learn to treat the Earth with better care, rather than continue to destroy the wonders that nature so abundantly gave us. We must come to love our Earth and not take it for granted.



Hopes and Dreams I Still Have

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Lined writing area for the student's response.

Date: _____





Let your dog or cat comfort you as you write from your heart; stroke their fur



Whom I Love with All My Heart

(WHAT I KNOW)

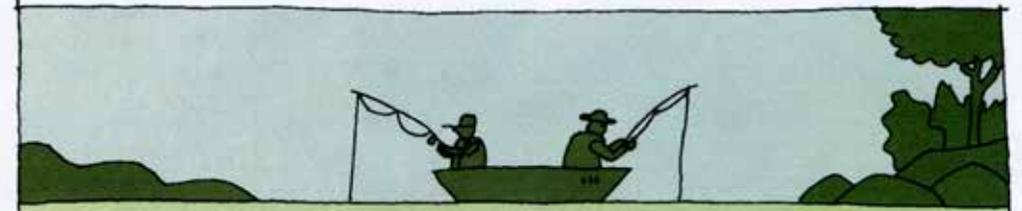
I love my wife and daughter. They nurture me and fill my life with goodness and kindness.

I have had a long marriage and this love has proved to be the richest experience in my life. It has helped me overcome my selfishness; it has opened me to new experiences and ways of seeing the world. My marriage has given me comfort and stability.

Being a father has helped me fill the holes in my being, the holes which were just waiting to be filled with love. Loving my child has enriched me, has matured me, and made me a more compassionate person.

Opening oneself to love also makes one more vulnerable, particularly to loss. Love of others is the final consolation and makes life a little more easy and meaningful. **I think that people cannot love enough;** they have so much to give if they allow themselves to do so.

I also have loved the pets in my life. I am grateful for their companionship and comfort.

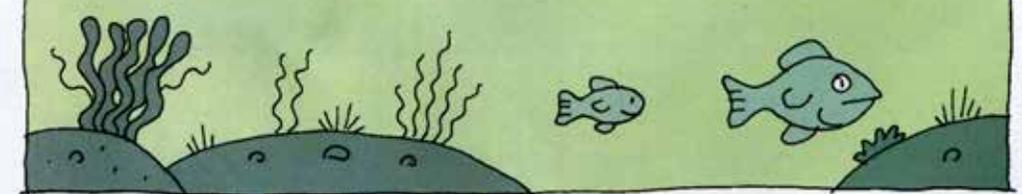


Whom I Love with All My Heart

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Handwriting practice area with 15 horizontal lines.

Date: _____





Share what you know

What Is Our Responsibility to Others?

(WHAT I KNOW)

We are here to help one another because life is so very fragile. One moment we are happy, the next moment we may lose everything or someone important to us, leaving us sad and alone. Each of us, no matter what we have accomplished or been given, struggles with the similar problems as we live our lives.

Each of us, no matter how high or low our station, needs to be loved and to reach out and love others as well. The more we can find it in ourselves to be giving and kind, the stronger we will become, the fuller our natures will grow. All we need do is put ourselves in the shoes of the other person to realize what he or she needs and then find that quality in ourselves to offer another.

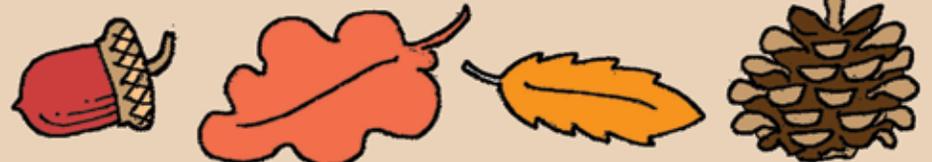
As a child I was a slow learner, but as I grew older I became a tutor to many people who were having trouble learning to read and write. I understood how difficult it can be to learn and I saw the need to help others build their confidence. Those who know things have a responsibility to share what they know with others.

What Is Our Responsibility to Others?

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

A large rectangular area with horizontal red lines for writing.

Date: _____





*You have earned
your wisdom*



On Raising A Child

(WHAT I KNOW)

Raising a child s one of the least selfish acts a human can perform. It draws forth all the loving and goodness and patience that a human possesses. It is a thrilling experience to see a child grow and thrive and build confidence in life.

Rearing a child brings forth all the joy a parent has within her—or himself.

In raising my own daughter I wanted her to be free to explore and find her way so that she could grow strong and confident, rather than be burdened by the fears I often felt in growing up.

Sometimes, it seems, that raising a child should be the easiest thing to do; you need only to let the love flow from your heart to your child. If you can be loving and kind and patient with your child, she or he will then more easily find their place in the world.

Your child is the center of your universe, but you must teach her that she is part of that larger universe which must be shared lovingly with others. Yes, your child is very special, but so, too, are all the other children in the world. We are part of something bigger than ourselves. We must not be selfish.

On Raising A Child

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

A large rectangular area with horizontal red lines for writing.

Date: _____





*Give yourself fully
to the writing;
don't hold back*

Someone, Something I Believe In

(WHAT I KNOW)

I believe in our humanity, that within us are decency and love to guide us. I believe we are in the world for just a very short time (no matter how much time we wish we had) and that we must use our time well.

I want to believe in God, that there is a Supreme Force who helps order our lives and who can comfort and protect us. But I am not sure anymore—there is too much war, hatred and misery in the world to believe that He or She exists and truly loves us. If this were so, would He really allow so much suffering?

Perhaps I believe in mankind to make things better, but I am not sure of that either. We seem to bring too much pain to the world and sully the wondrous Earth that was given to us to sustain us. How miserable we humans can be at times. We have not yet learned how to tap fully into the love, the kindness, the compassion that is innately within us. **Why do we not fully embrace all the good that is within us, rather than give in to evil compulsions?**

As I write these words, I am a little surprised at myself. My words sound cynical, almost bitter and seem to have dimmed some of the hope I had within me. I feel some shame for what I have written. Yet, it is okay to have conflicting thoughts and emotions, no?



Someone, Something I Believe In

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Lined writing area for the student's response.

Date: _____





*Write as if
your life
depended on it*



About Resilience

(WHAT I KNOW)

I have learned that each of us is stronger than we think, that we have greater inner resources than we ever thought possible.

In life each of us will get hit with blows. These may make us fall or leave us sorely pained. But with a little time, we will heal, maybe not as fully as we'd like, but we will mend well enough to go on with our lives. **We have an innate resiliency that enables us to bounce back from our hurts and losses and somehow carry on.**

Resiliency seems to come easier when we are young, but even with the passage of time and our aging, we still have the capacity to regenerate ourselves, to find some joy or peace in life.

The ability to adapt and endure is what makes human beings special.

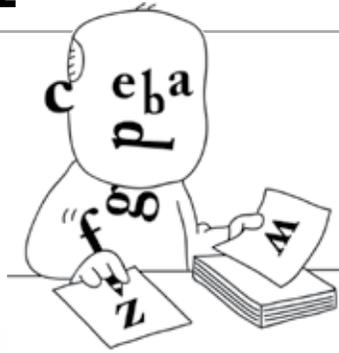
About Resilience

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

A large rectangular area with horizontal red lines for writing.

Date: _____





*Who ever thought
you'd be writing
your own book?*

How to Mend A Broken Heart

(WHAT I KNOW)

Give time, ancient time, a chance to heal your hurts and pain.

Keep hope alive in your heart because having a dream helps get you through the worst life has to offer.

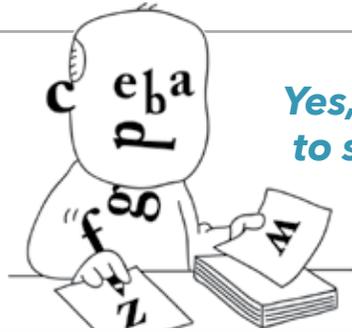
Find an undertaking, a mission, a purpose that will keep you energized, busy and useful; **helping others will help you mend.**

I have learned that when crises develop, the only way I can get through them is by working and starting a new creative project. By doing so, I provide a path for myself into a better place. I channel my pain and upset by writing books.

A decorative header for the writing page. It features a yellow sun with rays in the top left corner, a row of green bushes or trees in the middle, and a light blue sky background. Below the header is a large light blue rectangular area with horizontal red lines for writing. At the bottom of the page, there is a brown sandy beach area with various beach items: a seashell, a starfish, a piece of driftwood, another seashell, and some small pebbles.

How to Mend A Broken Heart
(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Date: _____



Yes, you have much to say, your thoughts are deep, they are wise



On the Importance of Doing Good Work

(WHAT I KNOW)

Work gives us a way to tap into our creativity and express the personal, best things in us. It may be our love of discipline, or the joy of solving problems or expressing our ideas. Work gives us focus and allows us to put aside, for the time being, the pain and uncertainty we may feel.

Every since I was a child my happiest moments have been in my work—whether it was a written homework assignment or, later, writing books and managing a newspaper and creating educational web sites.

I know of no greater joy than to have seen my dreams come true over the years as I became more confident and skilled in my work.

A large writing area with a blue background. At the top, there is a yellow sun and green bushes. At the bottom, there is a brown beach with various shells and stones. The writing area is filled with horizontal lines for text.

On the Importance of Doing Good Work

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Date: _____



*Write for the person
whom you hope
one day will read this*

What or Who Provides the Bedrock of My Life

(WHAT I KNOW)

My wife and daughter provide my bedrock. They give me ballast when I feel lost and drowning. They return the love I have given to them.

I used to think—or wanted to believe—that it was God who was my foundation. I remember praying to Him as a child, asking that He keep my family together, that He make my mother and father love each other rather than fight all the time. I prayed for him to help me hold my family together.

But He was not there for us and everything was torn asunder. Later, as I grew older, I prayed to Him again. I guess He was there along the way to ease my pain and fears and worry. But I think now that He has deserted me. Or perhaps He was never there, that it was I who was responsible for my fate...I am not sure.

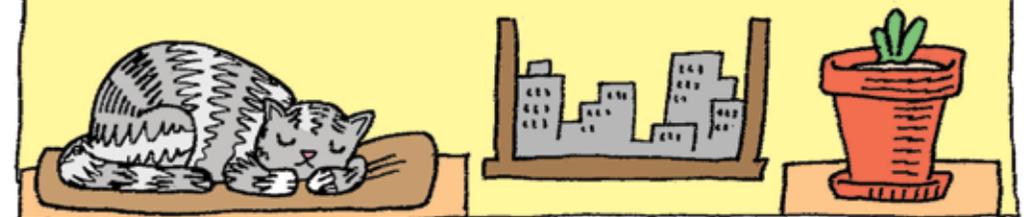
I have learned to provide my own foundation. I do the best I can to comfort myself, to depend on myself, to see myself through my tears and fears. What other choice do I have?

What or Who Provides the Bedrock of My Life

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

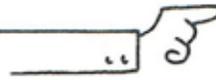
Lined writing area for the user's response.

Date: _____





Take pride in the fact that your writing is very important to you and to others



What I Respect About Myself

(WHAT I KNOW)

I am a hard worker and always try to do my best in every situation. I share what I've learned with others in order to help them.

I have cared deeply about my work—it is the best part of me.

To the best of my understanding, I have been a good and loving father and husband. I have done my best to take good care of my family and to help friends and family and people who worked for me.

I respect what I have accomplished in my life, that **I have not wasted my time here on Earth. Life is short and very precious**—I know that from having lost people whom I loved early in life—and I have tried to use my time constructively and helpfully.

What I Respect About Myself

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

A large rectangular area with horizontal red lines for writing.

Date: _____





Write some words from the pain you have felt at times

What to Do When You Feel Sad or Lost

(WHAT I KNOW)

Write to yourself or to God. Write what is in your heart—it will help you find comfort and better understand your situation and yourself.

Write about your feelings, or a happy memory, a hope, a fear, even a hate.

Listen to music that soothes your soul. It will help heal your raw wounds.

Take time to rest to allow your body to find comfort and renew itself. A healthy body will give you more confidence, courage and strength to get through difficult times.

Seek out comfort from those who love you.

If you feel ready, adopt a pet from a shelter. Loving, holding, stroking and caring for a pet is comforting and healthful for both of you.

Realize that these bad days will fade with time and new ones, filled with light and flowers and even love, will be there again for you to enjoy.

Be mother and father to yourself: you are worthy of love. (You know that, don't you?)

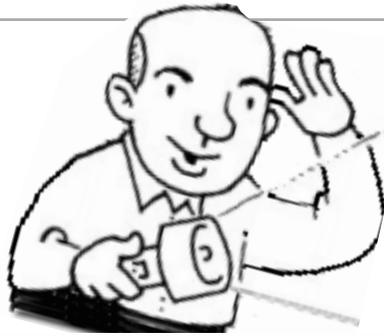


What to Do When You Feel Sad or Lost

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Large lined writing area for the student to write their response.

Date: _____



Imagine a giant post or billboard with your important words. What would they say?

Blessings for Those I Love

(WHAT I KNOW)

May you reach your fullest self and grow in appreciation of the life which has been given to you.

May you experience only joy and love and good health.

May you remember I have always loved you and may you, in turn, freely offer your love to others.

May the world find peace and all people be treated kindly and with respect.

May you realize your deepest dreams.

May you find pleasure in every moment of your life.

May you accomplish all that you are capable of doing.

May you have good luck in life.

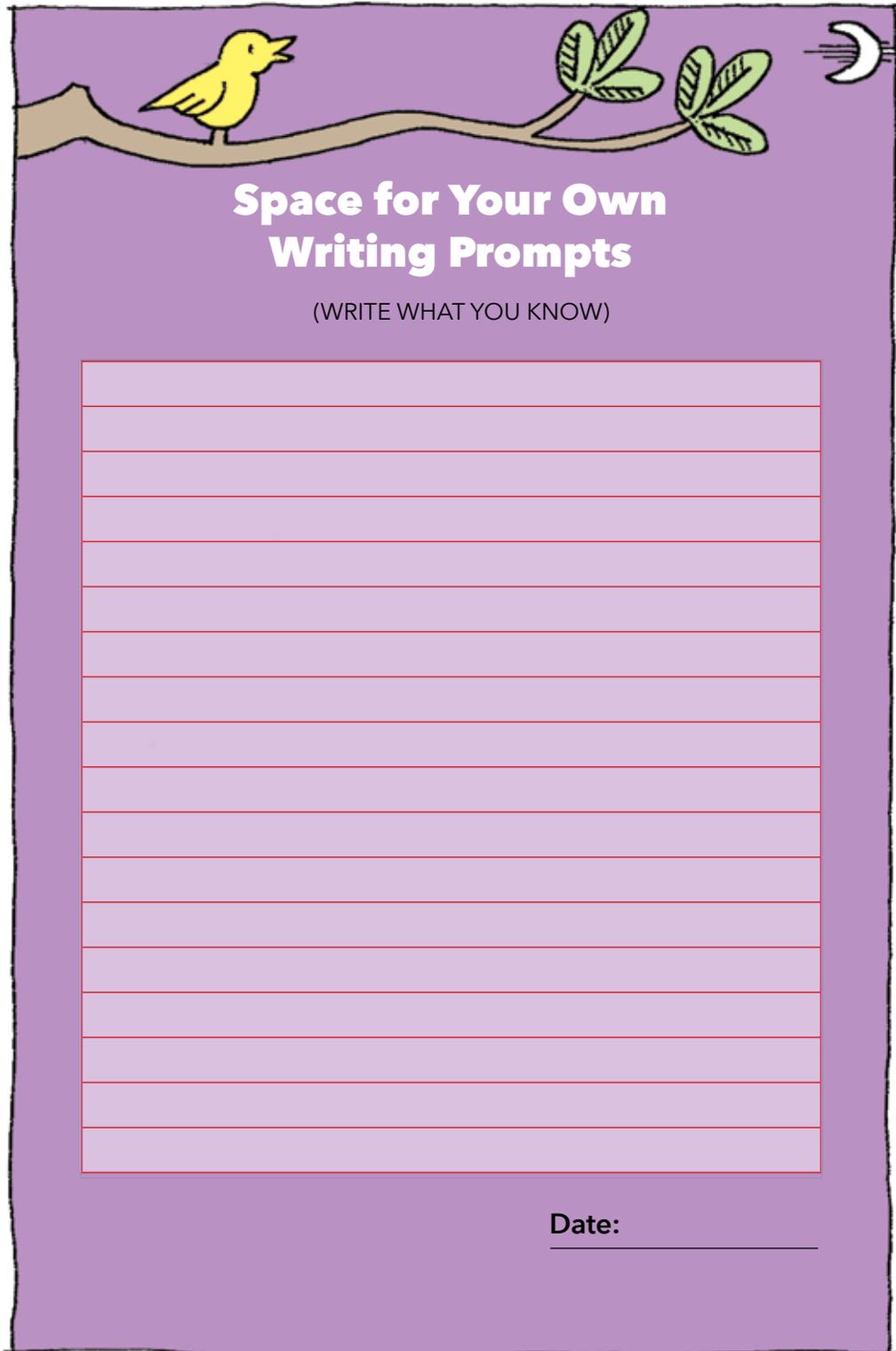
Blessings for Those I Love

(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Lined writing area for the student to write their blessings.

Date: _____





Space for Your Own Writing Prompts
(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Date: _____



Space for Your Own Writing Prompts
(WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW)

Date: _____



About the Author

In his many books as well as in his work as a newspaper editor, **Bill Zimmerman** has pioneered innovative writing techniques to help people express all the

important things within them. His books and web sites are used in literacy and English Language Learning programs around the world and to encourage creative thinking and expression.

His web sites are: <http://www.billztreasurechest.com>, which features excerpts from all his books; <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com>, which enables visitors to create their own online comic strips, and <http://www.somethingtowriteabout.com>, his writing prompts blog for students. Please visit them.

Among his popular books are:

- Pocket Doodles for Kids
- Pocket Doodles for Young Artists
- Make Beliefs: A Gift for Your Imagination
- Lunch Box Letters: Writing Notes of Love and Encouragement to Your Children
- How to Tape Instant Oral Biographies

Zimmerman's work has been featured on The Today Show, on the PBS acclaimed Ancestors Series, and in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and such magazines as Family Circle Magazine, Esquire, Business Week, Reader's Digest and Essence.



About the Artist

Tom Bloom is an artist who has brought joy to the world with his cartoons and illustrations which have appeared in leading publications, including The New York Times, The New Yorker, Fortune, Barron's and many more. He has collaborated with Bill on many other books.

Share With Us

Your feedback on using this book is very welcome. Please be encouraged to send your thoughts or suggestions on how we can improve this book, including new writing topics to help you review your life, along with your permission to use your ideas. For every idea used, a free copy of one of Bill Zimmerman's books will be sent to you.

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Another Free Interactive Digital Journal
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