

### Owning Our Narratives: Writing & Performance (Session Two), *Specialty Track 2*

<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Caroline Rothstein
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	In session two of "Owning Our Narratives: Writing & Performance," participants will explore what it means to cultivate, own, and share our personal narratives, stories, and opinions using writing, poetry, and performance.
<b>TOPICS:</b>	Camp-wide/Large Group Programs, Communication Skills, Community Building, Gender, Sex and Sexuality, Global Jewish Community, Group Dynamics, Identity, Inclusion- Special Needs, Jewish Culture, Jewish Values, Leadership Development, Life Cycle Events, Performance, Prayer- Alternative, Social Justice, Storytelling, Team Building, Teen Programs, Theater, Writing
<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE:</b>	The goal of session two of "Owning Our Narratives: Writing & Performance," is for participants to feel comfortable owning their narratives, and writing about their stories and truths, as well as learning how to teach these skills to their campers.
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	This can be used for any size group, any age, and any camp role! Adjust the content accordingly!
<b>LENGTH:</b>	60-75 Minutes
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Fat" by Caroline Rothstein.doc</li> <li>- "Fierce This House" by Caroline Rothstein.doc</li> <li>- Va'ani tefilati - Hebrew &amp; English.doc</li> <li>- Pslam 69,14 for POSTER SIZE</li> <li>- VIDEO LINKS for REPLICATION</li> </ul>
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VIDEO LINKS for REPLICATION (in appendix)</li> <li>• Psalm 69:14 in Hebrew &amp; provide English translations</li> <li>• Pens / writing utensils and paper for each participant</li> </ul>
<b>SETTING:</b>	Sitting in a circle (chairs preferred)

#### Session Description:

#### Share today's goal and agenda (5 minutes)

- Goal: to explore what it means to cultivate, own, and share our personal narratives, stories, and opinions using writing, poetry, and performance.
- Agenda:
  - Opening exercise.
  - Discussion on storytelling and ownership.
  - Performance.
  - Discussion / debrief.
  - Writing workshop.
  - Sharing.
  - Closing.

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- Reminder on ground rules – confidentiality / asking questions / “I” statements
- Ask each participant to answer the following questions, and go around the room:  
What’s your most pressing thought since our last session? (5 minutes)

### Transition into discussion on story ownership (5 minutes):

- Ask and discuss / facilitate dialogue around these questions:
  - What does it mean for your story to be told versus to tell your story?

### Ask participants to get paper / writing utensils for a free-write, and their stories from last session (10 minutes):

- Ask participants to review/reread their personalized tabloid story – is it sensationalized? If so, why? If not, why not? Also, who owns that story? Take five minutes to free-write on this idea.
- Underline one thing that surprised you.
- Star your favorite part.
- Ask for volunteers to share either what surprised them or their favorite part.
- Ask participants shake out their body, and if they’re able to stand, to please stand!

### Transition into performance and discussion (15 minutes):

- Caroline performs her poem “Fat.” [or follow the provided YouTube link for her performance.]
- Guide participants into three deep, transitional breathes.
- Ask participants:
  - What resonated?
  - What did you experience?
- Caroline performs her poem “Fierce This House.” [or follow the provided YouTube link for her performance.]
- Ask participants:
  - What resonated?
  - What did you experience?
  - Is there anything in particular that stands out about the art form itself?
- Ask participants shake out their body, and if they’re able to stand, to please stand!

### Transition into writing workshop:

- Bring up poster of va’ani tefilati / Psalm 69:14
- Bring up translations (written onto poster in different colored markers)
- Note that it’s in the Rosh Hashanah service and also said as part of the Torah service on non-Shabbat festivals.

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- Think about va'ani tefilati – “I am my prayer.” (5 minutes)
  - What does it mean to be your own prayer?
  
- Ask participants to take out their writing utensils and follow the following prompt.
  - Make a list of five important “stories” about your past / that have already happened. They do not have to be traumatic! They can be anything - fun, exciting, mysterious, challenging - all that matters is that they are important! Think about people, or things. Feel free to map out these moments, instead of simply listing. (5 minutes)
    - Feel free to be visual and/or use colored pencils.
  
  - Make a list of three intentions / future “stories” of how you want your future to unfold – how you want to write your story for the future. (5 minutes)
    - Feel free to be visual and/or use colored pencils.
  
  - Pick one story from each list – write a letter from your past to your future, guiding yourself on how to proceed knowing what you already know, and knowing what you want. (20 minutes)
    - Can also frame it as: write your future story knowing what you know about your past.
    - Can be a poem, or prose, or both. Important that it be textual and could be read as text.

### Sharing (10 minutes):

- Invite volunteers to share what they've written.

### Closing exercise (5 minutes):

- Pass out blank index cards; everyone takes a blank index card and writes one word they're taking away with them from today's session.

### Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

I encourage participants and counselors to create their own prompts and content driven writing workshops. There are so many different themes one can write about. Encourage campers to take ownership of their stories, truths, and voice! Think about what your camps and campers' needs and interests are, and use that to inform the topics you choose. Feel free to use other materials to inspire discussion and writing beyond Caroline's poems. Are there other poems on YouTube? Other poems in Jewish texts? Clips from movies? TV shows? Famous quotes? Use your imagination! Have fun!

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#### APPENDICES:

- Text of “Fat” by Caroline Rothstein: <http://www.germmagazine.com/fat-by-caroline-rothstein/>
- Video of “Fat” by Caroline Rothstein: <https://youtu.be/l1nY3uDFmj8>
- Video of “Fierce This House” by Caroline Rothstein: <https://vimeo.com/carolinerothstein/fiercethishouse>



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