



My Life in Europe



Write of you with us

Grazia Chiarini – Sara Calcini
LUA



Autobiography: what does it mean?

The word Autobiography comes from the greek αὐτός «myself», βίος «life», γράφω «write» : I write about myself

If I write about you or him, her or them I write a Biography.



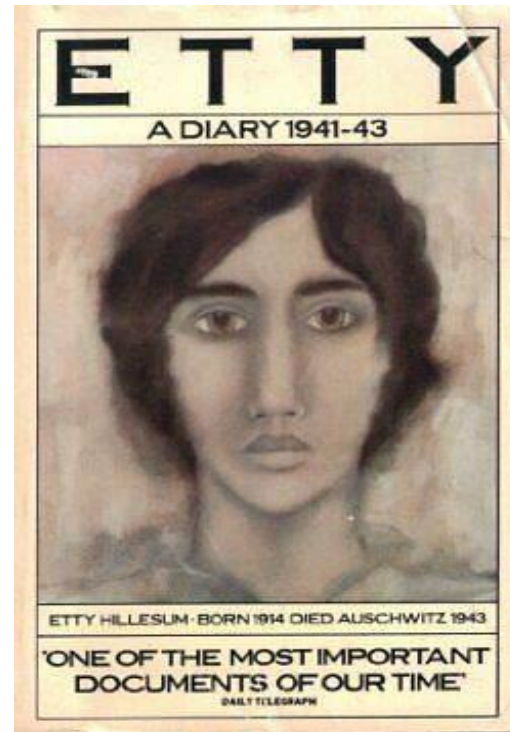
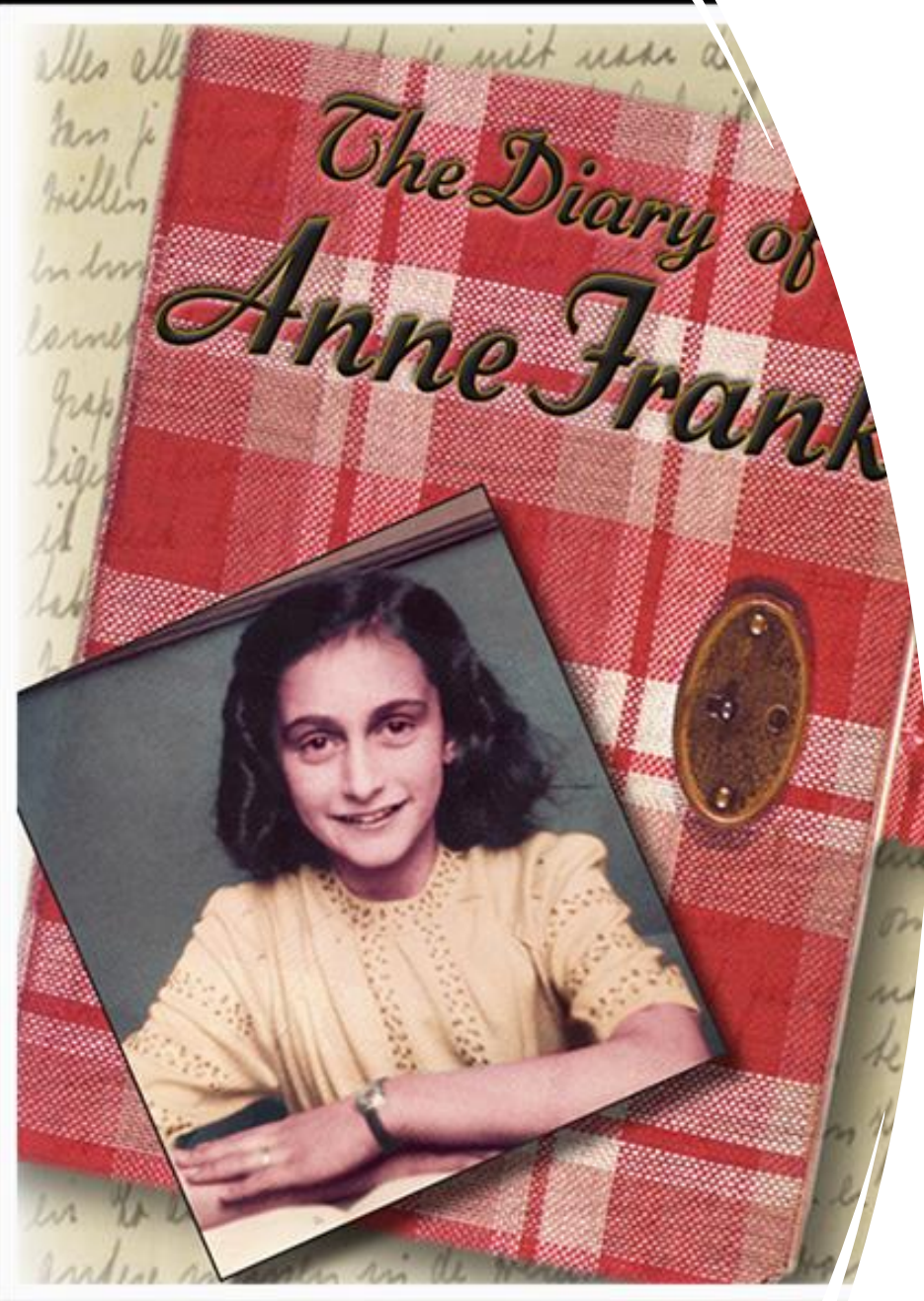
Diary and Autobiography

Diary is a narration, through writing, almost daily. It is written for themselves, or to an imaginary interlocutor. It is often written at a young age and the linguistic register is informal.

Autobiography is an ancient literary genre for all those who want to tell of themselves and their lives, of what they have done and learned over the years. Through the autobiography everyone, at any age, learns to document their own experience, to leave a testimony of themselves to others, to think and reflect better.

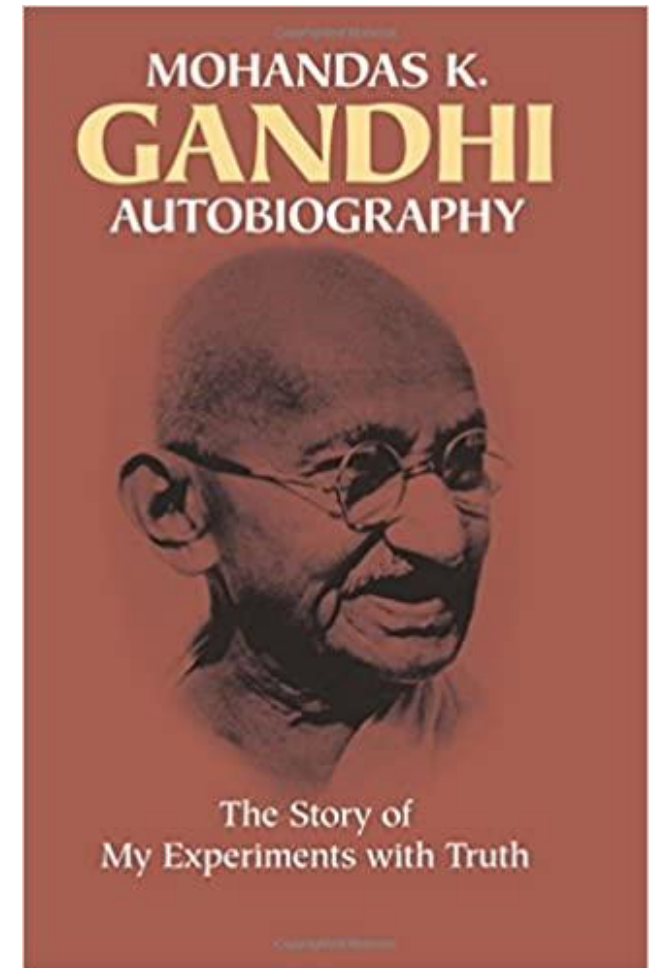
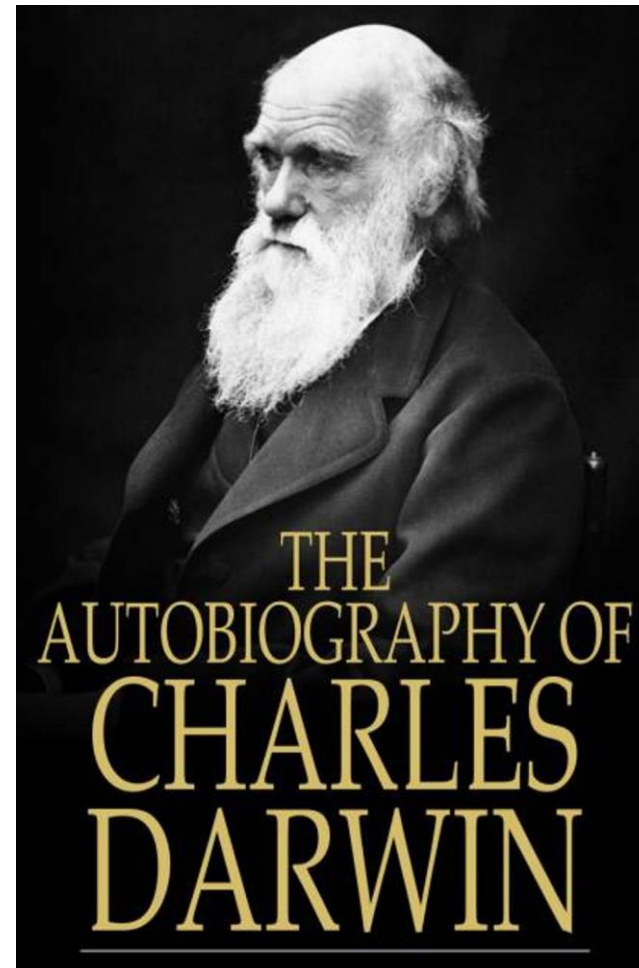
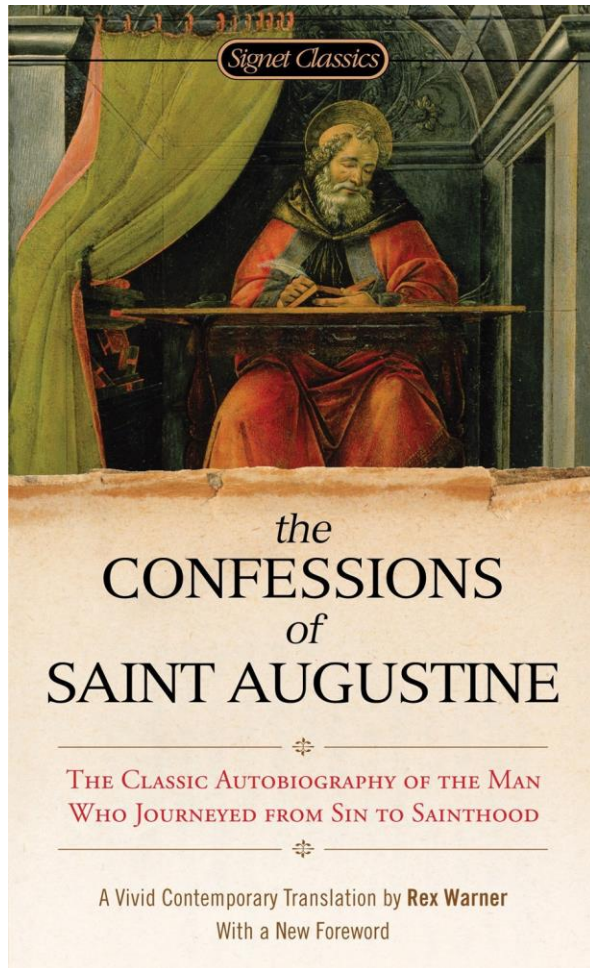


DIARIES



**The Diary of
Tolstoy's Wife,
1860-1891**

Autobiographies



Individual, collective memory and historical memory

We can have :

Individual memory: it is the story of the life of an individual written by him/ her or another person

Collective memory: it is the collection of life stories (memories of a generation, a family, a historical period, the pandemic).

This is also **Historical memory**

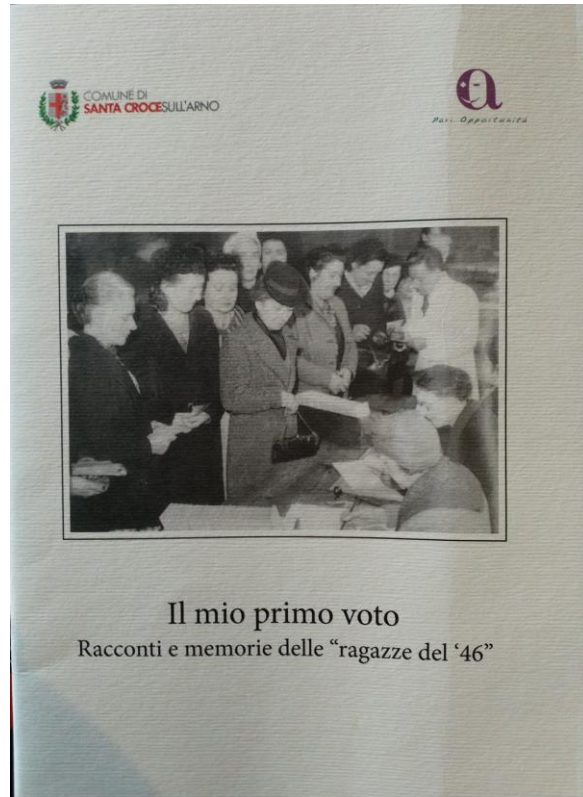


Women's voices project

Santa Croce sull'Arno (Pisa) in Tuscany (Italy)

Project "Voices of women" collected the life stories of women from 65 years and over (a woman was 102 years old), through various meetings in different locations (senior residence, centres for children, schools).

A small book of stories, photos, drawings was made (2005-2009)



**Other stories, other books
on women's first vote and women in 1968
2017-2018**



**The stories in the “Meacci”
senior residence
Santa Croce sull’Arno
Pisa**

- 2011-2012-2013-2019
- Stories of recipes, proverbs, passions
 - The last book is :
“ I tell myself. My passion is”

At the time of the Coronavirus 2020-2021

Meetings at a distance,
the pleasure of
narrating

Santa Croce sull'Arno - Livorno



At the time of the Coronavirus

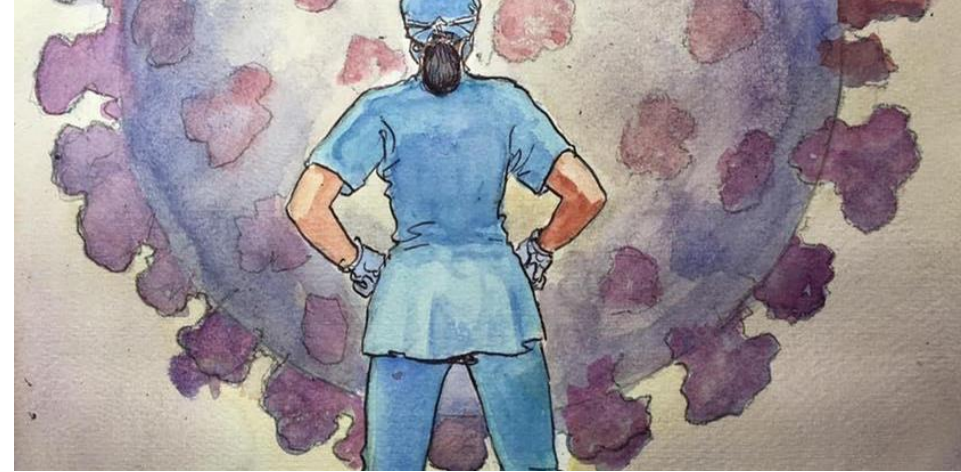
The Free University of the Autobiography of Anghiari

Project of LUA : “Dear LUA, I write to you”: to write about
yourself at the time of the coronavirus” @caraluatiscrivo

From all over Italy

Thoughts, music and poems with whatsapp and email.

All the writings were collected in a book



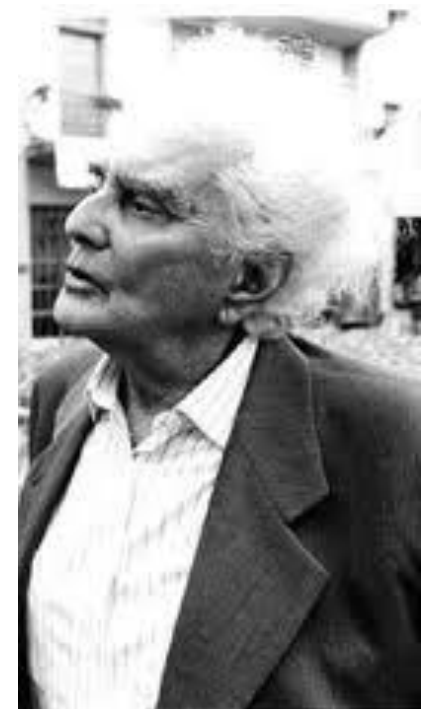
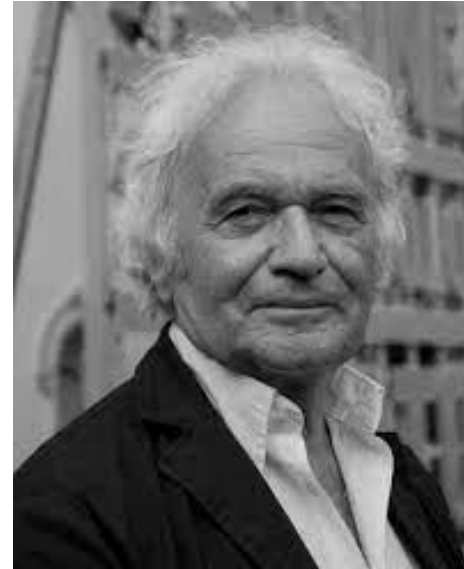
Marilena Capellino
Sara Degasperi
Scrivere di sé ai tempi
del Coronavirus
@caraluatiscrivo
Prefazione di Paolo Di Paolo

What is the Free University of the Autobiography of Anghiari?

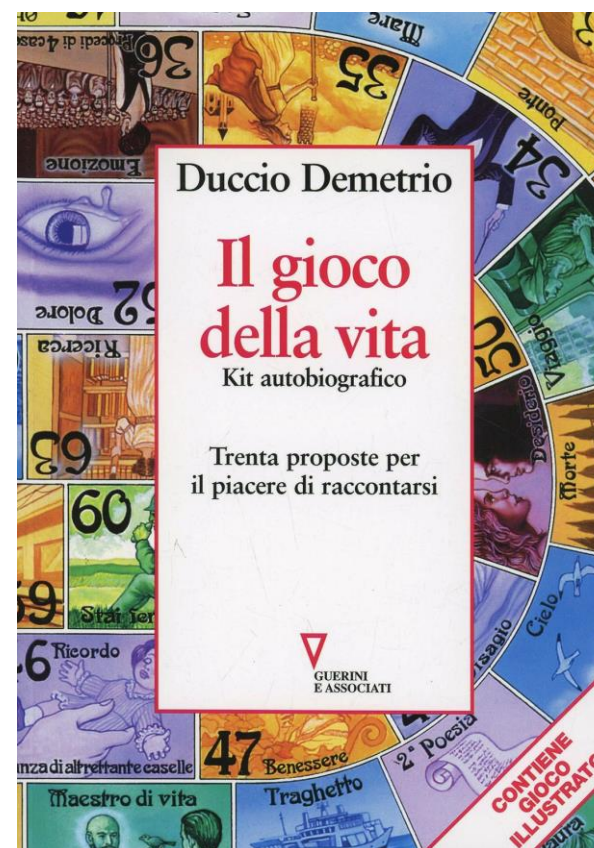
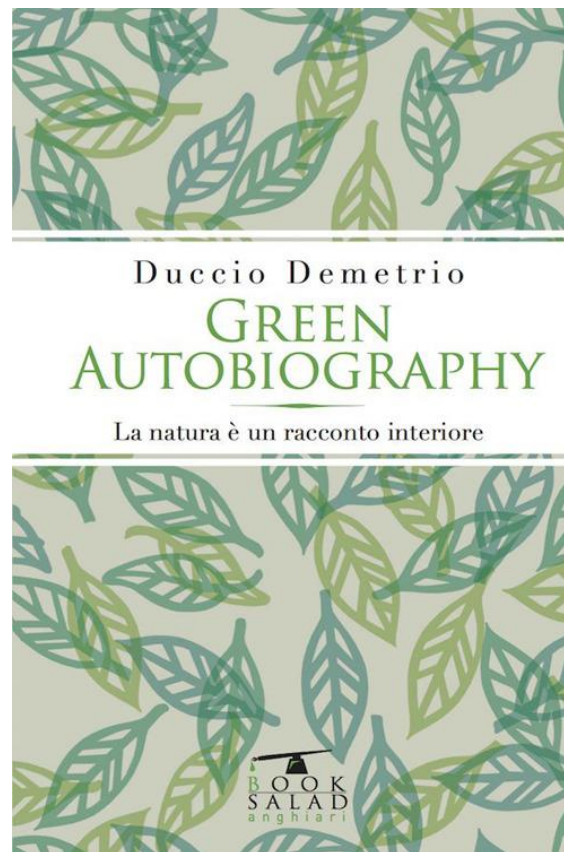
The Free University of the Autobiography of Anghiari was founded as a non-profit cultural association by Duccio Demetrio and Saverio Tutino in 1998.

The meeting between the scholar of autobiography in the formation of adults and the inventor of the Diaristic Archive of Pieve Santo Stefano started the constitution of a research community, of formation, of diffusion of the culture of memory in every field.

The association promotes training and research through various activities : the school, specializations, seminars, the Study Center.



LIBERA UNIVERSITA' DELL'AUTOBIOGRAFIA DI ANGHIAI



Writing for knowing each other





The autobiographical methodology of the LUA

The methodology is a not rigid model that can be adapted creatively according to different contexts, but that has some precise characteristics: individual writing, the sharing of the text is not mandatory, the restitution.

In the meetings a circumscribed space-time is created, a space of well-being and freedom in which everyone can take time for himself, opening up to new possibilities and perspectives.

Through exercises guided by a facilitator, readings and commentaries of literary passages and sharing of testimonies, we develop deep self-listening and reflection on lived experiences.






The autobiographical methodology of the LUA

Autobiographical thought awakens images, emotions and memories, it also pushes us to question ourselves, to ask questions, to have new motivations.

The narration becomes an effective instrument of growth, care and valorization of people both at the individual level and at the level of social and educational relations.

It is essential that those who participate in the workshops want to deepen their knowledge of themselves and be willing to put themselves in the game.





The fable of the stork

There's a man who lives in a round house near the pond. One night he is awakened by a big noise outside: he goes out in the dark to understand what happened.

He goes to the pond; he stumbles, then falls into a ditch and gets up, then into another, then into another.

Then he heads south, but hears the noise again and returns north.

Then he sees a hole in the pond embankment, and works to close it. He finally goes back to sleep.

In the morning he looks out at the window and, looking at his path, he sees that it had the shape of a stork!

The fable of the stork: a metaphor

The Italian philosopher Adriana Cavarero begins her reflection on the narrative citing the African fable of the stork told by the Danish writer Karen Blixen (Cavarero 2001).

The fable of the stork is a metaphor of how important it is to be able to connect all the fragments of one's life. You also need to be open to unexpected outcomes and wait until the game is over to grasp its meaning.

The sense is the shape of the stork that the man has traced. They are his steps on the sand, the having walked.

The author asks, "when the drawing of my life will be complete, will I see - or will others see - a stork?"

Autobiography is care

Autobiography is a path that goes from the past, through memories, to the present and the future.

Always, when you write, you discover something of yourself, something that gives meaning to your life path.

In this sense writing is care, in the way it makes evident the latent meanings present in each individual.



A close-up photograph of a fountain pen with a gold-colored nib and barrel, resting on a piece of aged, cream-colored paper. The paper has faint, handwritten text in cursive script, including the word "refrigerator" and "coolification". A large, white, torn-edge shaped overlay is centered over the image, containing the text "The benefits of writing" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

The benefits of writing



It increases your creativity

Write about yourself is a creative act: it helps you to express yourself better, to seek new solutions and ideas, to imagine and dream.

It helps to navigate your feelings

When you write, turn all your emotions on a piece of paper. Don't be surprised if you want to cry or laugh while you do it.

What you transmit with your writings helps you to manage emotions and learn to live them from another point of view.





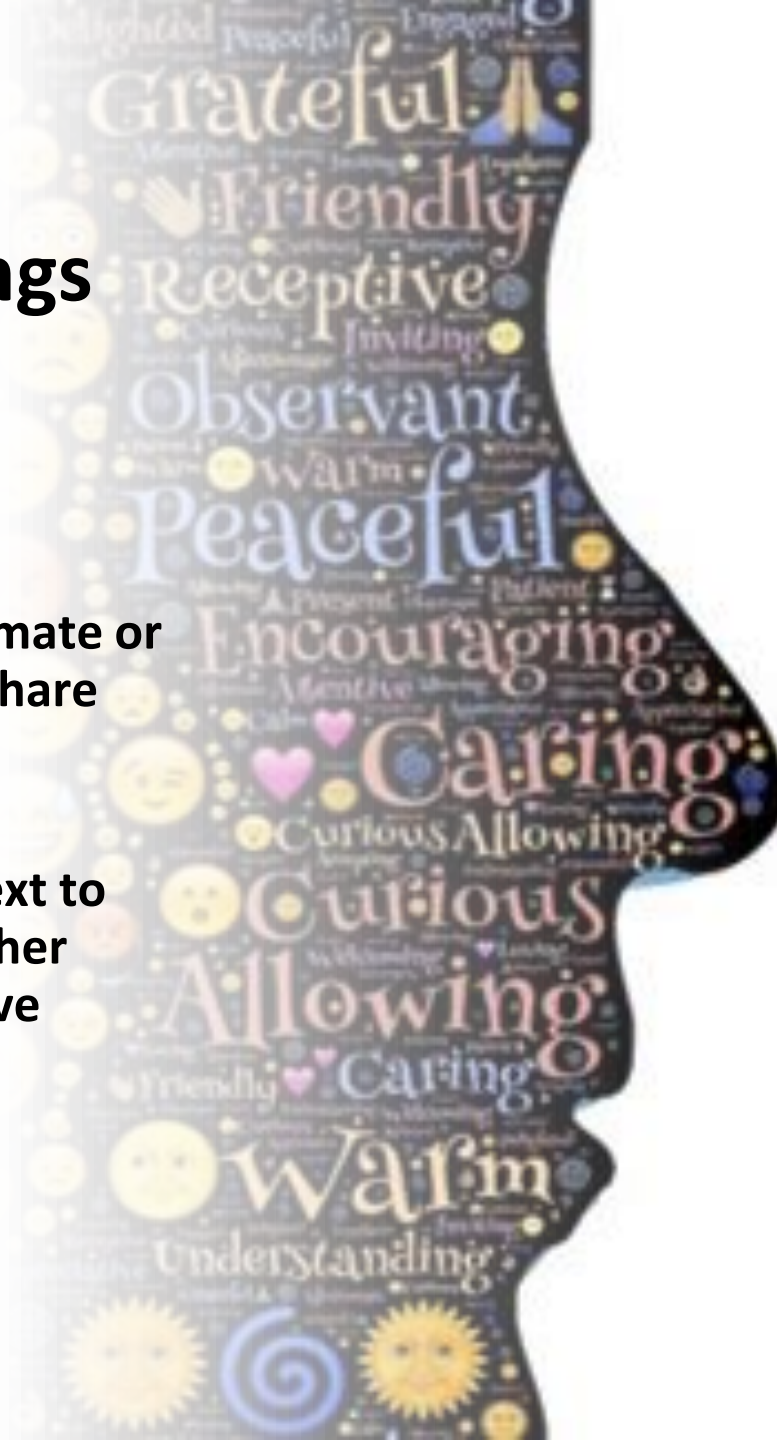
It allows you to know yourself

Writing helps to strengthen our identity and to reflect on actions and experiences as if we were rereading them from the outside

**It allows you to
share your feelings**

**What you write can be intimate or
shown to other people to share
what you feel and have
experienced.**

**The fact of showing your text to
others allows you to get other
points of view and to receive
empathy.**





It helps our memory

It tests our memory because it pushes us and remind us vicissitudes and details of our life

Remembering the past helps us to better reconsider the present and to plan our future

It favors self-esteem


**It makes us retrace our
history and makes us
identify our skills and
resources.**



A woman with short brown hair, wearing a beige cardigan and blue jeans, is sitting on a light grey sofa. She is smiling and gesturing with her hands while talking to a therapist. The therapist, a woman with blonde hair and glasses wearing a light blue shirt, is seen from the back, sitting in a white armchair and holding a pen over a notepad. They are in a room with large windows in the background covered by white horizontal blinds. The lighting is bright and natural.

Writing and psychology

Within a therapy path, writing of oneself can also be used to integrate the narrative, to facilitate processes or express difficult emotions.



Some tips for those who want to write about themselves



When you write

**Don't worry about the syntax, the spelling,
the meaning of what you write**

**You need to release your feelings and let your
emotions fly**





Connect various aspects of your life

**In your text, you can connect various aspects of
your life: work, emotional relationships...**

**By describing in words what concerns you in every
aspect of your life, you will be able to see the
connection between these concerns.**



Listen! Don't judge!



**Remember not to judge what you write or
what others write, there is no right or wrong
content, everything is fine because it
represents our history.**

We are important.

The role of Facilitators



Caring for others

**The activity of writing is a
transformative activity
that makes participants
more independent of the
ability to tell about
themselves**



Important skills for the facilitator



NO JUDGMENT



ACTIVE LISTENING

Active Listening

An active listener

Tries to understand how the person in front feels and knows how to find the right words to communicate this empathy

It allows to face the emotions in a safe context



Attention and observation

**it is important to pay
attention and observe what
is happening**



At the beginning of writing meeting: Ice Breaker Games

To put the group at ease and start or end a writing, some games like this could be useful:

Three words at the beginning and three at the end

Choose a color or a tree or a flower to describe you

Write for five minutes freely



Writing stimuli or narrative devices

Various narrative devices are used to stimulate writing by the facilitator

Phrases, poems, music, literary passages, images, the cards of the game MYLIFE

that can stimulate memories

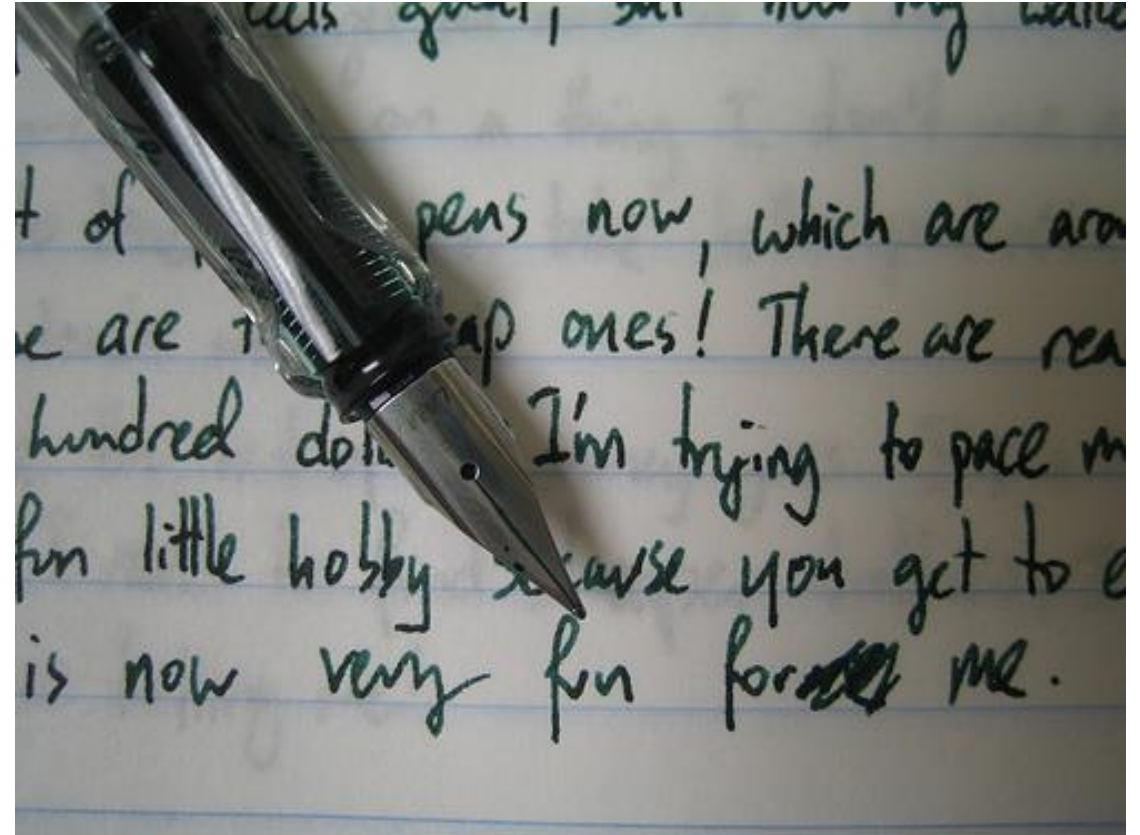
Some examples:

My first memory

I remember smelling that smell

My teacher

My first love



**Stimulate writing and
sharing without forcing**

***Would you like to write about
this?***

Who wants to share?

***Which of you has lived a similar
story?***



Get in the game

Write down your thoughts, memories, emotions and feelings, using during the session the silent time in which the person writes about himself.

This helps to achieve a sense of presence and closeness and increases the awareness and empathy

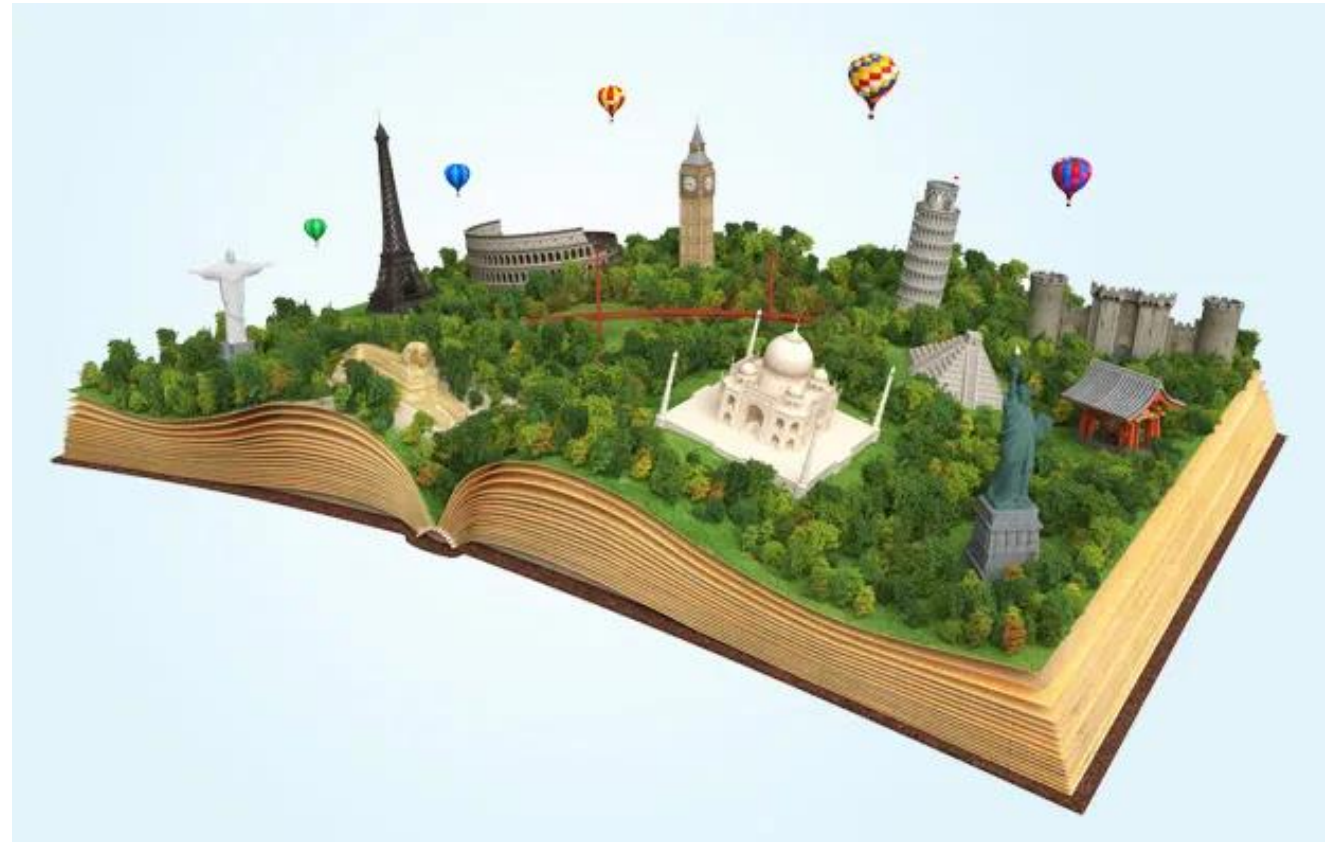


The context

The context in which the autobiographical intervention is carried out (for example if it is carried out individually or in a group), the choice of themes and educational activities are very important.

Autobiographical writing should not be seen as an isolated activity.

The world and relations with others often transpire in an autobiographical text.



Feedback and Self-assessment

How did I feel?
(Emotions)

Was I effective within the
group?

You can take notes on
what emerges even with
a title or with a few lines



After each meeting the facilitator can fill out a short form

- Difficulties faced during the meeting
- Difficulties observed in the participants on an emotional, practical and relational level
- Positive notes
- Observations and reflections



***MY LIFE* in Europe**

The cards of the game



The cards of the game MY LIFE are used to stimulate the narration and are 64 that remember *“The game of the goose”*

Each card contains a word relative to an image.

Through the observation of the paper, everyone can write what he/she remembers in relation to an episode of his life.



There are two versions of the game:

- Paper version
- Alpha version of the online game

***MYLIFE* in Europe**

For this first meeting

We use paper version of the game

Participants are divided into small groups

The facilitator in MYLIFE is called Master.

Everyone writes their name in a piece of paper and folds it in front of him.



Ice breaking for this meeting

Everyone, including the Master,
writes three words:

“At the beginning of this experience
I feel...”



Rules for the Paper game

The paper game consists of putting the cards on a plane in numerical order, with the images visible.

Cards can be placed horizontally or vertically in a row, or placed in a spiral as in the game of the goose.

Each player will have a signal or a small object of recognition and in turn will roll a dice game.





With your own signal will advance as many cards as is the number indicated by the die. Based on the image and the word indicated on the paper he will write a memory, thought, a poem, a song or make a drawing.

All participants can write or draw on that stimulus.





Players along with the master can propose variations of the game, choose a prize for who finishes the game first or in any other way

You can use the cards for more games





After each writing is desirable but not mandatory, sharing. We invite you to write only what you want and share in the group.

It is best to avoid writing the names and surnames of people not present for privacy reasons.



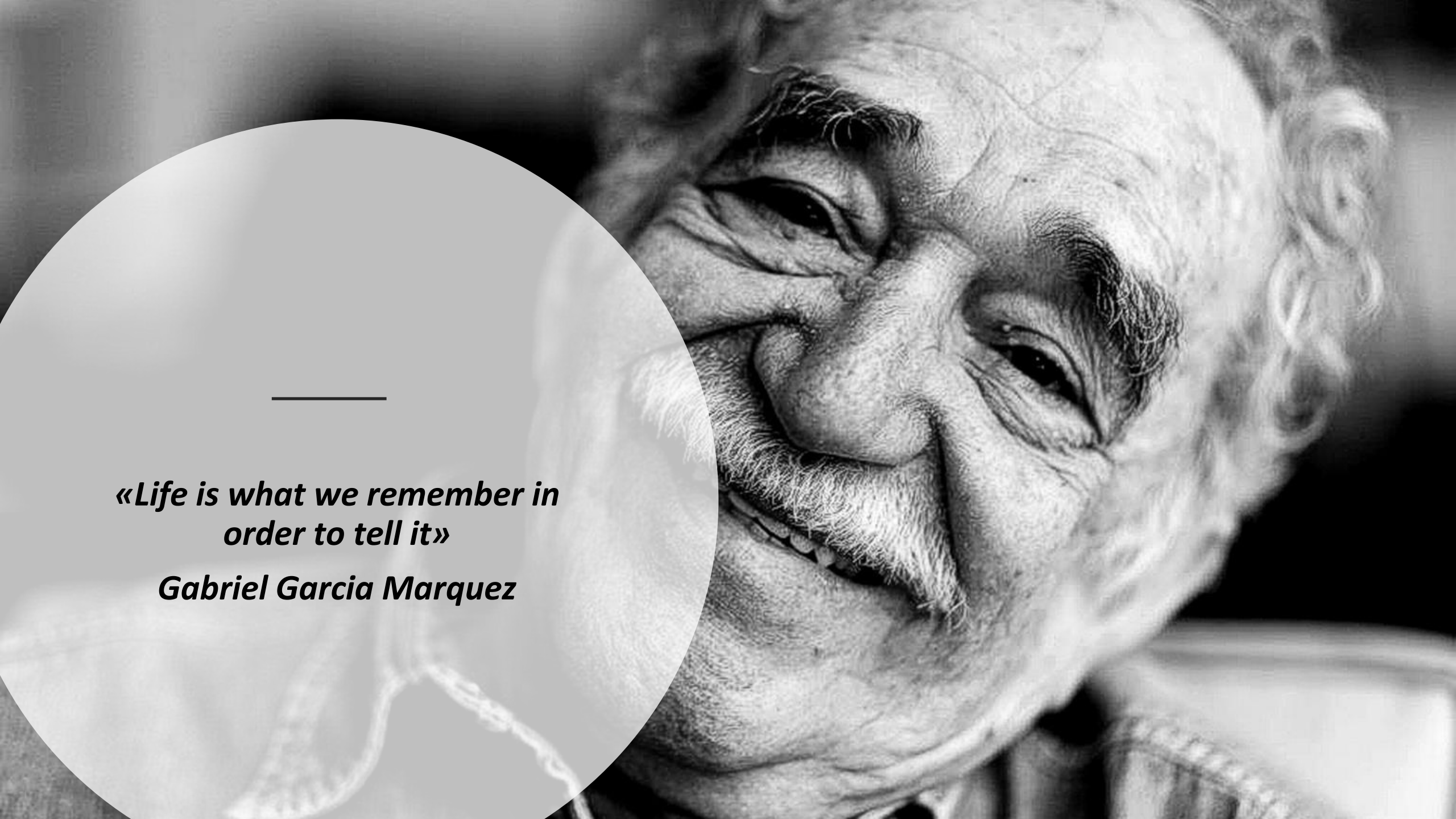
It is not necessary to be able to write well, nor to know grammar, but it is essential to be able to share in a serene and non-judgmental environment.

There is no beautiful or ugly script but all are equally interesting and important.

At the discretion of the master can be chosen mode to liven up the game that still remains a game collection of writings autobiographical



You Are Important!

A black and white close-up portrait of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, an elderly man with a mustache and wrinkled skin, smiling gently. The image is partially obscured by a large, semi-transparent white circle on the left side, which contains the text.

***«Life is what we remember in
order to tell it»***

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Thanks for the attention
And now
LET'S PLAY!

