

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



Strategic Partnerships Adult Education N° 2020-1-IT02-KA204-079571

# 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

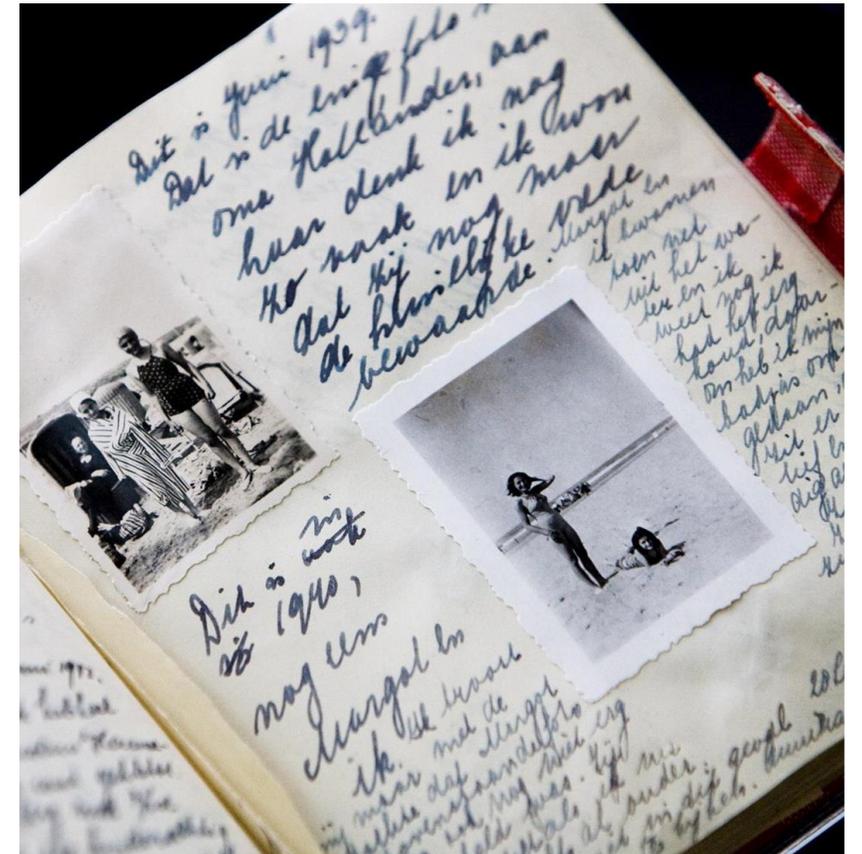
If I write about you or him, her or them I write a Biography.



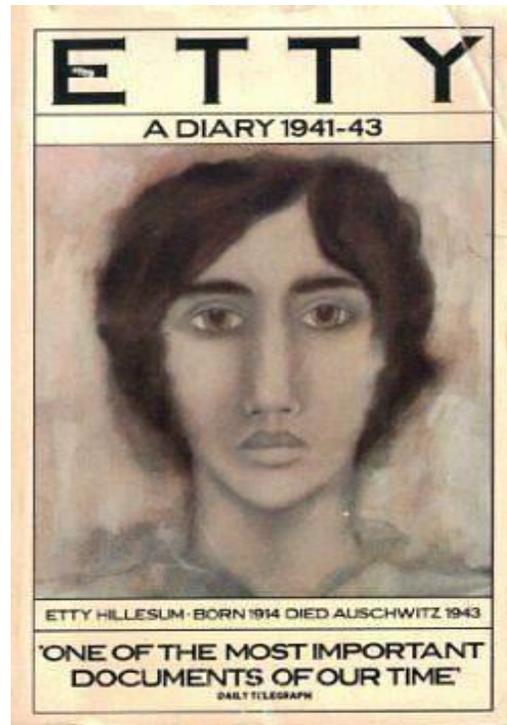
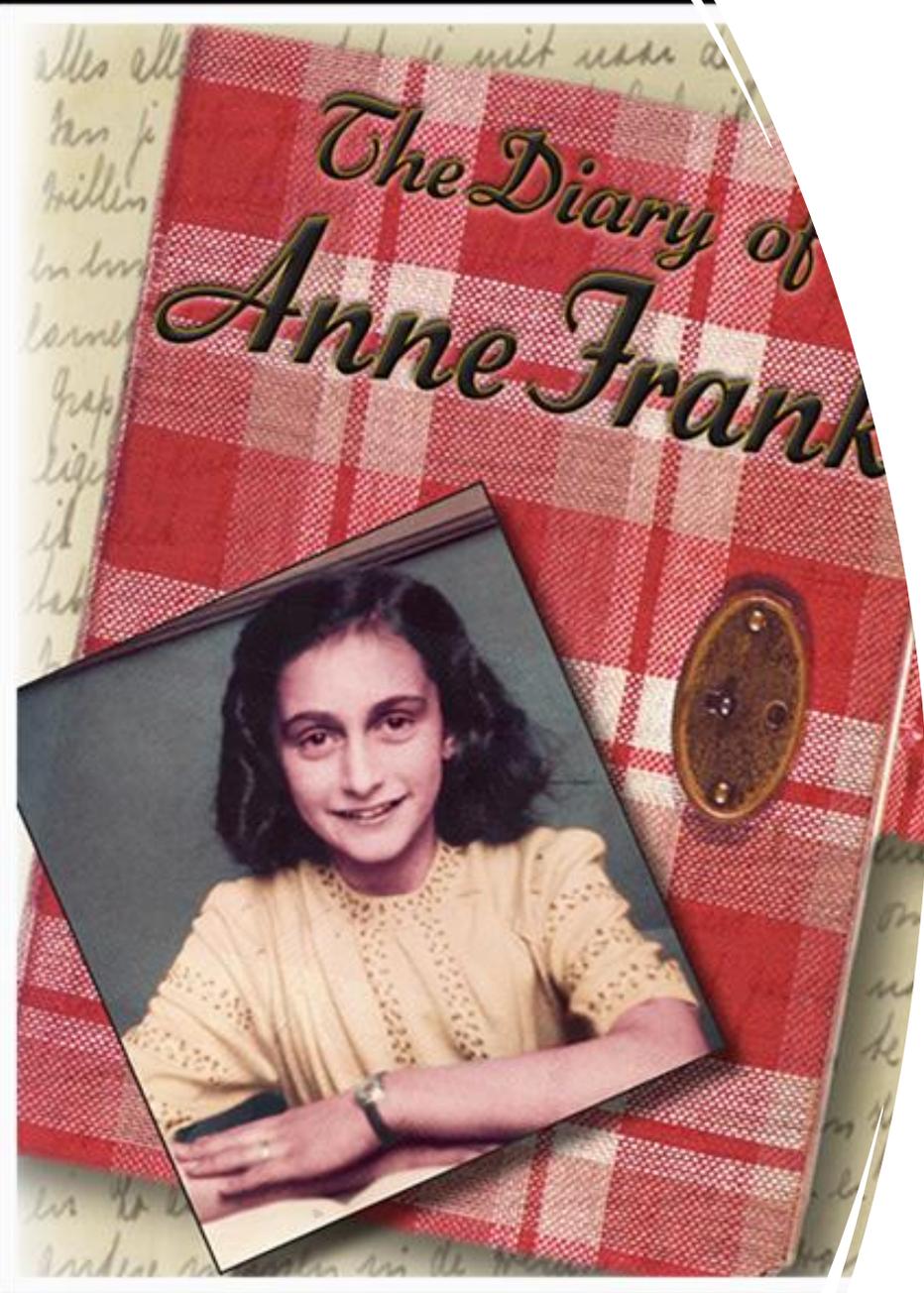
# Diary and Autobiography

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.

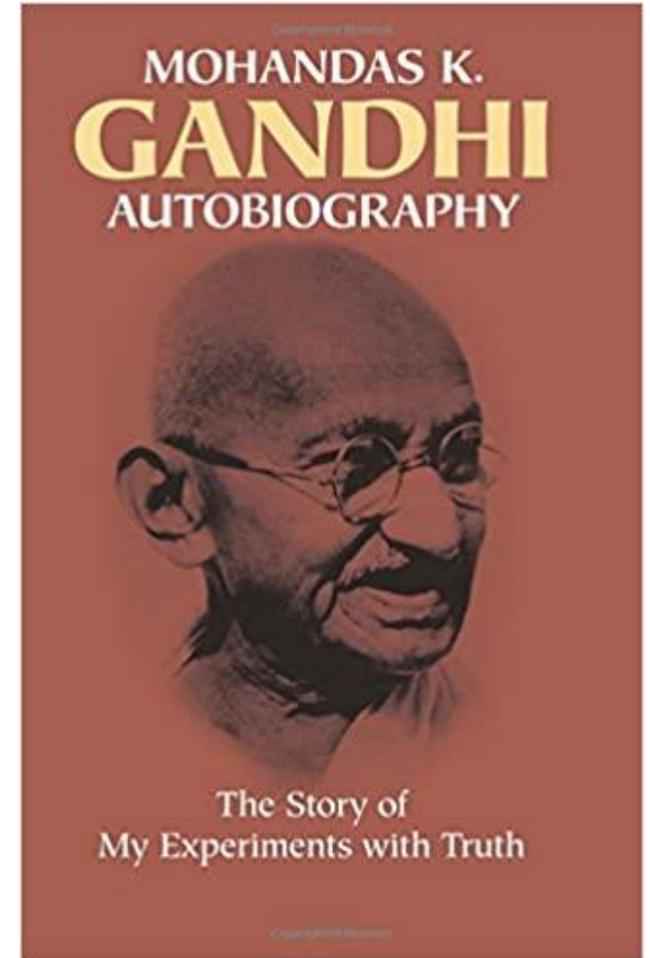
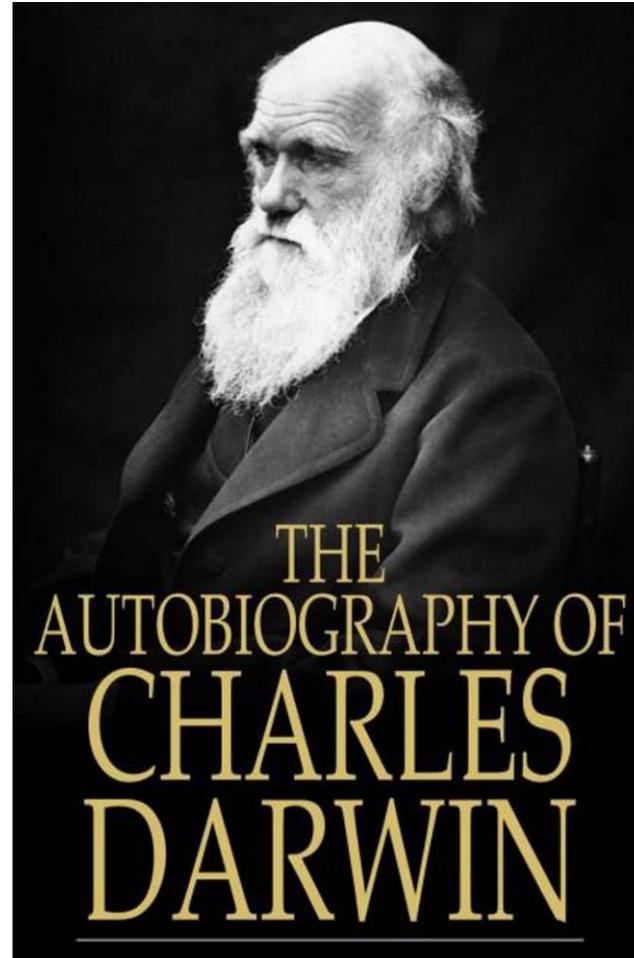
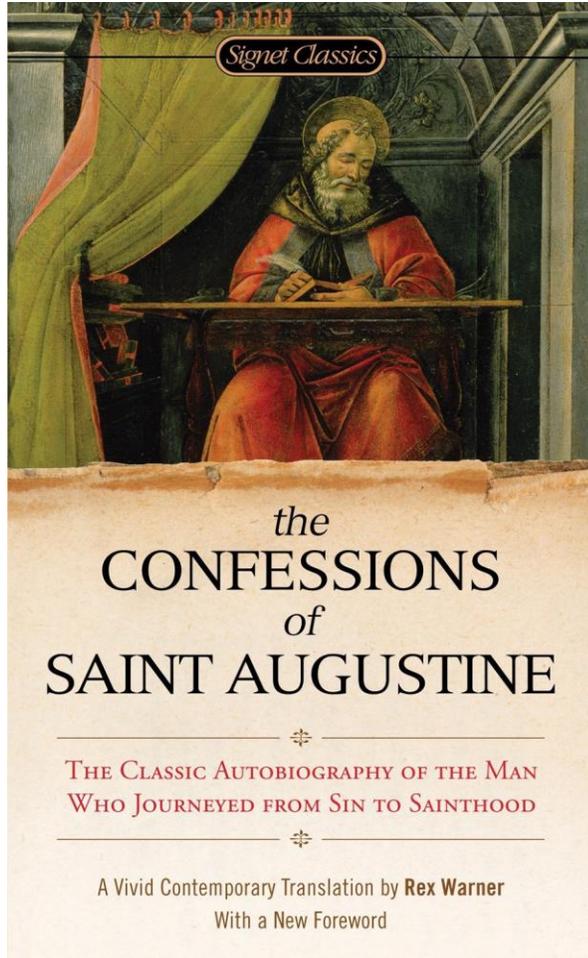


# DIARIES



**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**

**DI DONNE**

Comune di Santa Croce sull'Arno  
Pari opportunità - Politiche educative

# 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

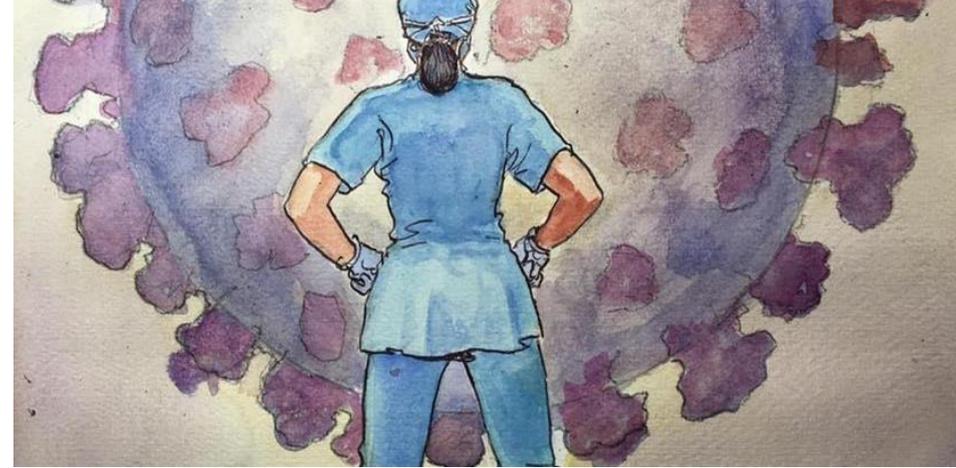
## The Free University of the Autobiography of Anghiari

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 Degasperì

Scrivere di sé ai tempi  
del Coronavirus

@caraluatiscrivo

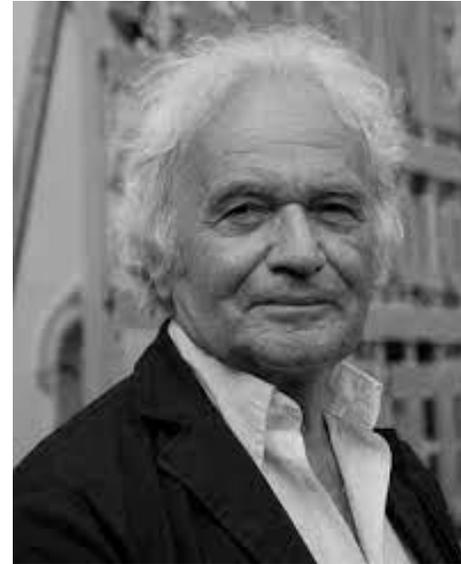
Prefazione di Paolo Di Paolo

# What is the Free University of the Autobiography of Anghiari?

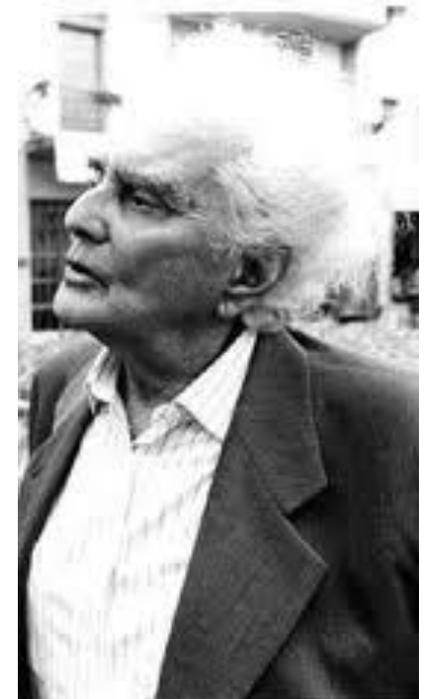
The Free University of the Autobiography of Anghiari was founded as a non-profit cultural association by Duccio Demetrio and Saverio Tutino in 1998.

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.

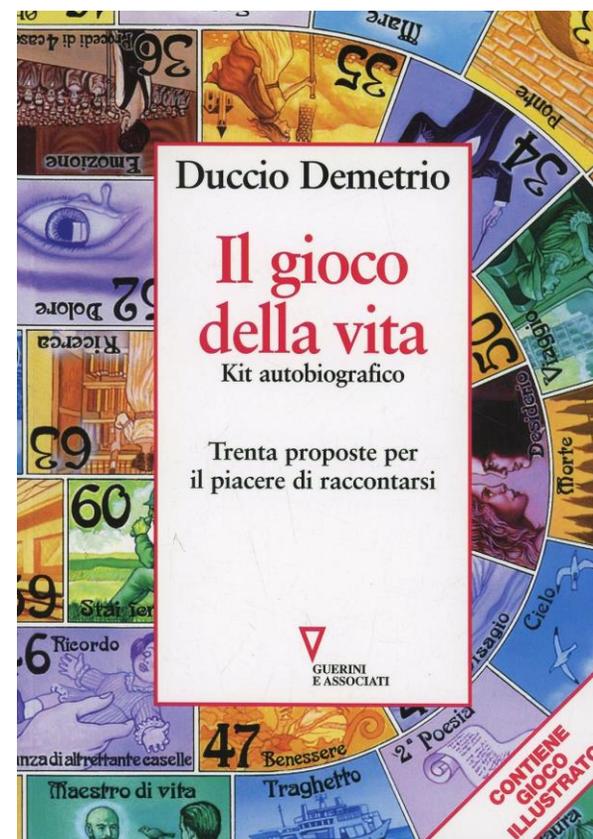
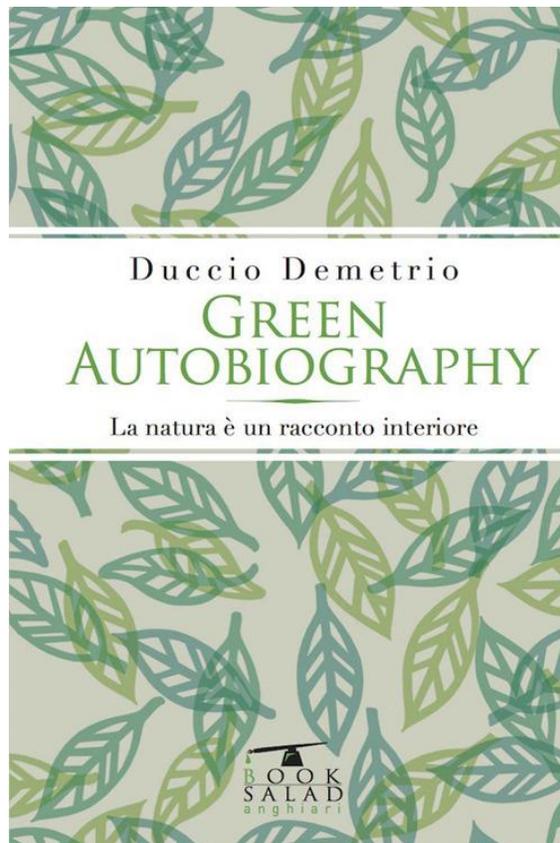
The association promotes training and research through various activities : the school, specializations, seminars, the Study Center.



*libera*  
**UNIVERSITÀ**  
*dell'AUTO*  
**BIOGRAFIA**  
di Anghiari



LIBERA UNIVERSITA' DELL'AUTOBIOGRAFIA DI ANGHIARI



Writing for knowing each other





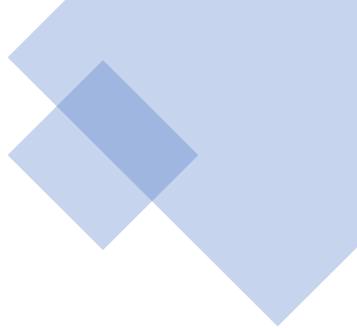
# **The autobiographical methodology of the LUA**

**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?"

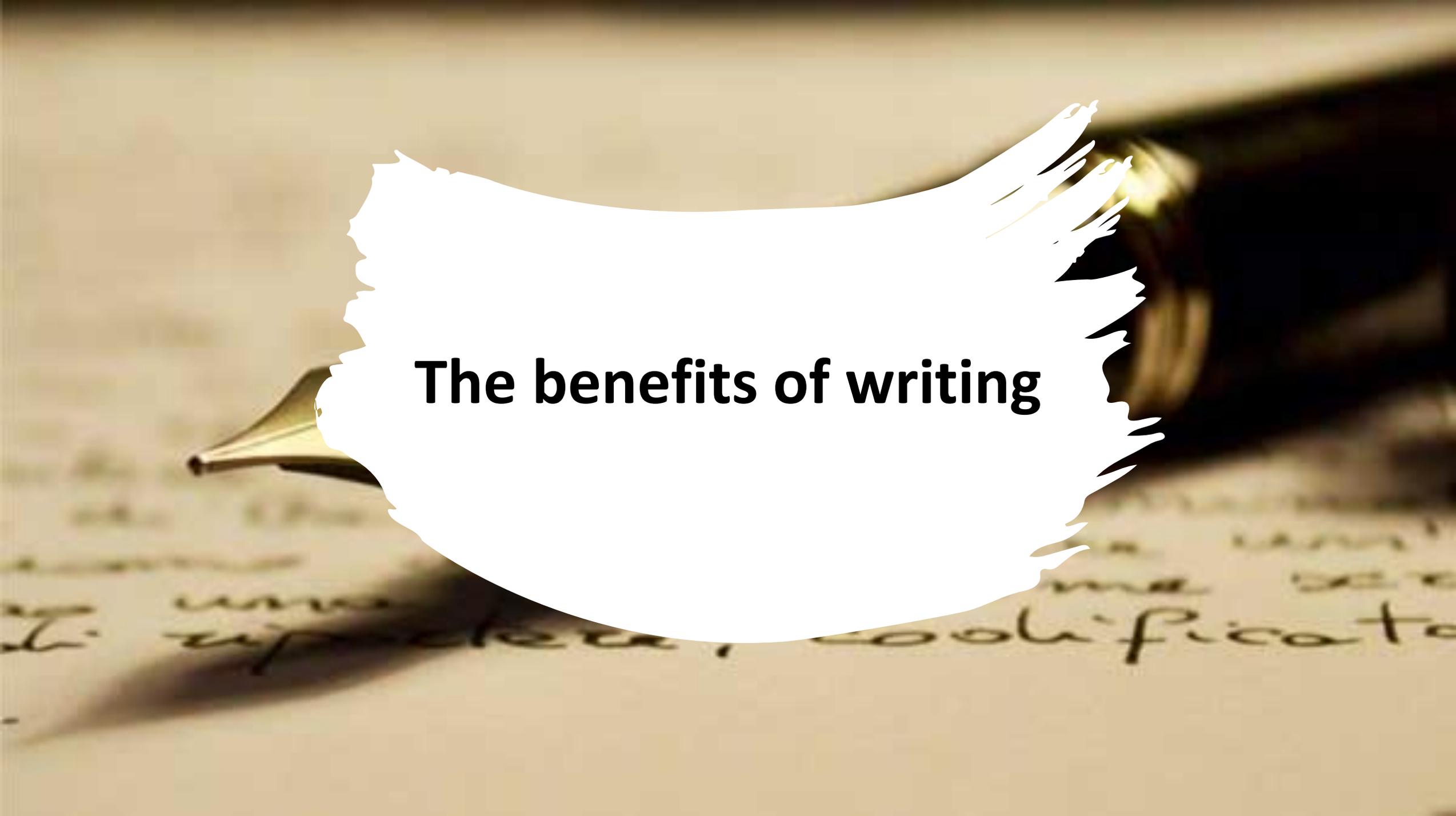
# Autobiography is care

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 nib resting on a piece of aged, yellowed paper. The paper has some faint, handwritten text in cursive, including the word "refrigerator" and "coolification". A white, torn-paper graphic overlay is positioned in the center of the image, containing the text "The benefits of writing".

# **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.**





# **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

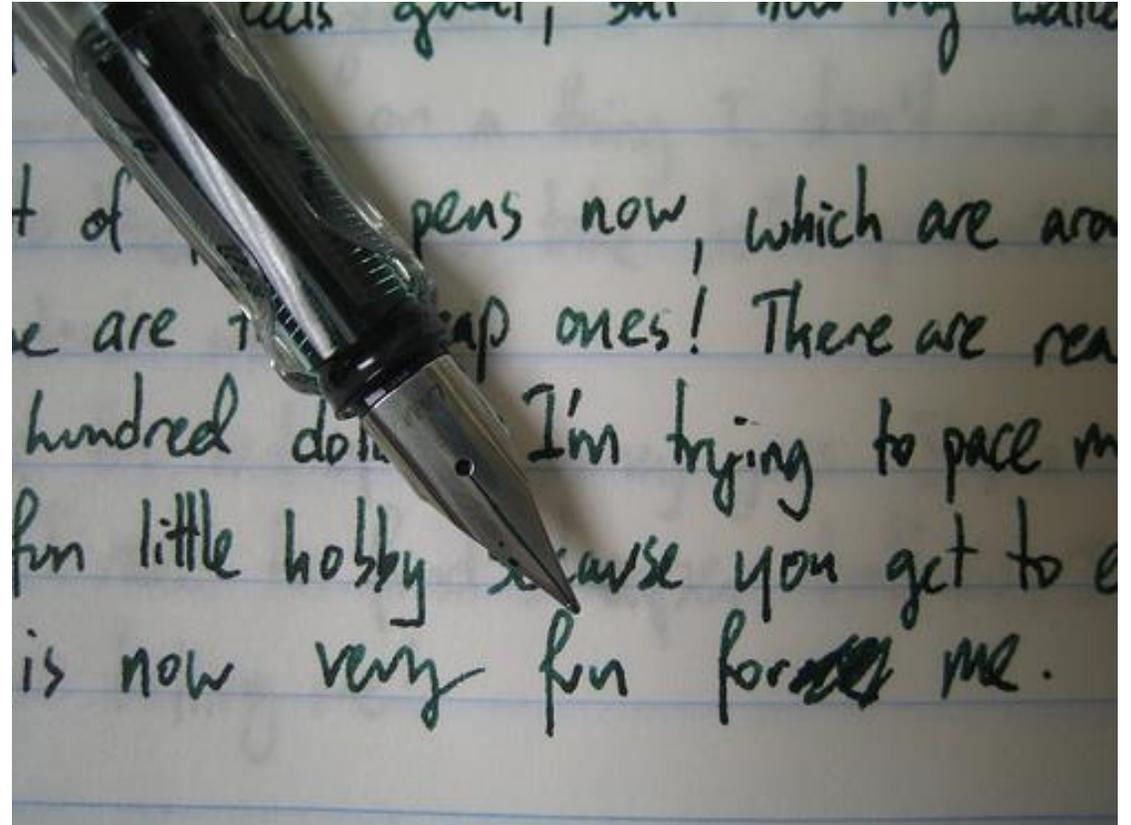
**Some examples:**

*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.**

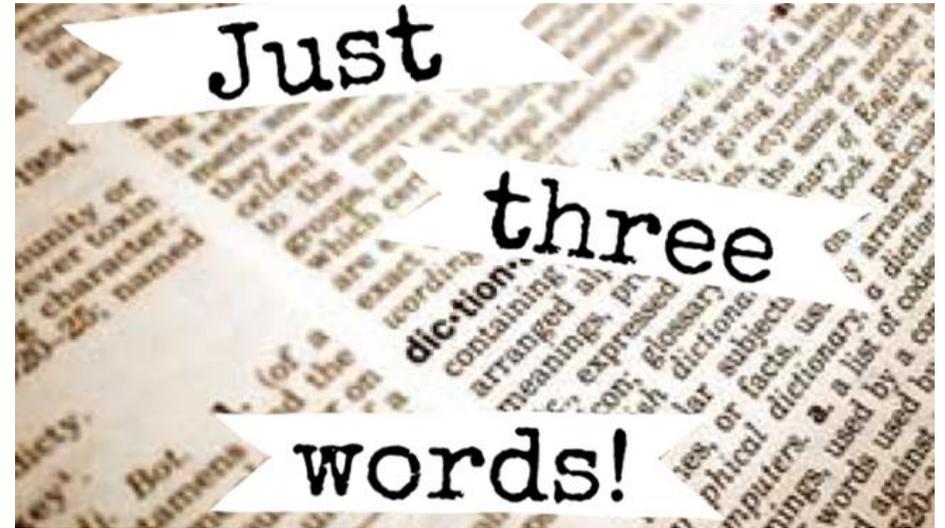


# Ice breaking for this meeting

---

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.**



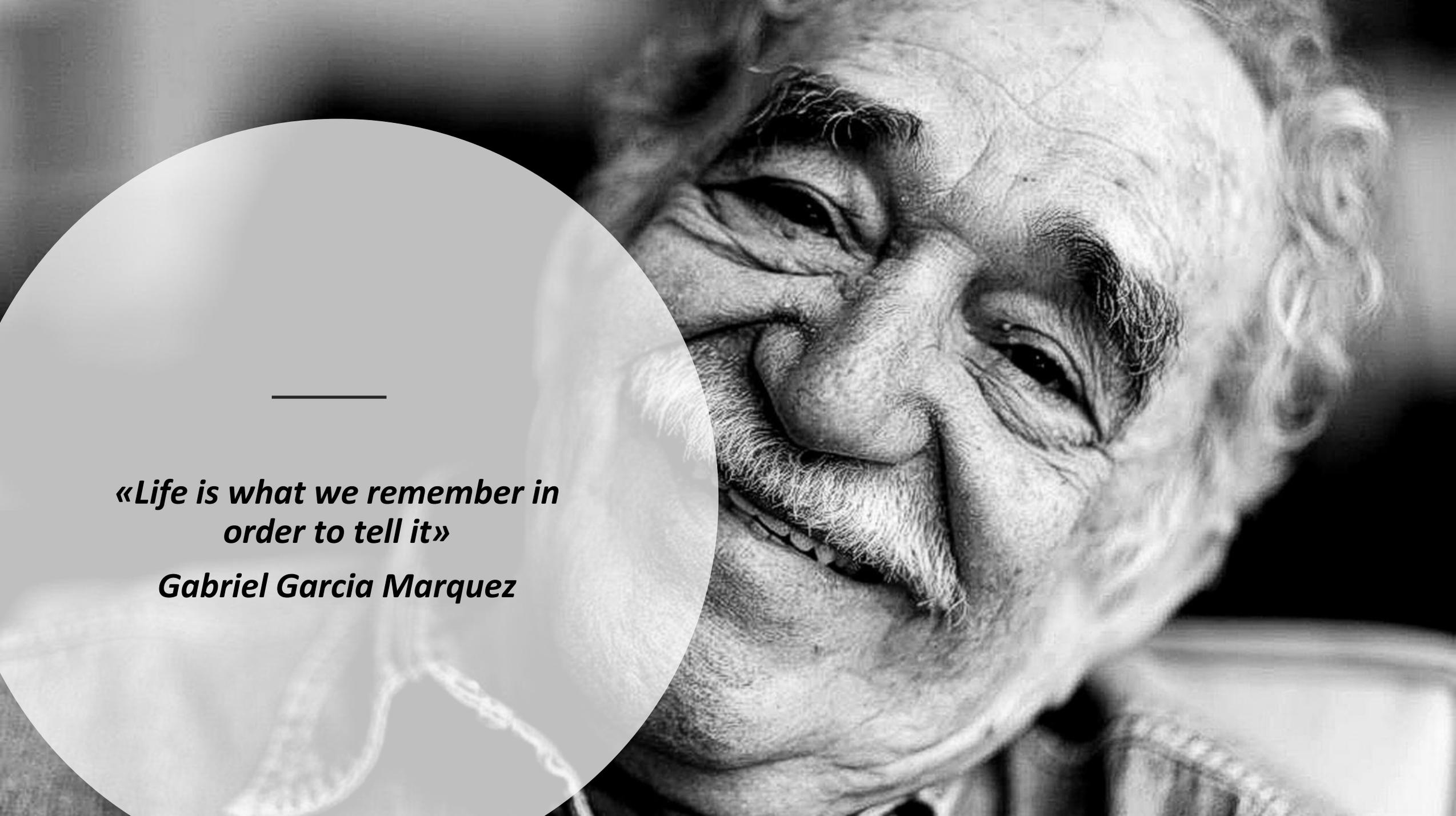
It is not necessary to be able to write well, nor to know grammar, but it is essential to be able to share in a serene and non-judgmental environment.

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 photograph of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. He is smiling slightly, looking towards the camera. His face is wrinkled, and he has a mustache. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of his skin and the details of his features. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

---

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

***Gabriel Garcia Marquez***

**Thanks for the attention**  
**And now**  
**LET'S PLAY!**

