**There is no mystery in writing a personal narrative essays if you follow these easy steps.**

There is very little mystery to writing the personal narrative essay. There is no proper topic for such an essay. An essay can be about a variety of personal experiences. You, the writer, have the right to say what you want about your personal experience. You can write about anything -- Aunt Sally, the funky necklace you bought at a garage sale, the harrowing experience of being stuck in an elevator, the best Christmas you ever had, the worst day of your life. No topic or subject is off-limits; therefore there are endless opportunities to write an essay about your personal, point-of-view of what happened. Often the reason behind wanting to write a personal essay is unclear. Once the writing begins and the events are recorded and recounted it becomes clear that the writer is searching to find the meaning, the universal truth, the lesson learned from the experience. When writing, rewriting and good editing coalesce, a personal narrative essay becomes a beautiful thing. It shows how the past or a memory's significance affects the present or even the future.

We all have stories to tell. But facing a blank page is intimidating. Knowing where to begin becomes a real dilemma. A good place to start is with the word I. Write I was, I saw, I did, I went, I cried, I screamed, I took for granted. I is an empowering word. Once you write it on the page it empowers you to tell your story. That's exactly what you are going to do next. Tell the story. Get it all out. Don't worry about how many times I appears in the text. Don't worry how scattered and unfocused thoughts are. Write however your mind tells you to write. This style is often called freewheeling writing or stream of consciousness. Once the story is all down on paper you will go back and begin to shape the essay into a form that says exactly what you want it to say about your experience. If you're discouraged over what you've written, back away from it. Let it rest. Take a walk. Do something that distracts your mind from writing the essay. Many writers find that even while doing something other than writing, their writing mind continues to work out what needs to be said and continues to uncover the multi-layered associations and voices of what they're writing about.

Personal narrative essays are essentially non-fiction stories, ones that are neatly arranged like a road map that take the reader from point A to point B to point C. In life, and in our own personal experience, things aren't so straightforward as A-B-C. Characters, facts, places, conversations and reporting what happened, where you went, what you saw and what you did isn't always so neatly pulled together. That is your job, as the writer, to pull together all the elements so they bring the reader to the universal truth, the lesson learned or insight gained in your experience. How do you do this? Through re-writing and re-writing.

Partner Interview Reactions: