

MARIST COLLEGE

Center for Lifetime Study (CLS) - FALL 2021 SESSION



INSTRUCTOR:
Barbara Mindel
(CLS Member)



CLASS MGR:
Mike Cowan
(CLS Member)

PRODDING YOUR MUSE

8 Weeks, Tuesdays, Starting Sept. 14th, 2021 @ 9:15 A.M. to 10:30 A.M. (75 mins.)

Presenter: BARBARA MINDEL

(TODAY → EIGHTH (FINAL) CLASS – TUESDAY, NOV 2nd, 2021)

MARIST CLS VIRTUAL (ZOOM) ATTENDANCE AND ETIQUETE PROTOCOLS – HOUSEKEEPING HIGHLIGHTS

Make every effort to attend the classes for which you are registered.

Be courteous when asking questions in class.

Show respect to presenters.

Camera/Visual protocols should be followed.

**SPECIFIC ZOOM USAGE / PRACTICES DURING CLASS
(GROUND RULES FOR EFFICIENT / PRODUCTIVE CLASS PARTICIPATION)**

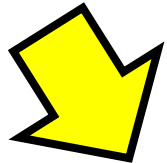
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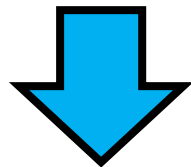


THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION

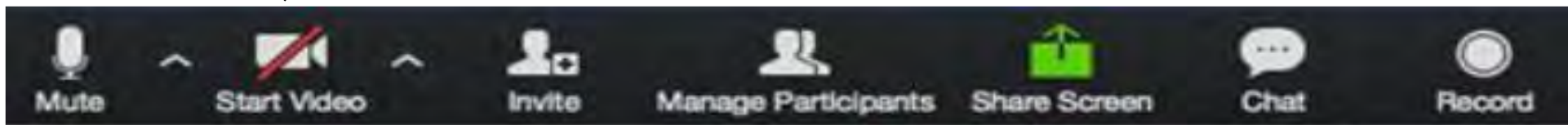
MUTE / UNMUTE AS WARRANTED



START / STOP YOUR VIDEO AS NEEDED



TYPE COMMENTS / QUESTIONS AS APPROPRIATE



Prodding Your Muse

Fall 2021 / WEEK #8

(NOV 2, 2021)

Our prod today is about yesterday, November 1st. How come?

Because aspects of yesterday now have all the earmarks of becoming a memory. So let's give it its due!

Whether or not the day was special is beside the point.

The point is that you've lived it. Now, I ask you to recapture it by reflecting on only its various insignificant aspects, a few of the little things that give us a picture of your day.

They may not seem worthwhile to write about but so much of what we do in a day is a reflection of the life we either choose to lead or be moved to.

And one day we may enjoy looking back on how we preserved in memory an ordinary day in fall of 2021.

Some aspects to help be prodded:

**Morning: Move fast? Feel sluggish? Feel peppy?
A big breakfast? A hasty one? Exercise? Tend to chores?
Putter with this 'n that? On computer?**

**Afternoon: Stay in? Lunch out? Appointments? Read?
On the phone? Visit? Have company? Nap? Shop?
TV programs? On computer? Take a walk?**

**Evening: Dinner prep? Dinner out? Company?
Special TV programs? Advance planning of something?
Pay bills? Email friends? Bed early, late?**

ETC.

******* Something else to remember:
Today, Nov 2, is Election day *******

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PRODDING YOUR MUSE (WEEK #8 – NOV 2nd)

**BACKGROUND MUSIC TO BOTH
PROD YOUR MUSE AND WRITE**

**Beautiful Relaxing Music –
Calming Piano & Guitar Music by *Soothing Relaxation***

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kY1F_Y0GniQ

Classical Music for Autumn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llxYSLiFHlk>

PRODDING YOUR MUSE (CLASS #8 - NOV 2nd, 2021)

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THANKS
BARBARA

FOR YOUR INSPIRATIONAL
“PRODDING”

ALSO THANKS TO ALL PARTICIPANTS
FOR YOUR CREATIVE WRITING
AND SHARING TOO

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**PRODDING YOUR MUSE
CLS FALL 2021 SESSION**

SLIDES TO FOLLOW:

**BARBARA MINDEL's
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

***Thoughts on Writing* (CLASS HANDOUT)**

PAST WEEKLY PRODS => 7 WEEKS (WK #s 7 to 1)



PRODDING YOUR MUSE – FALL 2021 SEMESTER

BARBARA MINDEL's BIO

- ❖ **Grew up in an extended family of older cousins, aunts and uncles who loved to hear life stories her parents enjoyed telling and in turn who were eager to tell their own.**
 - ❖ **Back then children were to be seen and not heard but she listened.**
 - ❖ **Fascinated to discover how seemingly insignificant experiences were actually significant for one's life, how certain memories returned to enrich it.**
- ❖ **Over the years her love of encouraging an appreciation of recapturing memories has evolved into this class which she first taught to Continuing Ed students at Dutchess.**
 - ❖ **It has been over twelve years now that she has taught Prodding the Muse at CLS in Fall and Spring semesters.**
- ❖ **As former elementary school teacher, published writer, former ghost writer, volunteer organizational writer, she continues to create even more memory vignettes for her family portfolios intended for each of her three sons and four grandchildren.**

Thoughts on Writing (CLASS HANDOUT, *Prodding Your Muse*)

(About memories of people, places, experiences, things, the world)

Believe that your memories are worth validating, especially the little things you might tend to dismiss as trivial. It is often the “dew of little things” that refresh the soul and spark more memories.

Own your memories. Don't be dissuaded by how others remember the same thing. Yours may have been subject to filtering from the passage of time but they ARE yours as you recall them. If emotions surface about them, how can you not claim them?!

Memory pieces are a legacy connecting you with those who no longer are in your life and with places, times, experiences or things long forgotten or still recalled.

Writing memory pieces constitutes a relationship, a connection between you and your past. After all, in many instances we are now because of who we were back then.

I urge you to enjoy the freedom of expressing yourself honestly (unless you don't mind seeing a lie!). It's just you and the paper or screen in front of you. Privacy, no interruptions and not having to deal with one-on-one reactions to what you want to communicate can thwart inhibitions you may have about stating a truth.

You will discover that the process of writing will uncover what you have to say about something which you hadn't realized you wanted to say something about!

You might discover that writing will make you aware of things you didn't know you knew!

CONT'D

Thoughts on Writing (CLASS HANDOUT, *Prodding Your Muse*) - Cont'd

(About memories of people, places, experiences, things, the world)

If you are willing to persevere to capture a memory that you find difficult to put into words, keep believing that your perseverance will not fail you.

Keep writing - quickly, anything, even if you discard it later - to overcome feeling blocked / discouraged/ critical.

Push against those brick walls and stay the course.

Your mental strength will create an opening that will allow your subconscious to surface.

Often the richness of what we write comes from having plumbed our depths.

Well Known WRITER's QUOTES (Another perspective)

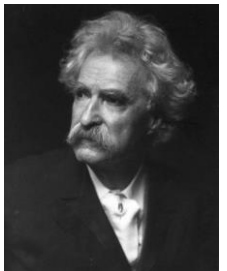
"I write to find out what I think." (Stephen King)



"God gave us memories so we might have roses in December." (James Barrie)*



"The older I get, the keener I remember things that never happened." (Mark Twain)



* => Sir *James Matthew Barrie*, (9 May 1860 – 19 June 1937) was a **Scottish novelist and playwright**, best remembered as the **creator of Peter Pan**. He was born and educated in Scotland and then moved to London, where he wrote a number of successful novels and plays.

Prodding Your Muse

Fall 2021 / WEEK #7

(OCT 26, 2021)

This week's prod is based on an artist's quote:
"You can't separate yourself from history."
She was referring to a state of world history but I'm extrapolating the quote to have it mean we can't separate ourselves from our personal history.

So what I'm asking you to do is to think back to those youthful days of either positive influences that helped create who you have become or negative influences that you are proud to have overcome.

Be sure to include your approximate age, where you were, your reactions, your current feelings about that bit of your history and any interactions with others about that influence. Make what you write come alive with those details. A prodded memory often likes company and you end up with more of them!

Examples of where an influence might have originated:

- ...from adult family members
- ...from siblings
- ...from neighbors
- ...from school
- ...from overheard conversations
- ...from a positive or negative experience
- ...from something you'd read
- ...from something you saw
- ...from something that pleased or frightened you.
- ...from a vacation ETC.

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Prodding Your Muse

Fall 2021 / WEEK #6

(OCT 19, 2021)

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This week's prod asks you to think about what's known as "random acts of kindness."

You may have been the recipient of such thoughtful gestures; however, our prod is to get you thinking about *your own* kind behavior on behalf of someone.

Focus your writing on only *one* such act and develop the memory as sharply as possible, including why you offered the kindness and the recipient's reaction, if any.

A few possible examples:

A casual kindness... giving up your place in line to another

A pre-planned kindness...sensing someone needs your help or your ear

A secret kindness...preferring to remain anonymous

An unexpected kindness...paying the toll for the car behind you

Etc. Etc. Etc.

CLS - Prodding Your Muse / Fall 2021 / WEEK #5 (OCT 12, 2021)

This week's prod asks you to go wayyy back in time!

Turn back the clock to when you were young and living with your parents.

It's your decision about what age you hope to remember.

Just be sure the time span you write about doesn't go beyond elementary school.

Our prod: "How did you and your parents spend evenings together?"

Whether your memories are pleasant or not so or a combination of both, that's life and its influences *upon* us. Remembering can be a fascination *for* us!

Some examples to prod memories:

Very young: being read stories ...playing games ...taking a walk
...sharing supper cleanup ...playing with blocks or toy vehicles or baby dolls
...sitting content in a parent's lap as they listen to radio ...having to go to bed early

Young: practicing your penmanship ...playing board games
...spending time with your crayon book ...helping fix something
...practicing piano or your instrument

...playing ball or tag or jump roping outside ...drying dishes
...reading ...taking a walk ...sharing your collections of what was special to you

Pre-teen: getting help with homework ...clearing the kitchen ...walking the dog
...discussing something with a parent ...sharing a radio program ...playing a card game
...writing a letter ...adding to your diary...

AND anything else you recall that reflects those evenings with family.

CLS - Prodding Your Muse / Fall 2021 / WEEK #4

Today we're going to be prodded to remember something about our work life from some stage of our life ...either as a teen, a young adult, or mature adult.

What particular job you remember to write about can run the gamut.

It's your choice if:

**the memory is positive or negative,
something funny or embarrassing,
perhaps something especially meaningful or totally boring,
fascinating or best ever.**

A few examples that might help prod your memory:

***Teenage:* ...painting fences, ...restaurant dishwasher,
...car washing, ...grocery clerk, ...computer aide, ...paperboy/girl,
...snow shoveling, ...clerking, ...babysitting, ...raking leaves, ...waitressing**

***Young Adult:* your first "real" job (s)**

***Mature Adult:* professional or otherwise....retirement work**

CLS - Prodding Your Muse / Fall 2021 / WEEK #3

Today our prod is not a specific topic or word to prompt a memory.

It's the quote below to relate to. A graphic quote to say the least!

Let's see all the different directions it takes each of us!

You might be surprised by where *you* go!

You might feel warmed to remember such a seemingly minor thing.

You might wonder if that's really the way it was?

You might be excited to share the memory.

You might simply feel wonderfully nostalgic.

*

**“THE MIND OFTEN DASHES OFF INTO THE UNDERGROWTH OF THE PAST,
DIGGING UP SOME OLE BONE OF MEMORY AND BRINGING IT BACK
WITH TAIL WAGGING TO LAY AT YOUR FEET.”**

*

You might want to include not only your memory but what prompted it to surface:

Was it from what someone mentioned?

Was it the scent of something?

Was it seeing something familiar?

Was it in something you overheard?

Was it a familiar taste or preparation of food?

Start digging!!



PRODDING YOUR MUSE – SECOND CLASS’S “PROD”

Think back to a good friend from *elementary* school.

Think about what you shared.

Now write him or her a letter which has two rules: 1) It has to begin with Dear _____,” and 2) the first sentence has to begin “Do you remember when _____.”

Paint a verbal picture of this ole time friendship by prodding memories of:

- where you met
 - what you did together
 - where you went
 - what you talked about
 - why you liked him or her as a special friend
 - a secret you might have shared
 - what you both agreed you disliked
 - the kind of students you both were
- (etc)



PRODDING YOUR MUSE – FIRST CLASS’s “PROD”

Today let’s take a trip to the past, the ‘50s. That’s where many youthful memories lie in wait to be prodded.

To remember certain objects and the different expenses back in the ‘50s probably seems incredible now.

Choose a memory from the list below that you react to. It might be something you’d totally forgotten or something you could never forget.

Whichever you select, be sure to tell us about your experiences with it... and with specifics so we almost can “see” what you’ll be sharing.

EXAMPLES FROM THE ‘50s

Mailing a letter cost \$.07 # Minimum wage was under \$1.00 # A gallon of gas cost under \$.25

Baseball contracts were less than \$50,000 per year # Motels cost \$2.00 a night

Hospital stays cost \$15 per day # A man’s haircut cost \$.30 # Telephones were attached to the wall

TV channels got changed by getting up from the chair # Electric typewriters were coming into vogue

Kids congregated at the drug store for ice cream not drugs # Teachers used chalk on blackboards

Mom’s meals were make-in not take-out

Finding a penny or a nickel that someone dropped was exciting

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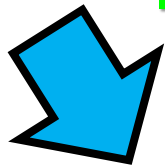
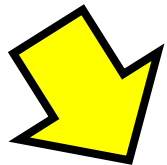
QUIET ENVIRONMENT => PARTICIPANT'S MUTING / UNMUTING – WHEN / WHY / HOW TO.

NO EMBARRASSMENT => PARTICIPANT'S VIDEO ON / OFF – WHEN / WHY / HOW TO.

DISCUSSION TIME => BARBARA'S CALL - PLEASE WAIT TO BE CALLED UPON.

PARTICIPANT'S COMMENTS, ASKING QUESTIONS – WHEN / HOW TO.

CHAT FUNCTION – WHERE / WHEN / HOW TO.



THANKS FOR YOUR
COOPERATION

