

Inspiring Neurodiverse Learners to Love Writing

Amy Henderson / Writing One True Thing



"A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people."
— Thomas Mann



Those with the greatest resistance to writing
often have the most to say.



Origin Story

"Oh, here I am."



WHERE IT LED ME

A Shelter for the Unhoused:

Could other people also living in the margins find themselves through words?



CASE STUDY #1

Paul:

Dyslexia + no formal education beyond elementary school



WHAT I LEARNED

I wasn't alone in what I'd experienced in Malawi.

People living in other kinds of margins could also find themselves through words written on the page.

Safety + permission + peers doing the same thing → something opened.

Writing became access to interiority: There I am.

Sharing made that interiority relational: brave writing allowed us to find ourselves in each other.

We felt less alone.

Writing in a safe, well-held space in the company of peers didn't just support the writing. It changed what became possible.

And sometimes, given enough freedom and time, something remarkable emerged—a voice, a way of seeing, a particular gift.



Case Study #2

Kara:

Dyslexia / ADHD / A History of Shame & Resistance Around Writing



What Kara's Story Reveals

We don't give people a voice.
They already have one.

And sometimes, when given enough time and freedom
to keep discovering that voice, a very particular gift emerges.

We can't manufacture what emerges.
We can create the conditions that allow it to emerge.



Case Study #3

"Suzie"

Perfectionism / High Anxiety / Unable to Complete Writing Assignments



What "Suzie's" Story Illuminates

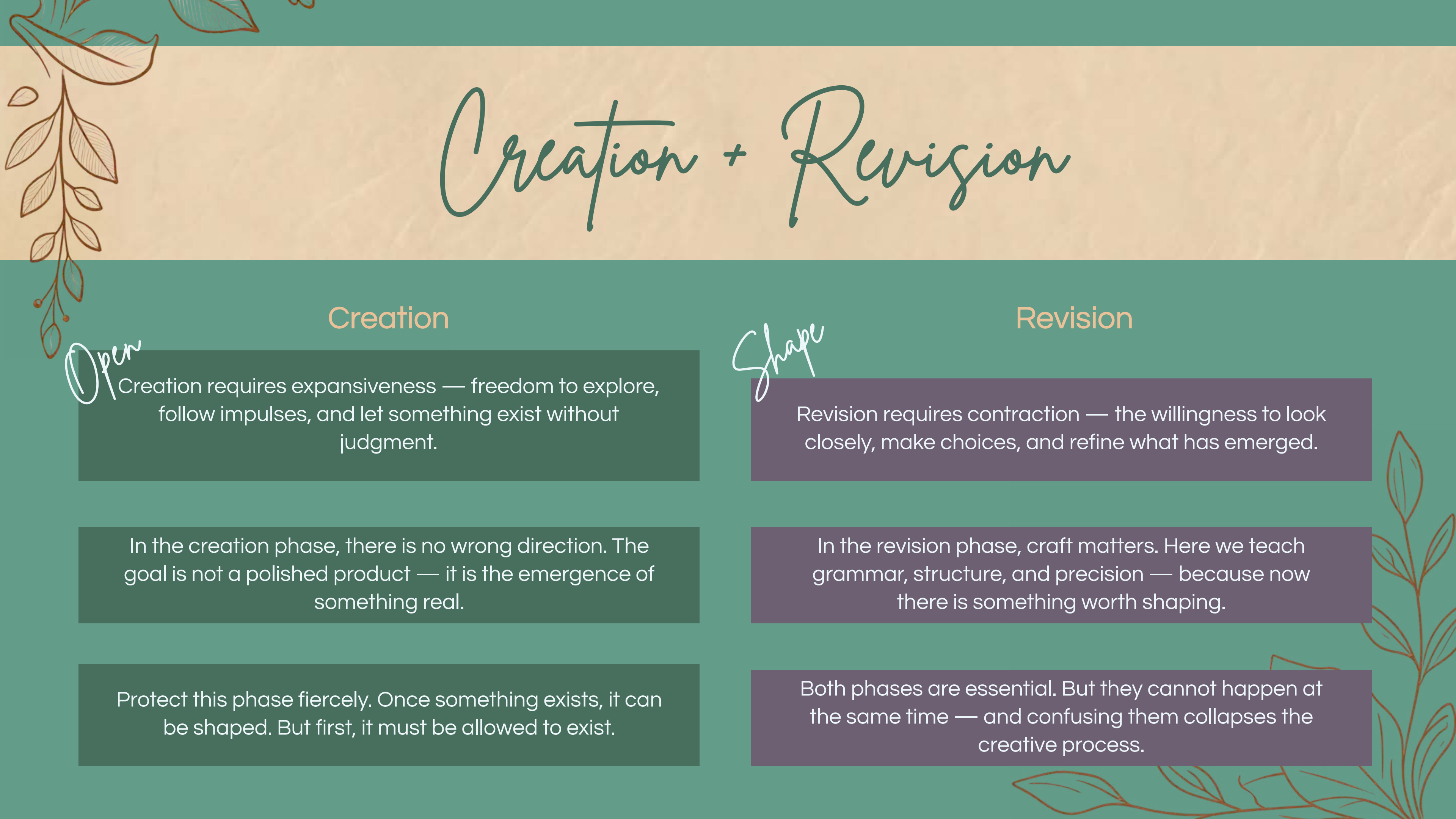
Protect the expansive phase.

There will be time to contract.

There will be time to revise, edit, teach craft, correct grammar.

But first we have to allow something to exist that is worth shaping.





Creation + Revision

Creation

Open

Creation requires expansiveness — freedom to explore, follow impulses, and let something exist without judgment.

In the creation phase, there is no wrong direction. The goal is not a polished product — it is the emergence of something real.

Protect this phase fiercely. Once something exists, it can be shaped. But first, it must be allowed to exist.

Revision

Shape

Revision requires contraction — the willingness to look closely, make choices, and refine what has emerged.

In the revision phase, craft matters. Here we teach grammar, structure, and precision — because now there is something worth shaping.

Both phases are essential. But they cannot happen at the same time — and confusing them collapses the creative process.

What Conditions Allow for Creation?

Engage the body — Presence before production.

Encourage expansiveness — Follow the energy. Go somewhere unexpected.

Make the beginning small — A few minutes. One invitation. Begin.

Protect choice — Follow the prompt—or don't. Share—or pass.

Participate — If they write, you write.

Affirm — Illuminate what works. Encourage. Lift up.

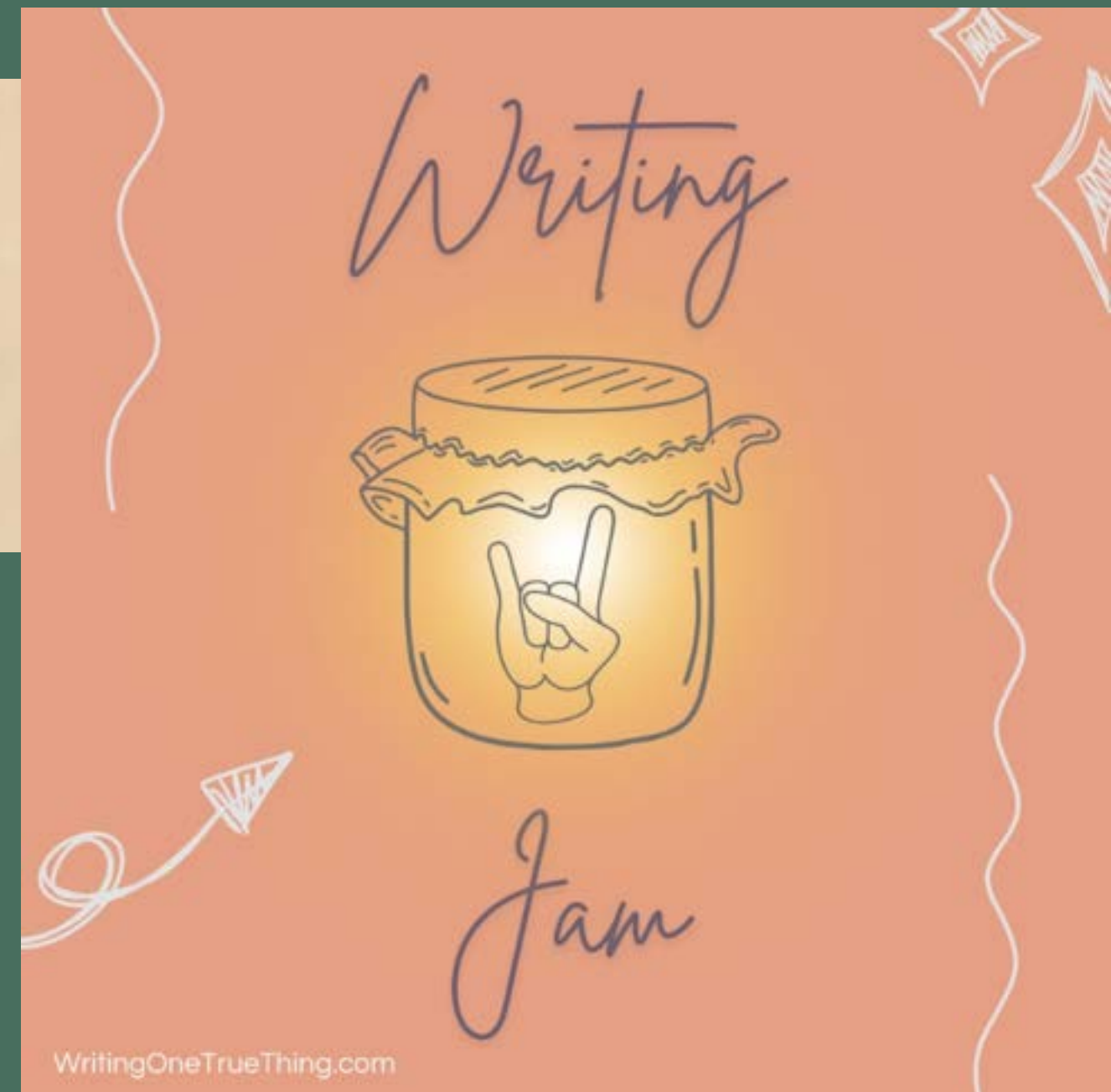
Create community — Write together. Listen to one another.



BREAK



WRITING JAM



“Allowables” by Nikki Giovanni

I killed a spider
Not a murderous brown recluse
Nor even a black widow
And if the truth were told this
Was only a small
Sort of papery spider
Who should have run
When I picked up the book
But she didn't
And she scared me
And I smashed her

I don't think
I'm allowed

To kill something

Because I am

Frightened

SHARE

Listen for what moves you.
Affirm. Encourage. No critique.



There you are.

I'd love to hear what emerges for you.
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