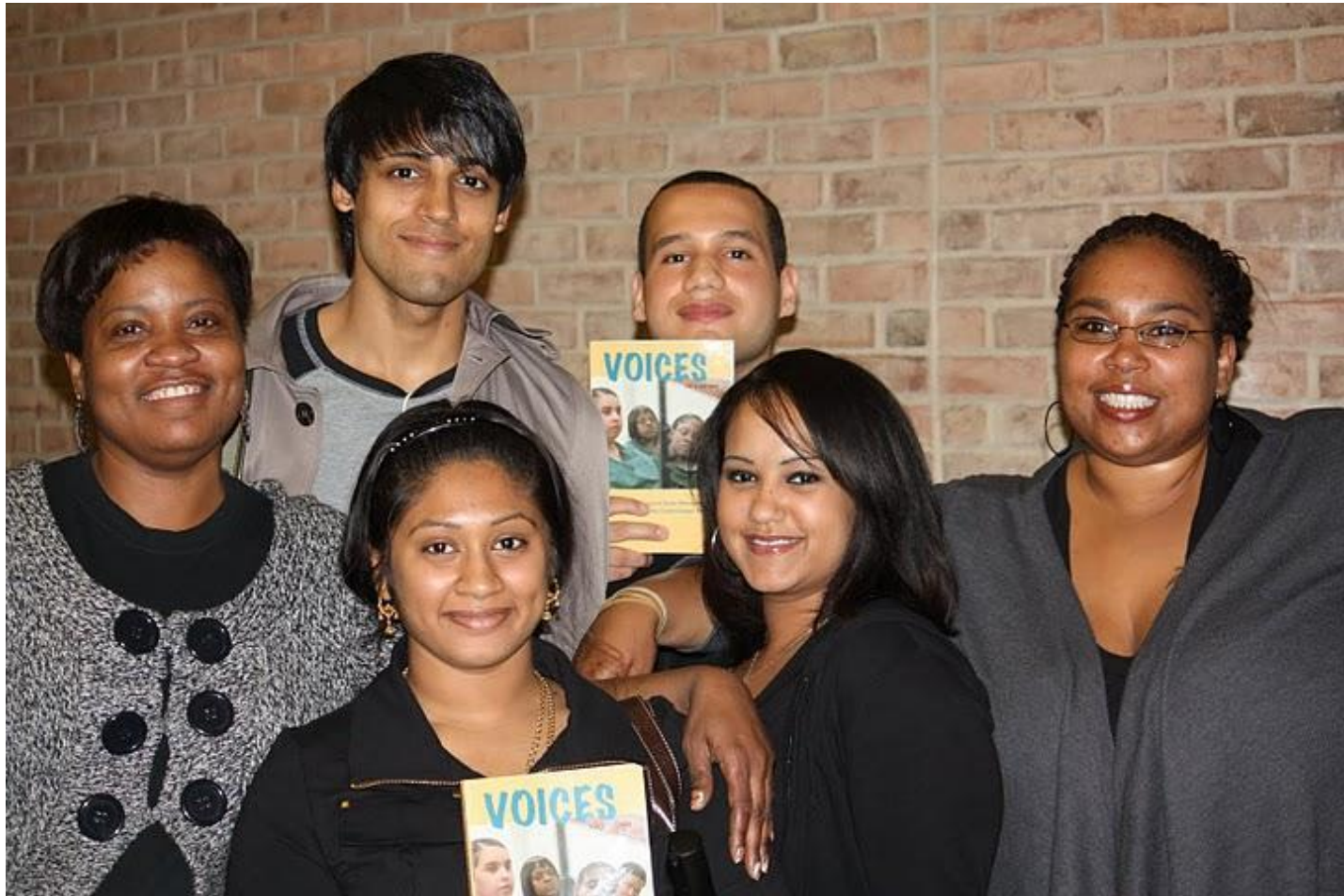


Youth Empowerment Through Guided Memoir Writing

A Restorative Justice Tool

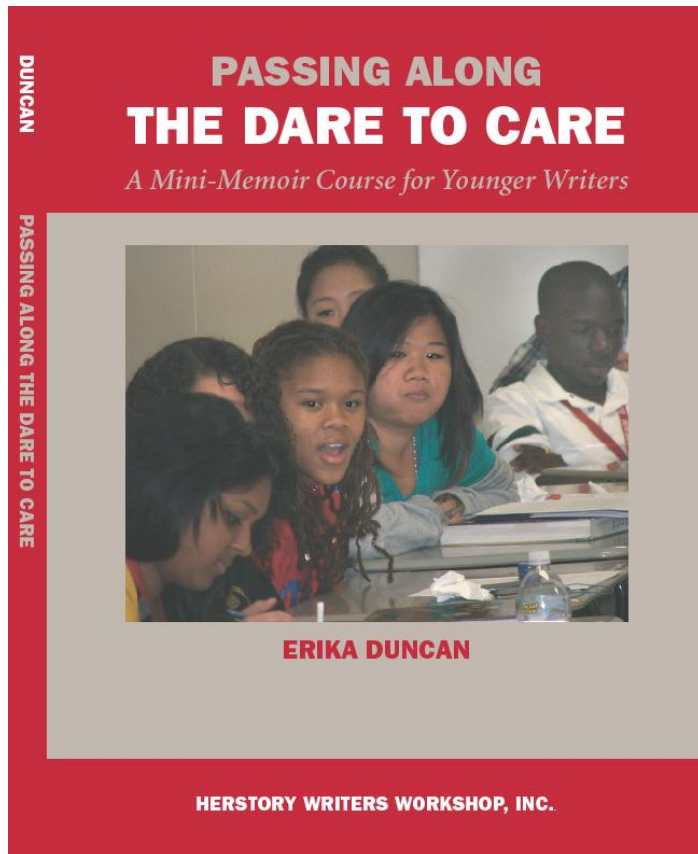
If your words had the power to change
the way people looked at you...



Introduction to the Herstory method, providing ...

- Training for staff members of seven agencies of the Nassau County Youth Board who are working with juvenile justice, family and gang violence, teen pregnancy, addiction and the special problems of immigrant youth.
- Five weekly workshops in Long Island's three correctional facilities for incarcerated women and girls
- Weekly workshops for young women mandated to the East End Regional Intervention Court as an alternative to incarceration.
- Summer Institute and year-round courses for students at risk in educational opportunity programs and alternative schools.
- Community bridge workshops for young women who started to write with Herstory in jail.

A new pedagogy based on a simple dare to help a “Stranger/Reader” to care



- By play-acting and then writing scene after scene that will help a stranger to walk in your shoes
- By recreating past selves so vividly on the page, that the reader will feel s(he) is there.
- By sustaining the stories begun, page after page and week after week, creating community and compassionate understanding in the process.

Along the “School to Prison Pipeline”

In cases especially of victimless crimes

- Early Intervention to break cycles of poverty, discrimination, violence, addiction, incarceration and abuse.
- Creating a new sense of purpose through striving to be heard, while helping other to hear.
- Moving out of the role of victim repeating the cycle, into letting the acquired knowledge of the both the personal past and associated sociological conditions create new possibilities and choices for our future parents and teachers and leaders.
- Ultimately, reducing recidivism-- one person and one story at a time-- though developing the mission of letting one’s story help others in the larger community.

The Ramifications of Writing for an Imaginary “Stranger/Reader”

PAPER STRANGER

Shaping Stories in Community



ERIKA DUNCAN

VOLUME I / HERSTORY WRITERS WORKSHOP, INC.

For young people who have never felt heard...

- Safety in imagining someone who might actually hear you and care.
- Investment in organizing one's story so that another can walk in your shoes.
- Level playing field in the nature of the task.

Oral Imaging Before Anyone Writes



Learning to engage your listeners in painting a scene-- a game everyone can play

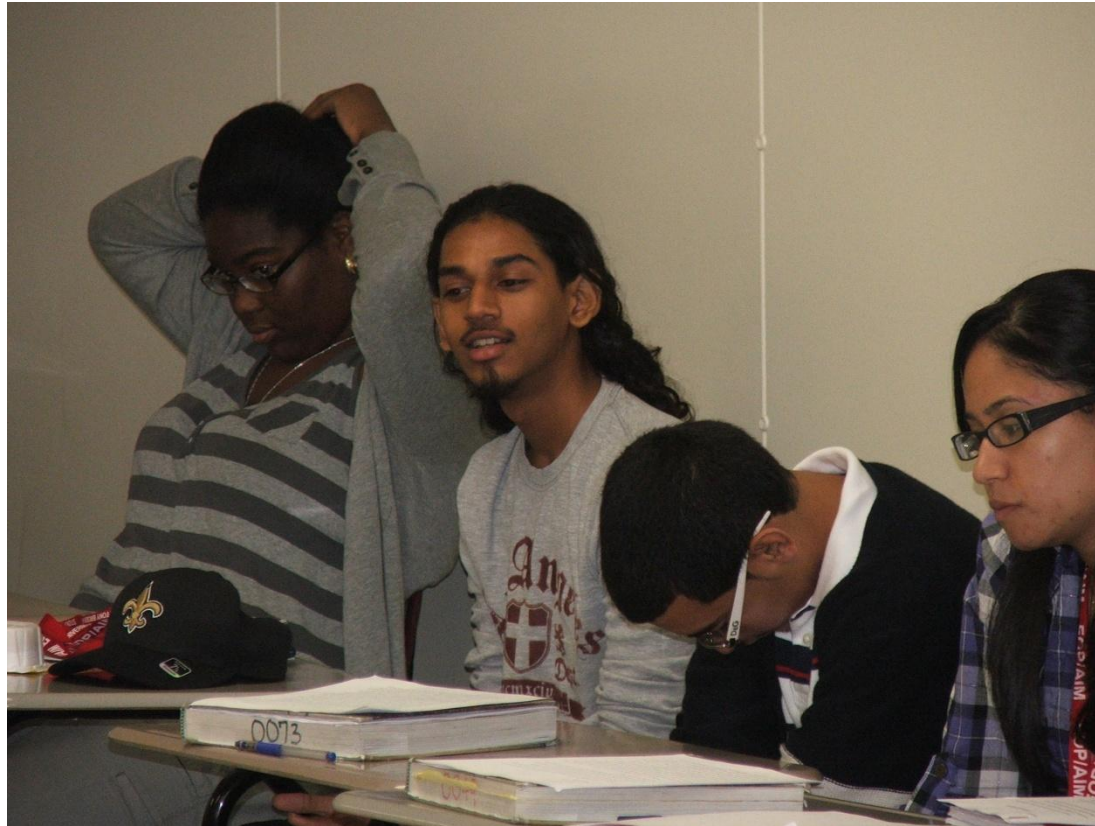
- Not to worry if you don't have the technical writing skills, the trick is to paint a scene vivid enough to shock a sleepy or angry listener/reader into coming on your journey.
- How to startle people into attention, while deciding what facts you want to reveal and what you want to keep secret for a while, or maybe forever.
- Puzzle solving for what should come first and why.

Finding a Dramatic “Page One Moment”



- Learning the elements that keep your audience reading and make them care about what has happened particularly to you
- Teasing them into coming for the next workshop to find out what will happen next
 - Looking at those moments that changed it all with new eyes, while inviting the others to come on your journey of discovery.

Letting your own story brew as you listen



Taking courage from the other
images and scenes being shaped

Once the writing begins...



The pleasure of sharing a secret
with someone who has begun to truly
know you through your words

Knowing that your words



helped others to embrace your honesty and pain

Sustaining your story

a new set of skills



Connecting the dots as you set out
how you got from here to there...

Leading to:

- Understanding past choices in a way that will free you to make new future choices.
- Beginning to see yourself as an actor in the story of your life, instead of just a passive victim.
- Surprising yourself with lost moments of power and beauty.
- Learning new compassion for the other players in your drama.
- Finding places for your sorrow and rage that others can truly share, as together you work toward change and healing.

When the Impact Begins to Get Real



April 2010

Riverhead Correctional Facility purchases 250 copies of VOICES to be used for the training of every incoming officer in Suffolk County's Correctional Academy

November 2010, The first group of 50 corrections officers (42 men and 8 women) are training using the women's stories in a special class taught by Lieutenant Darlene McClurken and Sergeant Noreen Fisher, to resoundingly positive evaluations. These readings are made a requirement for graduation from the academy, a major break-through for heightened awareness in correctional facilities that moves the women behind bars to tears.

As group after group of women writing
with Herstory in jail hear the news,



they know that their voices will begin to be heard.

Partnering with the Center for Research and Evaluation of John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Professor Natalie Byfield of St. John's University looks at the impact of the Herstory Inside and Bridges out of Incarceration projects

Preliminary research suggest that the Herstory process could work as a type of restorative justice, impacting:

- Rehabilitation
- Reintegration

Current research is further examining the Herstory process in relation to apology and guilt, rehabilitation, reintegration and healing.





www.herstorywriters.org

If you are interested in learning more about our staff trainings, retreats, and ongoing workshops for young people, or our publications and public readings...

Email us at contactus@herstorywriters.org

Or call us at 631-676-7395

Recent Funders (a partial list)

- **The Horace and Amy Hagedorn Fund in New York Community Trust**
- **Long Island Unitarian Universalist Fund in Long Island Community Foundation**
- **Long Island Fund for Women & Girls**
- **New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA)**
- **Suffolk County Department of Economic Development, Office of Cultural Affairs**
- **Ms. Foundation for Women**
- **Ben & Jerry's Foundation**
- **The Fund for a Just Society**
- **Verizon Foundation**
- **Henry Luce Foundation/special grant**
- **Town of Southampton Arts and Recreation Program**
- **Knapp-Swezey Foundation**
- **The Charles and Stephanie Coleman Foundation**
- **New York State Literary Presenters Technical Assistance Program (LitTAP)**
- **Sorotimist International of Nassau County**