

Kim Stafford's aphorisms on the benefits of daily writing ...

Each day I need an appointment with silence.

Every sleepless night is a voyage of one's own.

Be the Eric Snowden of your inner life.

The well-lit problem begins to heal.

While you keep working on the life, try to get the story right.

Write with affection for what is near, and let revision deepen simple words.

What I do leads me to remember. What I did not do leads me to wonder. By writing each day I join memory to wonder.

Poetry and song seek to fill the vacuum I am.

All a writer can do is compose clues to what can never be spoken.

Spend kind words—the coins of happiness—or hoard them, endowment of sorrow.

Offer the periphery but guard the source.

"What do you do when there's nothing you can do?" asks my student Frank (his father died young without saying goodbye). My answer: Write. Write about what you feel, about the father, times with the father, times without. Write to the father, a letter telling all. And write a message from the father to you.

"Begin" is the hinge between the impossible and the possible.

In a world of technology, foster language that is primitive, visceral, feral, early human.

As days fall away, each life gathers an archive of the interior.

Only by returning to zero—the blank page—can a writer savor the luxury of first thought.

A writing practice turns the red smudge of anger to words, the green seed of affection to sentences, the ash of despair to song.

Writing with others, I hear each voice matter.