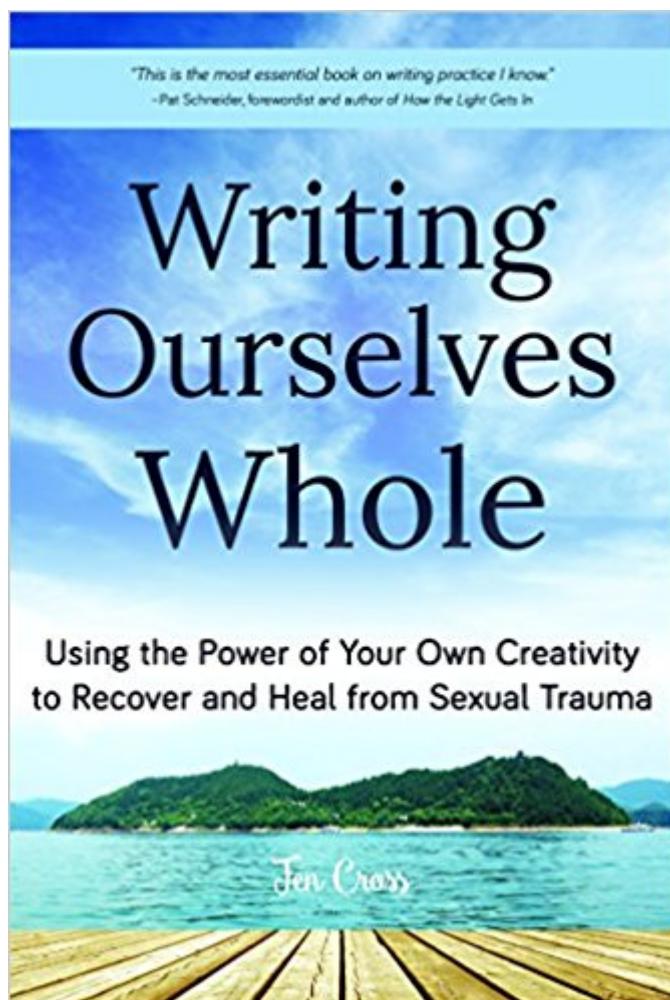


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# Writing Ourselves Whole: Using The Power Of Your Own Creativity To Recover And Heal From Sexual Trauma



## Synopsis

#1 New Release! Creating books that will change your life Healing victims of sexual assault through transformative journaling: One in six women is the victim of sexual assault. Using her own hard-won wisdom, author Jen Cross shows how to heal through journaling and personal writing. Rape victims and victims of other sexual abuse: Writing Ourselves Whole is a collection of essays and creative writing encouragements for sexual trauma survivors who want to risk writing a different story. Each short chapter offers encouragement, experience, and exercises. Sections focus on writing as a transformative practice, embodying our story, how to write trauma without retraumatization, writing joy and desire, and more. How to change your life: When you can find language for the stories that are locked inside, you can change your life. Talk therapy can only go so far for the millions of Americans struggling in the aftermath of sexual abuse and sexual assault, as well as for their partners, families, and caregivers. Survivors of childhood sexual trauma are strong and vulnerable enough to bear witness to each other's truths, to share and learn new languages for our experiences, to throw over the simplistic "victim" and "survivor" narratives that permeate mainstream media in favor of narratives that are fragmented, complicated, messy, and ultimately more whole. Sexual assault survivors can heal themselves: Sexual trauma survivor communities (and their allies) have the capacity to hold and hear one another's stories — we do not have to relegate ourselves solely to the individual isolation of the therapist's office. We do not need to be afraid, as a community of fractured, harmed and healing survivors, of reaching out to and supporting one another. > Books such as Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way*, Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones* and Louise DeSalvo's *Writing as a Way of Healing* beautifully describe the power of writing and offer practices for readers to engage with individually. Yet few creative writing or creative recovery books explicitly address sexual trauma survivor struggles to find language for their experience, nor do they describe the empowerment we might find in discovering language and expression for our delight, desire, and joy as well as our loss and pain. *Writing Ourselves Whole* specifically addresses the power of connecting with others who share our experience and can support us in finding language for subjects we not only are not supposed to talk about in polite company, but aren't even supposed to articulate to ourselves. Transformative journaling: *Writing Ourselves Whole* acknowledges the radical and profound impact of a creative healing community for trauma survivors, and includes suggestions for those seeking to create a peer writing group in their own communities. *Writing Ourselves Whole* rises out of the intersection of Natalie Goldberg's groundbreaking *Writing Down the Bones*, the powerful *Trauma and Recovery* by Judith Herman, and the hopeful, angry struggle of

Inga Muscio's Cunt. What You'll Learn Inside Writing Ourselves Whole: How to reconnect with your creative instinct through freewriting How freewriting can help you reclaim the parts of yourself, and your history, that you were never supposed to be able to name How "restorying" the old myths about sexual trauma survivors can set you free How a consistent writing practice can help reconnect you with your creative genius How (and why) to make writing part of your regular self-care routine And why, if you don't have a self-care routine, it's time to develop one Why writing about your desires is at least as important as writing about violence The profound joy and power of writing in community and solidarity with other survivors, the powerful Trauma and Recovery by Judith Herman, and the hopeful, angry struggle of Inga Muscio's Cunt.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Writing Ourselves Whole is a raw, powerful, necessary, wise and practiced guidebook to the revolutionary practice of finding the words, language and voice to transform suffering. It is chock full of insights, exercises, experience and the kind of fierce love and teaching that transforms pain into power. Jen Cross is a brave and brilliant transmitter of the deepest healing and healing practices. To anyone who has experienced abuse, violation and trauma, this book is a way out of the darkness." -Eve Ensler, The Vagina Monologues

"Writing Ourselves Whole is rich, intelligent, passionate, intimate, honest and encouraging. Jen Cross draws from her personal experience, her many years of facilitating writing groups with survivors of sexual abuse, and the wisdom of a variety of teachers and writers, to provide guidance for writing and for life that's both sensible and inspiring. This book is a treasure trove!" -Ellen Bass, author of The Courage to Heal

"This is the most essential book on

writing practice I know ... Every writing teacher, writing coach, writing workshop or group leader?and every person with a history of any kind of trauma needs this book.? ?Pat Schneider, author of How the Light Gets In and founder of the Amherst Writers & Artists method

Jen Cross is a writer, performer, and writing workshop facilitator based in Oakland, CA. Her organization, Writing Ourselves Whole, founded in 2003, focuses primarily on sexuality writing workshops and writing with survivors of sexual trauma. Jen's writing appears in more than thirty anthologies and periodicals, including *The Healing Art of Writing*, *Nobody Passes*, *Visible: A Femmethology*, *Best Sex Writing 2008*; she is also the co-editor of *Sex Still Spoken Here* (with Dr. Carol Queen and Amy Butcher). Jen is currently an MFA candidate at San Francisco State University. Dr. Carol Queen [[www.carolqueen.com](http://www.carolqueen.com)] co-founded the Center for Sex & Culture [[www.sexandculture.org](http://www.sexandculture.org)] in San Francisco and is staff sexologist and Company Historian at Good Vibrations, the women-founded sex shop, where she has worked since 1990. A noted cultural sexologist whose work has been widely published, she's written, co-authored or edited several books, most recently *The Sex & Pleasure Book: Good Vibrations Guide to Great Sex for Everyone*. She has been speaking publicly about sexuality for over 40 years; she frequently speaks to conferences and academic, general and specialized audiences. Pat is a poet, playwright, librettist, and author of ten books of poetry and non-fiction. She was born in the Ozark mountains of Missouri where she became intimate with fossils, creekbeds, grasshoppers and box turtles. After a search for work took her single mother to St. Louis, from age ten Pat lived in tenements and in an orphanage until she was given a scholarship to college. Those early experiences have deeply influenced her writing, and fueled her passion for those who have been denied voice through poverty and other misfortunes. Pat's libretto, "The Lament of Michal," was performed in Carnegie Hall by Phyllis Bryn Julson and the Atlanta Symphony directed by Robert Shaw. Her poetry has been read by Garrison Keillor on National Public Radio's "Writer's Almanac" sixteen times. There are more than three hundred recorded productions of her plays for community theater. A film about her work with women in low-income housing, titled "Tell Me Something I Can't Forget", is included in the DVD companion to her book, *Writing Alone and With Others*. Amherst Writers & Artists, founded by Pat in 1981 and directed and managed by Pat and Peter for thirty years, is now an international network of workshop leaders who use the writing method described in Pat's book, *Writing Alone and With Others*, Oxford University Press. Pat's newest book, *How the Light Gets In: Writing as a Spiritual Practice*, was released from Oxford University Press.

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