

Lyrics for Best Practices Videos featuring Members of Free Write Arts & Literacy

Best Practice #1

Lessons in the Cycle

He gains 30 lbs when he die
Just wanted to fit in, no role models, no one who'll listen
It's hard to see the lessons in the cycle of retaliation
Got to high school, next step that gang bangin'
a boy died right before our eyes, well yeah I cried but still I rise
A change of scenery might've encouraged me to make it out
We just wanted to fit in, cost him his life
Shoulda took a break that day, steered away from the fights

Ignored my fears to show out for peers
Trapped in a cell, made my body strong and my spirit as well
From fist fights to gun shots
5 went off and lil bro caught one,
Bullet FRYING his FLESH from a .25 caliber gun
God bless the fallen, he would've been in college
I changed my fate, my route,
A couple mentors helped to pull me out.
It took a village, yea no doubt.
Now I'm a leader from the North to down South.

Lukman Muhammed

Best Practice #2

Trust

People doubted she could teach us poetry,
calling us underdogs at best,
but Ms. Arthur believed in us.
knew we could surpass any test.
We ignored her at first, drifting off in class.
But there was no evading her.
Short shot of black espresso, she woke us up, had us writing by the mass.
Concisely like she said, straight to the point like a haiku.
She ain't waste no time or syllables on nonsense.
Genuinely cared in the process, always listening to what we shared as if it were already a poem
recited in the air.
We learned to tell our truth this way, unafraid to be ourselves.
Learned new words like "resilient", "metaphor" and "simile".
One day she told me,
"It's not the dog in the fight, but the fight in the dog."
Trust me, she would've spit truth in this minute, and in it you might've found yourself.

Angel Pantoja

Best Practice #3

The World is Mine

When the war cry of depression
First threatened my unsuspecting heart
When the foot soldiers of anxiety
First set up camp in my mind--

My hands became the mouthpiece
Of voices that sought to ruin me.
"You are worthless," I copied
On the page a hundred times,
Dutifully, like a child sentenced to the chalkboard,
"You are ugly," I heard them say.
But I had yet to tally the advantages
Of my troops, my weapons, my terrain.

I'd been training for this battle
Since the day when I was born. Songs sang above my crib,
Lessons learned in grammar
Taught me to seek my voice, to hear its call and script.
Notes on comprehension, hours of tedious spelling
Led me to understand the story my life was telling.

"You don't know anything about anything." I found myself writing.
But at this, my skilled combatants
Restrained themselves no more:
On the front line, lullabies and songs,
Fairies and goblins, rhymes and legends,
An arsenal of adjectives,
Sonnets by the score.

These, the friends of my youth,
Struck down the lying voices of the enemy!
Declared my own words the strength and the law of the land.
My bold teachers, my wise warriors,
Proved the world is mine.

Grace Phan Jones

Best Practice #4

A Room with Three Walls and Some Curtains

I'm in a place where
I can hear everything
and see people
I don't feel safe with.
This person has
problems controlling
herself
every time I see her
She's violent and
arguing with people.

My room is the place
I stay
with my son when
my husband is at work.
my room is all I have
the bed isn't mine,
But it feels soft and
comfy to sleep
with my son and husband.

My son makes me
feel safe
just like I know he
feels safe
when I hold him
in my arms, asleep,
knowing that I can
provide in every way.

When he sleeps I
hear all the noises,
I take out my pencil
and paper and draw
anything that comes in my mind.
That's when my mind
gets lost in the lines,
the bright colors,
the dark colors,
or just in the pencil.

When my husband
comes home
with dirt on his face
looking tired and
stressed
but still gives me

a soft kiss and asks,
"how was your day?
how is the baby?"
I know that he will do
anything for us to be safe.

Being around people
with whom you
don't feel safe can
be hard
but finding your
safe space
can be right there
in the same place.

Mariela Villanueva

Best Practice #5

Make a Change

I can't eat and I can't sleep because the thoughts I got within
I had a friend just like a brother and his life got put to end
A lot of trauma in my life all I wanted was to win
You know I gotta make a change you know a change go' come within
It get harder everyday but soon them day will come to pass
I got abused I don't know why it's so hard for me to ask
Momma why you have to leave me with them snakes in the grass
I'm traumatized so now I'm cutting on my wrist with a glass
Everyday this stuff get hard I get the short end of the stick
I did a lot of stuff that I regret...the stuff I can't forget...
I'm traumatized, not only me but the people I was with
You say you walk up in my shoes, naw' the shoes wouldn't fit. But now I'm tryna make a
change, a lot of problems I'm going to fix

Marshawn Knight