

4 Agreements and 4 Permissions for Firefly Writing Workshops.

Agreement 1. Listen deeply, to each other and yourself.

We believe that the greatest gift we can give one another is our full attention. Writing workshops are a beautiful place to lean in. Give this gift to one another, and yourself, deeply and generously. Listening can look different for different people, we invite you to listen in the way that works best for you.

Agreement 2. Feedback should make us want to write more.

Feedback on freewriting should be positive, not critical. It should also be about the writing itself, not the content, even when you assume the piece is true. For example we might say, "I was gripped by the suspense you built up in this story", but not, "I'm so sorry that happened to you." When in doubt, ask yourself, how will this comment be helpful to the writer?

Agreement 3. Content notes are a form of care.

Consent is a core value for us, and listening can be hard work. We don't know what could be hard for each other to hear. Please let the group know when you're sharing something that may be challenging to take in, so that group members can sit out if they need to.

We know this request holds tension. We want you to feel free to write all you want to write, and we want to care for one another. This will be imperfect. Let's be in that tension together.

Some examples of material that might need a content note are: bigotry, racism, white supremacy, diet culture, descriptions of food and eating, accidents, suicide, abuse and self-harm.

Agreement 4. Respect requests for confidentiality.

We have two kinds of confidentiality at Firefly. Small c confidentiality is the one we observe all the time. This means that you're welcome to repeat things you hear and experience in this workshop, but we ask that you not attach names or identifying characteristics. If that

doesn't feel like enough, request capital C confidentiality and we will put that piece in the vault, and not repeat it in any way.

Permission 1: Care for yourself, and ask for what you need.

If a prompt doesn't work, change it. If you don't want to share a piece, don't. If you need to fidget, fidget.

Humans are a beautiful chaos of needs and wishes, which makes every gathering at Firefly unique. Let us know what *you* need to feel as safe, comfortable and present as possible in this space and we'll build our practices from there.

Permission #2: Find the right balance safety and freedom in your work

Any time we do creative work, we can choose to be safe, avoiding the scary or confronting material, or we can choose to be free, taking risks and drawing close to our edges.

Both are great. Both are welcome. Take risks when it feels right, rest in ease when it doesn't. Embrace the power of being in control of your experience.

Permission #3 : Let me know if something feels off.

We all come from different contexts, and are just getting to know each other, so it's common to unintentionally misstep. This is especially true in writing spaces. We're all still learning how to have conversations about cultural appropriation, stereotyping and other forms of harm that come up in creative work.

I will speak up or reach out between classes anytime I catch this, but I won't see it all. If you feel anything off in this class, I welcome you to reach out to me.

Let's all be open to the work of creating community, and repair when we mis-step.

Permission #4: Hold me accountable.

If you see me missing or forgetting something, or if I say or do anything that reveals the limits of my awareness, I would love to know and will receive that with a very open heart. If you don't feel comfortable speaking to me, you can reach out to anyone else at Firefly.