

Write Into the Afternoon: "This I Believe/This I Don't Believe"

As we write into the afternoon we'll be writing about things we believe in or don't believe in. Perhaps recall something that inspires and guides you and informs how you live your life. You are attempting to persuade your audience of the importance this belief, or absence of belief, plays in your life.

One way to do this is to give specific examples of how and what you do in attempting to live your belief. For instance, if you start with the statement "I believe in cooking dinner with other people." You might next explain why. You might then move in the direction of "Cooking dinner with other people has taught me how to compromise, find solutions to problems, work as a team, and bond with other people." Next you would give specific examples of how so. You might start out by saying something such as, "The first time I cooked dinner with someone it was with my grandfather. My mom was at the hospital with my grandmother. My mom usually cooked, and so left on our own my grandfather and I were clueless. We knew we were hungry, but we had no idea what to make or how."

Then you can tell the story of cooking with your grandfather for the first time, the challenges, and how you worked together to find a solution to a problem, and perhaps how you got to know each other better in the process. This type of example will likely have sensory detail, as well as explanations of how you were shaped by the experience—how it became fundamental in your life and how the belief became a belief for you.

You may also describe cooking with others in another situation, how it was different, but perhaps also taught you something. You may write about a time your belief was challenged by people with whom you didn't particularly enjoy cooking with. You could also write about how the things you learned from a specific activity or experience could be generalized to other aspects of your life. For instance, perhaps while cooking you learned the value of asking others their opinions. How was what you learned important in situations that didn't involve cooking? Your writing into the afternoon could also become a "This I Don't Believe" argument for why there is no such thing as the proverbial too many cooks in the kitchen.