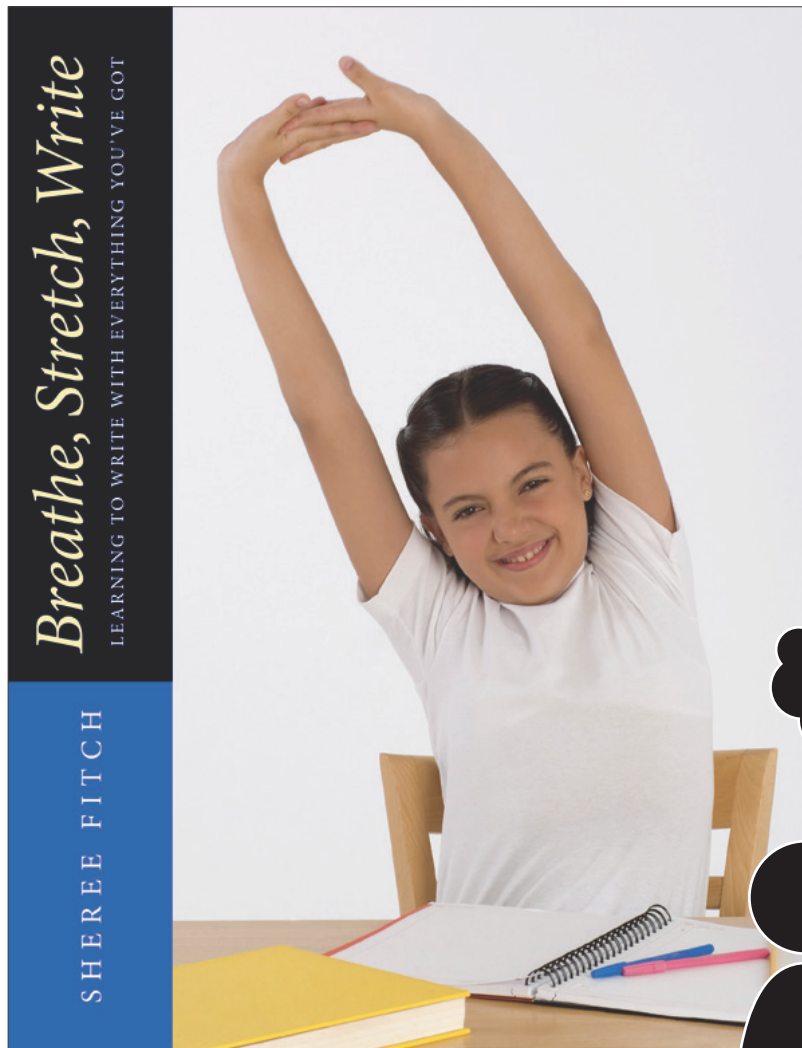


**Sit Down & Shush**

**Pembroke's Friday Freebie**



**Thought  
&  
Emotion**

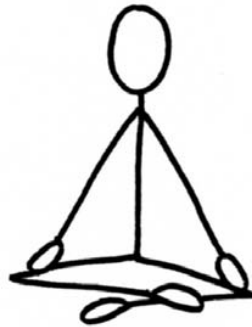
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## 16. Sit Down and Shush

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This classic pose is great for relaxation. It is amazing how a small act of adjusting your sitting bones on the floor or slightly opening your mouth and feeling your tongue on the roof of your mouth can relax your whole jaw. The *shush* sound is good to experiment with—make softer and harsher shushing sounds. Do this about three times as a group and then wait in silence. Even animals respond to the *shhh* sound and, for humans who are always chattering in our minds, it can help still the babble or at least slow it down. Let breathing become relaxed and easy. Gently rest the eyeballs by lowering the eyes and letting the eyelids almost close or close. I like imagining a rope tied to the tip of my head and, when I start to slouch, I see myself being gently tugged a little straighter. It helps me not round my shoulders. Relax but don't get body lazy! I confess, I have fallen asleep sitting up while trying to meditate.



### **Breathe**

1. Always breathe in and out through your nose.
2. Place your hand close to, but not on, your belly near your navel. Inhale. As you do, gently push your belly toward your hand.
3. Exhale. Pull your belly in. Imagine your navel touching your spine.
4. Do this three times.
5. Return to normal breathing.

### **Stretch**

1. Sit down on your behind. Wiggle yourself comfortable.
2. Cross your feet at the ankles.
3. Cup your hands on your knees.
4. Breathe. Keep your neck straight.
5. Lower your gaze three feet in front of you and continue to be mindful of breath.

*Write*

1. RHYMING NAMES

Play with names around a circle: e.g., Margaret Wargaret; Sheree Berry; Jess Guess etc.

This is a simple wordplay game but it is important. The naming of things is the claiming of things.

2. NAME GAME

- After playing with names for a few minutes, open journals and invent a name, first and last. Here are some sample names to get you started: Mr. Grumble, Fiona Fairweather.
- For five minutes write, creating that character.
- As always, when you are done, whoever wants to share can share.

3. EXPLAIN A NAME

- Write for five minutes beginning with these lines:

The door opened. In walked Rad Leblanc.  
 “Hey, Rad, how ya doing?”  
 Radish Leblanc sighed, sat down, and said, “ It’s been quite a day.”

- As you write think of the traits someone called Radish might have.

I take as much care naming my characters as I would a baby. I find names in name books, telephone directories, and the credits after a movie. I usually look up the origin and meaning of a name. If I’m going to be with a character for a long time, I want to like their name, and it has to be appropriate for the character. The name game is not just a game. It is about the right words and the sounds they make. The first poem I ever wrote was in Grade 2 when Mrs. Goodwin said we could write a poem about our names. She put my “Itchy Fitch” poem in the school fair. Watching the reaction of people that day, their body language—they smiled after reading—I realized words had power to connect and reach and touch another. I was hooked.

4. ACT A POEM

- Find and share a copy of a poem you love.
- Act out the poem with your body.

*I took a great workshop at the Kennedy Center a couple of weeks ago called Poetry off the Page in which we were taught a poem through using our bodies to act out one motion per line, without ever seeing the poem in print. The poem became a part of our bodies and from there we were asked to write our own poems using some prompts. Having used our bodies, it was much easier to come up with metaphors from the physical world to represent our ideas.*

—Amy Young, teacher at the Lab School, Washington DC