Writing Our Journey:
Poems and Essays by Family Caregivers

Each meeting has a suggested prompt, or idea, for people to write about. Everyone is free to interpret that prompt however they’d like. Below is one of the prompts, followed by a sampling of what was written in response.

Please remember that each piece of writing belongs to the writer and, if quoted, must be credited to that writer.

Three Adjectives: The Sequel

If you recall, the first prompt we ever had was to think of the first three adjectives that come to mind when we think of our child, and write about those. I thought it might be interesting to revisit that prompt for our 3rd anniversary meeting, but this time with a slightly different twist. So this prompt is: Ask someone else to think of the first three adjectives that come mind when s/he thinks of your child, and explain why those three. It could be someone who knows your child very well, or someone who’s a bit more removed. The idea is to get a sense of how that person perceives your child. You might try exploring some other ways to talk about that person’s perceptions. For example, you could ask the person to describe your child’s strengths and challenges, or what s/he has learned from knowing your child, or how s/he sees your child having changed over time.

- “Three Adjectives Three Years Later: It’s Your Turn” by Lisa N.
- “What Came to Mind” by Kathy Roberson
Three Adjectives Three Years Later: It’s Your Turn

As we often are, my son and I were sitting at the worn kitchen table hanging out. I asked him to describe himself. He didn’t want to, but I kept coaxing him. Eventually he smiled slyly and said, “Funny.” I liked the first word he chose. He is funny! His sense of humor is his finest quality.

“Another word. Give me another word to describe yourself,” I pleaded.

“Scared,” he said. As a recent high school graduate my son was scared about the future and what is next for him. I bet there are many graduates who, when being honest, would say they were scared, too.

“One more. Can you give me just one more word to describe yourself,” I begged.

“Overwhelmed,” he said. I smiled. Frankly, I was overwhelmed too. Our old routines and schedules were no more. We were waiting to be told his new bus schedule and the start date to his new program. Everything was up in the air.

The words Eric chose reflected a self awareness and a maturity that wasn’t there when my first writing assignment was to use three adjectives to describe my son. At that time, I could only settle on two words: powerful and unpredictable. We were living in hell at the time. On top of his severe disability he was struggling and losing a battle with depression and anxiety.

Ever so slowly, his mental illness has faded and his true self has been revealed to me again. And now, even though Eric is in the midst of one of the largest transitions of his life (from school based services to adult services) we have a calm in our house that was not there three years ago.

I am so thankful Eric is willing to SAY he is scared, SAY he is overwhelmed instead of expressing it by screaming, driving his wheelchair into walls, refusing to eat. I am thankful that he can make jokes at the dinner table which leave his brother, his Pop and me laughing.

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What Came to Mind

When asked there were no hints in their descriptions:

Joyful
Loving
Affectionate
Warm
Caring
Gentle
Sweet
Fun
Social
Shy
Quiet
Inspiring
Independent
Curious
Determined
Deep

These words brush against me like petals in a passing breeze, their light touch reassuring her gifts have been discerned after all; it is only I who first replied

Radiant

and then with the insistent
whisper of
a mother’s
heartache felt
compelled to
add

_Dependent_
_Vulnerable_

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