



Chapter Eight – Power & Empowerment - Transcript

As you can tell (just from the way this programme is put together) writing is a journey and it never stops. I'm still on my writing journey and I hope that never stops. I hope that I keep growing and getting better and changing in spoken word. But the thing that helps me do that is to be able to look behind me and see all the places that I've been in my writing before. To see how I felt about something at a particular time helps me better understand how I feel about that same thing now. If this programme really is the first time that you've ever encountered spoken word then I am honoured to be part of that journey but I hope it is really just the first baby steps that you take into this world of writing. After this programme is done you have the tools to carry on and take your writing in whatever direction that you want to...and performing it as well and that's amazing.

CHAPTER 8 – MY POWER COMES FROM YOU

'Spark' is a show that I wrote because I wanted to write about all the things that were important to me and to acknowledge all the things in my life that made me. And it was only when I was writing the show that I realized just how much... That it's the people in my life that make me and that's a real joy. And it also made me feel really powerful. Knowing that who I am as a person is made up because I have a great support network of friends and family and their love and them cheering me on and... That makes me feel like I can do anything. The dictionary definition of empowerment is - the process of becoming stronger and more confident while controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. That is what poetry has allowed me to do.

TRANSCRIPT FOR 'BURN'

I went back to the beginning and found everything that I was looking for in your faces felt so much power in your presence there is a curse that lies on all of us you can hear it in cracked hip bones and tiny first cries you can feel it in your back in your shoulders in the soles of your feet but this is not the old magic this is just the brick after brick in building his heaven we built our vocabulary around the towers around us learned to call it home but this is not the old magic the old magic is out there it survived the hurled brick by brick it found a way to be uprooted trusted itself in the wind and to exceed in our chest we have it in every heartbeat where she is needed most we are the guardians of her mother and her mother and every cracked hip they try to rebrand a stolen rib the story changes over time the truth remains the same good or bad I will believe you believe me they will still try to come for you silence you turn your bloody body into inkwell use your feathers to rewrite retell but remember no one page could hold your subway map plot lines you can hold power lines have them send you on a journey no manuscript and the embers could ever erase our story and we will never be afraid of fire again we are the

women with matches in our teeth and gun powder chests we are new moons and fresh starts
 harbors and stitches we are family we are witches we know the stakes are high but being loved
 by us is so damn magical we've come a long way to this powerful and it is not easy in fact it is so
 damn hard to bleed kindness from your chest full of smoke and ember remember it doesn't
 matter if you're a roaring flame or a cigarette kiss musket wet or infernal grit for we all
 perfected the art of rising from the ashes long before they ever thought to use it against us
 light up every room go through this life scorching sometimes all it takes is a spark and that is all
 we ever need take it light it up burn

LESSON CONTINUES

'Burn' is the only poem in the show that doesn't work as a standalone. Because it's made
 entirely of...bits and pieces of other poems - other lines from the show and it's all frankenstein-
 ed together at the end, just to end the show. It was probably my favourite poem to put together
 because I just got to see how...well...things about Glasgow and myths about giants and...stories
 about puberty books just all fit together...in a way that I-way better than I ever thought it could.
 I didn't feel like I had to end on some new message because I felt that I had got to say
 everything that I wanted to already and it was just pulling out little bits together and just seeing
 how they all fitted together to be like: 'I've made my point!' It was really special and I want you
 to experience the same thing - so you're going to do that too.

CHAPTER 8 – PULL EVERYTHING TOGETHER

By now you should have pages and pages and pages of...your notebook or your word document
 or your wax and tablet - that are full of scribbles and writing exercises, pieces of poems,
 startings and ideas - all of them about you. So I want you to go back through all of them and pull
 out your favourite bits; grab lines that you thought: 'Yeah I really like that line' or 'I didn't feel
 like I get to fully unders... To fully explore that one' or 'This is something that I didn't use in this
 poem but I feel it's still important.' Pull out all your best bits, lay them all out on the page and
 have a look at them and then I want you to use what's there as a starting point for a poem. I
 want you to write a poem that's called 'Things I now know to be true about myself.'

WRITING EXERCISE – THINGS I NOW KNOW TO BE TRUE ABOUT MYSELF

You have more than enough to make this happen. I hope you find bits from...all the exercises
 that we've done that you think: 'Yeah I'm actually really proud of that I'm going to use that
 there.' And I hope you have fun putting it together. I'm going to put 15 minutes on the clock for
 you to write this poem but I want you to pause it until you actually...pull everything out. That's
 not 15 minutes to pull everything out and, um, also to write the poem. Take as long as you need
 to go through your notes, make some new ones, pull everything onto a different page - that
 takes as long as it takes. But then, once you're ready to start, 15 minutes on the clock. Happy
 writing.

FIFTEEN MINUTE TIMER

CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION

So all of the exercises that we've done so far - all of them, in all the chapters - they're really only
 there to get you to start writing. No matter what your skill level - whether you've been doing

spoken word for years or you have never done it before this programme - these exercises are things that you can come back to over and over and over again. They help you get unstuck because writing poetry is hard. And when you see someone perform on stage and you think: 'My God! They make it look so easy.' It's because they've worked hard at making it look that way. I want you to look at what you've just written; a piece that you have made from all the journey that you've been on with this programme so far. You didn't just fart that out! That came from - practice and building confidence and doing exercises and...experimenting and things going wrong and things not working. And yet, you still have a piece at the end that you managed to put together. All that hard work goes into the piece that you have now. Nothing you write is a waste of time. Whether you think that: 'It's not great and it's not really what you wanted to say. It's not really coming across. It's not actually what you feel.' It's still not wasted. If anything it's helped you figure out that that's not what you want to say. That's not what you think. That's not how you want to articulate yourself. That's useful, you can use that with your next piece of writing. The piece you're holding is proof that you're a poet.

TOP TIP – DON'T THROW ANYTHING OUT

Keeping everything - don't put anything in the bin! It's keeping everything even if...when you open it you want to die of cringe of what you've written - keep it! Because you never know when it might be useful. You never know when you might need that thing that you've written. And when you look back through everything being like: 'I'm sure I've got something that I can use as a starting point for something I want to write now' and there it is.

UP NEXT – CHAPTER 9 – INTRODUCTION AGAIN