



Chapter Three – Odes - Transcript

I remember, quite reluctantly from school, um, that it was always kind of dangerous to show that you cared about something. Because if you cared about something then that meant that people could make fun of you for caring about that thing. The cool people didn't seem to ever care about anything and, I mean, how ridiculous is that? Can you go through life without caring about anything, I mean, that must be really boring. Also, people who care about things do amazing things. Greta Thunberg cares about the environment. Lady Gaga cares about music. Can you imagine not caring about anything? If you don't care then what are you gonna do? I know that it can be really scary to say out loud: 'Hey I care about that thing and I want to tell you why.' But who would you rather be? Someone who's passionate or someone who's just not. Also, when you care about something you attract other people who care about that thing to you and sometimes they're the people that you would least expect. I care about poetry and (through caring about poetry and talking about it and doing it) I have attracted people to me and I have been attracted to people who feel the same way. Um, and I have made some lifelong friends that way and my life is so much richer because I surround myself with people who care about the same things that I care about. Not only that but you might receive the thanks of someone who also cares about the thing you care about but thought they were alone in it. Or thought that there was no one else around them that cared about this thing or maybe they didn't have the courage to say that they cared until you did. Which is a really amazing thing, making those kind of connections that is kind of what's so addictive about spoken word poetry - those connections.

CHAPTER 3 - WHAT IS AN ODE?

An ode is a word from ye olde times. It's basically a lyric poem that is usually sung, um, to, it is addressed to a person or a thing and it is an admiration of that person or thing. Now I'm not going to get you to sing but odes nowadays are just letters of appreciation to a certain person or thing. It's about writing down what you care about enough to share and to say it out loud.

TRANSCRIPT FOR DEAR HERMIONE

Dear Hermione when you first floated down the hallways of the Hogwarts Express hair like you just licked the inside of a toaster I knew you were the one for me robes on spells memorised paying no attention to the boys with the dirty noses broken glasses or dead parents because you knew what was important yes Hermione you knew you were there on the Hogwarts Express from Platform Nine and Three Quarters because you were magic. First Year - 'Hermione Granger and the Deductive Reasoning That Saves Harry's Ass' you were so small but full of sass muggleborn and Gryffindor you made your voice echo like a roar because [bitches] gotta know

that it is levi-Osa not levioSaaa Second Year - 'Hermione Granger and the Art of Taking One for the Team' you had to deal with racist stupid people a big dirty basilisk you still solved the problem while you were petrified

Third Year - 'Hermione Granger and That Brief Time You Were a Time Lord' determined to fit all your learning into a little hourglass with so much class you refused to grass up Professor Lupin just for being a werewolf. Fourth Year - 'Hermione Granger and the Epiphany That You Can be Both Hot and Smart' you made it clear that you are no one's afterthought only idiots leave you to be last resort. Fifth Year - 'Hermione Granger and the Year You Had to do Literally Everything Because Harry Potter's a Giant Freaking Emo' Dumbledore's Army came to be because you gathered a small motley crew of others who knew the only way to do what was right was to be prepared to stand and fight. Sixth Year - 'Hermione Granger and the Danger of Copying Someone Else's Homework'

you told him to be fair you told him

Seventh Year 'Hermione Granger and the Longest Walk in the Woods Ever Cause Someone Let Harry Potter Pick the Route' followed by a fight to the death all in the name of what is good you gave up everything for hope of a better world you were always the best friend and never the girlfriend your first love was always books you never let anyone tell you who you are is wrong and in a world full of JKR's we all needed to hear that Dear Hermione you made this little girl sitting alone with a book in her lap know you can sit alone with a book in your lap and still be the hero of your story Dear Hermione you made this teenager understand the only thing more important than your education is your bravery and your kindness Dear Hermione you made this woman understand that no matter how many of them come for you there will always be daughters of witches that they forgot to burn Dear Hermione it's been 20 years and you still make me believe in magic

LESSON CONTINUES

'Dear Hermione' was a really fun poem to write because it didn't feel like I was writing a poem - I wrote a letter. I started it with, uh, 'Dear Hermione' and I knew that I could sign it with my name if I wanted to (like I would a letter) I just didn't feel that I needed to. But it was just, it felt, it made it so easy to write knowing that I had that, the focus that I was writing to Hermione, it made writing it so much easier with that format. Also (when you think about it) the section in the middle of 'Dear Hermione', where I go through the, the books - that's a list poem. The great thing about lists and letters is they are great tools to writing spoken word but they're not beginners tools. Don't feel that this is just your training wheels before going on to write poetry that doesn't have, um, a set structure like a list or a letter. I frequently still go back to (and write) list poems and letter poems. If you go through this whole programme and in all your writing exercises, they all take place as a list or a letter that's absolutely fine.

CHAPTER 3 - CARING IS HARD

There's nothing I like more than speaking to someone or listening to someone who is passionate about what they talk about and that could be about anything. If someone is chatting animatedly about Geology then I will get on board. I don't know anything about Geology but this person is speaking about it in such an excited way and they're so passionate about how cool they think that thing is that I think it's cool too. Writing and sharing an ode is a great way to be excited, to

engage people who don't have any idea what it is you're talking about but they know that you're excited about it. You can explain why you think it's exciting, why you like it and maybe they, they might not like it as well but they'll understand that you do.

WRITING EXERCISE – WRITING AN ODE

So this chapter's main writing exercise is we're going to be brave and we're going to write an ode in the form of a letter. Now first of all before we, uh, do any writing we're going to figure out what it is that we want to write an ode about. I know being asked on the spot, 'Hey, what kind of things are you into?' If someone asks me what kind of music I like I have heart palpitations. So we're going to take a minute and figure out what it is that we like so we can figure out what we want to write an ode about. So take a fresh page in your notebook and I want you to write these things along with me while I'm talking. Either divide your page into four or write down One to Four down the side of your page and leave a big gap so you can, um, populate it later. I want you to write for Number One - Your favourite childhood book or movie. Something you've seen or read lots of times. Okay, write in heading Number Two - Your favourite food. Okay, in heading Number Three write down - An object you couldn't live without. And finally in Number Four - a friend or family member that you couldn't live without. Now that you have those four headings, what I want you to do is just take three minutes and write down a few examples for each - the first ones that kind of come to mind are probably the best ones that you can go with. So take three minutes and write down a few examples for each of those headings.

THREE MINUTE TIMER

EXERCISE CONTINUES

Okay now we have a couple of things written out for each of those examples, I want you to pick one and that's going to be the thing that you write an ode to. Just circle it in your notebook, the one that jumps out at you, that you know that you can write lots about. Um, we're still in the planning stages, so I want you to take a new page on your notebook and write that thing at the top of your notebook, whatever you've picked. Now take five minutes to just get down on paper as much as you can think about it. What's the first time you, well, your first memory of this thing or this person or how do they make you feel? Why is it you can't live without them or it or whatever? Just take five minutes to write as much as you can. This is still the planning and mind mapping stage so you can feel free to be as messy as you like. This is just going to help you for when we actually go on to writing the ode itself so take five minutes.

FIVE MINUTE TIMER

EXERCISE CONTINUES

Now that you have all of your things written out it's time to write our odes but it's just a letter. I'm sure you will have written many letters in, in your life so just think about is that. You have all the information on your previous pages so you're going to write a letter to this person or this object, where you tell it or them all the reasons that, that you love them, that you like them. So it's a love letter so to speak. Just remember with a letter it can be as long or as short as you like because you have a clear starting and endpoint. You start with 'Dear' insert the name of the

object or the person and you end 'love' your name. Take 10 minutes for this exercise. Happy writing!

TEN MINUTE TIMER

CHAPTER 3 – ODES AS AN ACT OF RECLAIMING

I wanted to take a quick moment to talk about using an ode to reclaim something that has been seen as negative. There's a great poem by a, an American poet called Olivia Gatwood called 'Ode to my [bitch] face.' Where clearly someone has told her that she has resting [bitch] face and she has decided to write a poem telling her [bitch] face everything that she likes about it. We will all have, at some point, cared about something and then heard a negative comment from someone else which has kind of made us feel either ashamed that we like that thing or feel, feel a bit more negative about it. Sometimes writing an ode (just to remind yourself why it is that you like that thing) can be a real act of reclaiming the love of it. If you enjoyed the exercise we just did (and you like the idea of writing odes/writing letters) maybe at some point, in your spare time, come back and write an ode, um, to something that someone has called negative but you want to be seen as a positive.

CHAPTER 3 – CONCLUSION

As we go forward in this programme, I want you to remember the energy that you felt when talking about something that you care about. The, something about you, that you love. Because that is what makes us (as performers) really engaging. A way to remember that energy and even though it might not be what we're talking about as like things that we care about as we go forward, that energy, that excitedness, that want to explain to people to let them know why it is that we care. That is something that's going to help you moving forward with, uh, other poetry that we do in the programme.

TOP TIP – SAY IT OUT LOUD

Make sure you're practising saying your writing out loud at regular intervals. You don't have to wait until the end of the exercise or until there's a specific performance section, you should be practising speaking the words that you are writing as you're writing them. See if there's any natural rhymes or rhythms that can, that happen in your writing process. Like I've said before, this programme covers the broad scope of writing spoken word poetry: from mind mapping and planning, to writing, to editing, to performing. So we'll get to the performance side of it later in the programme but by, just, practising at an early stage saying things out loud it's going to make things so much easier when we get to that performance section.

UP NEXT – CHAPTER FOUR – DOUBT & CONFIDENCE