



Prologue - Transcript

WELCOME TO THE SPARK EDUCATION PROGRAMME

'The Spark Education Programme' is a free online course and educator resource centre, teaching you how to find your voice through spoken word poetry - linked into the full length spoken word show 'Spark'. Whether you have a passing interest and maybe even a little bit of experience with spoken words or whether you've never done spoken word before in your life if you've never even heard of it this programme is for you. My name is Sarah Grant I'm a filmmaker and writer and poet from Glasgow and I'm also the writer and performer for the stage show 'Spark'. On the website you will find a full filmed version of the theater show which you can watch for free and a complete course with over five hours of lessons examples and writing exercises meant to take you from never having written spoken word before to writing your very own introduction poem - a piece of creative writing that you could take onto a stage and, in three minutes, tell the world exactly who you are and what you're all about. We start with the basics; teaching you how to use your personality traits, your beliefs, and your experiences to be the building blocks for all your learning for great stories and for engaging poems. Each lesson chapter is around 40 minutes long so if you're a teacher you can stream that content directly into your classroom however, if you'd like to teach the programme with full autonomy knowing how to make changes to fit around your class, your students, then you can. Just head over to the teacher resource page to find everything you need. The workbook in its entirety can be downloaded below this video but we have also chunked up the workbook into individual chapters which you can find in the section next to the video. In that section you can also find any content warnings for the chapters in the programme. I came to spoken word later on in my creative journey I actually came through being a filmmaker and it was an incredible discovery to find that I could write and communicate in an entirely new way just helped shape me more as a person and helped me be a much stronger creative voice and eventually led to the writing of the show. Which is why so much of the programme is centred around finding out what it is that you want to talk about. Really practising using your voice because it's the strongest tool that you have.

GROUND RULES

Now, originally this programme was meant to be taught in person by myself in a classroom, um, obviously 2020 changed all those plans so I'm very happy to be able to present this programme digitally. But if I was in a classroom I'd be laying some ground rules for writing and sharing and performing spoken word. And as much as we're not in a classroom setting now, um, or maybe we are if you are watching this with your class right now I think it's important to go over some ground rules.

The first one is simply - be kind. This is an exercise in vulnerability and bravery and self-discovery and all of those things can be difficult and being kind to yourself, being kind to others, and being grateful for the fact that you and others are willing to share your thoughts and your discoveries and your opinions. Don't take that for granted, just be kind to people around you. This is a community that you're building for yourself so make it a good one.

Two - say everything you write out loud after every exercise. Spoken word is about performance it's not just about writing. You might write something and think 'Oh my gosh that's rubbish I hate it' but then you can read it out and go 'No that makes sense that sounds good I can hear that'.

Three - this is not your typical English class. So if you ever start thinking like you do when you're studying poetry in English and you're starting to think really critically about all the lines and the spaces and the words - just - that is not helpful just put it out your head.

Four - and this is important - you never have to share anything you don't want to ever. What we're going to be doing is your words, your writing, your stories. They're yours, they don't belong to anyone else and you never have to share anything you don't want to. Don't ever feel the pressure even if you're around other people who are writing and being a bit more, um, vulnerable and you think 'I should be as vulnerable as that'. No. You go as far as you are comfortable with.

Five - on the other side of only sharing what you're comfortable make sure that you're sharing your own work don't tell anyone else's stories.

Six - and this is so important and it's so easy to forget so I'll be reminding of you of it throughout the programme - it's not about the poem it's about the process. If you think that just sitting here and doing this is you're gonna be able to over and over and over again with every writing exercise we do bash out an incredible poem that you could instantly take to stage. Writing doesn't work that way. It takes time and practice and it takes re-drafting and figuring things out. Sometimes you will sit down and write the perfect piece that you want to write and that's amazing when that does happen. And it's great when it does but know that that doesn't happen all the time it's not about the finished article it's about the fact that you are sitting and you are writing you are learning, checking in with yourself and you are putting your thoughts down and then saying them out loud. It's always about the process and not about the poem.

Seven - after every chapter there's a recommended reading list. These are links to video performances of other spoken word artists the reason that I've left them there - they are not compulsory they're not, there's no questions on them, I don't reference any of them in the programme. However what's important to know is that there are as many different ways to do spoken word as there are people on the planet. Just because it's a programme that's written by me, that's based on a show that I wrote, I'm very aware that you're getting a lot of the process of how I do spoken word. And that might not be what makes you want to do spoken word. So after every chapter, there is a diverse range of poems by different poets from all over the world who do, who talk about the same things we've just talked about in the chapter but do it differently. I really recommend that you take the time to watch them after every chapter because exposing yourself to all the different ways that you can do spoken word is just going to make you more confident and comfortable that the way that you do spoken word is right.

Eight - and it's the same as the first one but I'm putting it in again - be kind. Always remind yourself that you've got to be kind to yourself when you're doing your writing and be kind to the others in your creative community who are being brave enough to do this as well.

GOOD LUCK!

SCROLL DOWN TO TAKE THE SPARK EDUCATION PROGRAMME