Personal Experience Writing

One of the best places to find ideas for writing is in personal experiences. **Things that happen to us**, or things that we have learned of, can often spark an idea.

Discuss the importance of personal experience to one's writing. Explain to your students that it is likely that they have already had many experiences that could provide fine material for writing, but that they just have not uncovered them. Tell them that **good ideas for writing are often hidden and tucked away in ordinary events**. We have to search for them to bring them out.

A helpful plan is to take a **personal inventory** of their experiences. The following list of questions can help students identify possible topics for writing. Encourage students to answer the questions in their journals. They can write as much or as little about each question as they like.

1. What am I interested in?
2. What things do I especially like? What things do I dislike?
3. What makes me different from other people?
4. What do I like about myself? What do I dislike?
5. What would I change about myself?
6. What makes me feel good about myself?
7. What do I care about most?
8. What would I most like to know?
9. What would I like to do?
10. Where would I like to go?
11. What exciting things have I done?
12. Do I know any interesting people? Why are they interesting?
13. What could I share with others?
14. What would I like to change about the world?
15. What are some things that have made me happy?
16. What are some things that have made me sad?
17. What are some things that have made me angry?
18. What are some things that have made me afraid?
19. What advice or insight could I share with others?

Excerpted from *Writing Workshop Survival Kit*.