

Writing with Love

In his introduction to *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, William Zinsser notes that the best memoirs are “written with love. They elevate the pain of the past with forgiveness, arriving at a larger truth about families in various stages of brokenness. There’s no self pity, no whining, no hunger for revenge; the writers are as honest about their own young selves as they are about the sins of their elders. We are not victims, they want us to know. We come from a tribe of fallible people, prisoners of our own destructiveness, and we have endured to tell the story without judgment, and to get on with our lives.”

—from p. 5 of *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*,
edited by William Zinsser (Mariner Books, 1998)

1. What does William Zinsser mean when he says that the best memoirs are “written with love”?
2. Why does William Zinsser say that good memoirs have “no self pity, no whining, no hunger for revenge”?
 - Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. If, as William Zinsser says, “we come from a tribe of fallible people,” then what makes any particular life or memoir worth noting?
 - What makes the life of the subject of *your* memoir worth writing about?