

*I have visited Tofino on Vancouver Island in Canada. Images the waves evoke are priceless. It isn't hard to imagine the emotion portrayed by seas. The inspiration of crashing waves and spraying water helps my procrastination problems as well. I see and understand feelings of anger, insignificance or a hopeless feeling when watching the ocean or the power portrayed by the waves as the tide comes in.*

If you are serious about writing a manuscript it is important to find tools and methods that inspire you. If you suffer writer's block (often an excellent reason to procrastinate) at some stage in your story, take a different direction if it goes on for days. Sometimes a different direction is all that is needed.

The tools I use to evoke emotions are: -

- Visiting places
- Nature
- Music, movies
- Researching

### **Visiting Places: - Ideas that inspire**

***Mount Rushmore – my question – at the time this was being created – what was the Native reaction? That one question could stem a whole story.***

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### **Inspiration all around you**

***Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start. - Nido Qubein***

**Count your blessings:** - At my age I have learned it doesn't matter where I am in order to see beauty and wonder. To have a full, happy life one can just visit and see family or friends to appreciate what we have been given. It doesn't have to cost money. Friends, family, peace and happiness are free and offered to anyone, provided they realize that is what matters.

Visiting places doesn't necessarily mean traveling. It can be as simple as studying the sky or looking at the birds or flowers in your back yard. All these free pleasures we are given can be captured forever by words or a camera.

## Nature

**Animals:** - watch birds and animals. A hummingbird darting around flowers can conjure up feelings of *happiness* at a *discovery*, to *anxious* feelings of making sure you can collect what you need. A baby robin falling from the nest can help you as you imagine the absolute *fear* and *horror* he must feel. I fed that baby robin when he stayed beneath my verandah until he learned to fly. A few months later my son and I were sitting on the steps when a robin flew between us and stood there with no fear. I am sure it was my 'baby' robin. Then I can think of *pleasure* I have inside of helping.

I was *fascinated* in the mountains when I saw the red and blue woodpeckers. Although we had woodpeckers around on the farm they were usually brown. One day, seated on my deck I felt the most *wondrous* feeling invade when a young woodpecker, just learning to fly, jumped on to my shoulder. Startling me, I turned my head and he immediately flew to the rail. Next time I will just stay still and look out of the corner of my eye. In the summer I usually wake up to squirrels chattering whenever I go out on my deck. They seem to dislike my invasion into their territory. Instead of annoying me I imagine how *upset* or *annoyed* they feel.

I managed to capture a unique sight when I captured these deer in our yard – a mother deer kissing her baby. Just imagine the *love*.

**Earth's beauties:** - There are some who never take the time to connect with nature and there are some that are obsessed with nature. Some believe humans are different and not a part of nature. They believe people are only here to destroy nature.

I believe we are a part of nature as surely as any other plants/animals are. God provides for humans just as he provides for other animals. If He provides rabbits for a wolf to eat, then so He provides plants and animals for a person to use.

This is a picture of trucks, including my husband's truck waiting to load/unload in a man-made mine. Some might see destruction. I see the *beauty* as the sun reflects on man-made ridges. I see man utilizing the offerings God provides.

When or if we believe that we can more easily connect with nature. One of the best methods I use for inspiration is to wander around in nature. A flower growing from a crack in the concrete can give me a feeling of **connection** and wonder at the **tenacity** of all living things.

Deerfoot Trail when the Bow River showed it's might in Calgary, Alberta. Respect it – or don't. In a short time the water will recede. A flood can teach me **patience** and the idea nothing lasts forever.

Even in a city, nature can be a part of your life. You can work with nature or try to conquer it.

**Use your own experiences: -**

A nasty divorce can conjure up many emotions from **hatred, anger, hostility** and **acceptance** or the **knowledge** to move on. If you haven't suffered one yourself, most people know someone who has.

**Faith:** - I was brought up a Christian. Mostly I didn't really 'connect' when I was young. I saw no reason to question the truth as I couldn't imagine my parents would lie. I feel that way to this day. There was no meanness or harsh punishment for me in my childhood. I remember – I would see Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem in the nights of sparkling snow or from pictures on Christmas cards and feel **awe** and **anticipation**.

Remember your past, but don't live in it.

### Summon Emotions

**Freedom: -**

**Wind:** - When I was young I used to feel free when I was galloping in the wind. Wind would actually blow all thoughts from my mind and I just felt the wind. When I moved into the city it was different. I couldn't just step out my back door and mount a horse. I had other things to concern myself with, children, family, a job and a house to maintain. I wasn't so free.

Now I take my grandson and we go 'cruising'. We roll the windows down, have the radio blasting and we sing at the top of our lungs. He's only seven, but he loves it including the country tunes I listen to.

**Water:** - Raging water also gives me a feeling of freedom. There are so many rules and regulations someone has insisted the government put on our freedom. When I look at the water and consider weather in general – I know that there are things that can't be controlled – things that are completely free – and hopefully always will be.

**Fear:** - I used to think I feared the dark. Then I discovered I feared what was in the dark. I used to play in the darkness (usually with siblings -but there was hide and seek when you were alone) and I wasn't scared. I walked in the dark and I wasn't afraid. We had wild animals as we were in a very isolated place, but they didn't scare me either. Then I moved to the city and I was afraid to go out at night. I eventually realized I was afraid of what was in the darkness. The signs were heart beating erratically, sweating (or perspiring – whatever your choice), and catching my breath – as though that would stop my stalker from finding me. I still choose to not venture out at night alone in a city.

I also thought I feared heights. But I can stand at the edge of a towering cliff and have no fear. I eventually realized I am afraid to put my faith in man-made machines (airplanes or vehicles on high ledges). I suppose I'm afraid of mechanical failure. Again I feel clammy, my breath catches and my heart beats at alarming speeds.

I often climb this ledge to get down to the river about 1,000 feet below our street. I find it easier to climb in my bare feet as I don't slip and slide.

**Jealousy:** - Some people believe jealousy is a sign someone loves you. I actually fear jealousy. I feel it's a sign of control or coveting.

If you want another person to do what you think they should, remember – you can't change a person. If that is jealousy I have experienced it. But I am more likely to feel sad and move on with my life when disappointed. If someone tries to force or convince me to do something I don't want, I am more likely to get out of that person's life as quickly as I can.

If you want to portray jealousy – just think of something you want and then combine anger because you can't get it. Then, if need be, your character can plot revenge or punish. A jealous man in a historical might be more convincing as a man did or could control women in those days. I am in favor of historical accuracy.

Jealousy as in coveting something that belongs to someone else is even worse. If I am jealous of my neighbor having a new vehicle when I can't afford one, I feel guilty at my pettiness. It is a character facet I hope to never have.

So with that in mind, I wrote a romance – **One Dance with a Stranger** – with my hero being unable to feel jealous, even when he didn't get what he wanted. There was no convincing, making or forcing Emily to love him. Then I had to convince readers he could love her just as much without getting jealous.

**Wonder/Awe:** - If you can create the feeling inside of what a child might feel whenever they take their firsts, it is the feeling of wonder.

I would watch my children, and now my grandchildren and can create the feeling from the expression on their face – amazement, surprise and fear. Just recently my grand-daughter took her first steps on grass. She has just learned to walk. Surprise was in her face as she stood like a statue. Then seeing encouragement from the adults she began walking. Then suddenly she was running and giggles pealed throughout the air.

I can't wait until she walks in the snow for the first time. It will be the same. It will summon the feeling inside. Then I jot down the feeling.

That is the feeling of wonder. Watch a child's first.

**Happiness:** - Usually people feel love is between a man and a woman. If you haven't found your 'true love' you are missing out. As a romance writer I, of course, need to understand that type of love. I don't feel this is the love of happiness. Often this type of love creates a myriad of emotions and happiness is not necessarily part of it.

I am talking about the love you feel towards anyone or anything. This is the love when a family member or friend might do something for you that create a feeling inside – a substantial feeling of love. Or it might be seeing the joy on their faces, revealing their feelings. Love might be for an animal, for a scene or sound. I love the sounds of waves lapping on the shore. It makes me happy. I love the sights the sky gives me. I love the way my grandson brings me a letter he has printed and signed himself. I love when my sister calls me and we chat as though we were together. It makes me happy.

My horse once stepped on my foot when I was young. I sat on a rock and cried it hurt so much. Suddenly the horse put his head on my shoulder. His eyes were so sad. A feeling of love flooded me and the hurt started dissipating.

I was driving in Calgary with my youngest son. He suddenly said in the silence, 'mom, if Jesus is the son, then God must be the moon.' He was about five at the time. It lifted my spirits and made me laugh. Love flooded my thoughts.

Everyone can feel the love of happiness. There are no exceptions. It is not the love between a couple – that type of love can create fear, sadness, anxiety and anticipation. It is not always the love of happiness. But it can be written whether you've experienced it yourself or not.

**Sadness:** - There are many things throughout our life that cause sadness. I doubt anyone can say they are not touched by sadness. But as a writer, sometimes sadness needs to be summoned from within and is sometimes very elusive.

Some things that can create sadness within me are listening to sounds. When I was young, growing up in isolation in Northern Saskatchewan, I can remember hearing the sounds of coyotes howling late at night, if I woke up. Always late at night, always in the cold winter, always when everyone else was sleeping and it was a poignant sound.

When I was an adult we lived near Fish Creek Park in Calgary for a time. One night I woke to that exact same sound. It was winter, it was late and everyone was sleeping. It brought back memories and it created that exact same feeling – sadness.

Northern Saskatchewan is scattered with thousands of lakes and sloughs. Lakes are surrounded by white, fine sandy beaches and sloughs are surrounded by trees, pussy willow shrubs and grasses. When I was around them, usually at dusk, there would sometimes be a piercing sound that filled me with sadness – a loon. Again, it always seemed to be dusk, but this time in the summer.

Now, it is hard to step out my door and hear those sounds or listen to them in the middle of the night. But I have discovered a new method to make me sad. A song by Vince Gill – *'The lonely sound of my voice calling is driving me insane....but nobody answers when I call your name'* makes the tears stream down my cheeks. There are other songs which are capable of doing this but this song is guaranteed for me.

**Peace:** - Look towards the sky after a storm passes. Black rolling clouds churn overhead and suddenly a light, with rays of beams break through. A feeling of peace, of contentment spread within. There is someone overhead watching. I choose to believe it is God. It is a feeling within I feel intensely.

Look to a sunset, see the light. Again a feeling spreads within. I am so happy to feel this and it has carried me through many obstacles in life.

It always seems as though when I am down as low as I can go, the sky creates light for me. My spirits lift. I wish I could give this to everyone as a gift of peace.

**Joy:** - It is said that laughter is the best medicine in the world. I believe this.

Often when I am overwhelmed by life's trials and tribulations something will strike me as hilarious and I will laugh, unable to stop. It may be the silliest movie – once I watched - **There's something about Mary** – and couldn't stop laughing. It was at a depressing point in my life and lightened my mood considerably. Since then I have tried to watch it again – and just find it silly, not funny.

Once a joke I heard created the same feeling - **What did Tarzan say when he saw the elephants coming? - Here come the elephants.** People looked at me like I was crazy when I couldn't stop laughing. But to me – it was the ultimate in the stupidity of jokes. What else would he say? How much more simple can an answer be?

I have used laughter to combat depressing, overwhelming moments and even moments of grief. Once I lost a brother. Another brother told jokes and kept me laughing until I was crying. Some didn't think it was proper behavior. But my mother said 'Everyone handles grief in their own way'. My mother was grieving the loss of a child, something no one should have to experience but she didn't forget her other children. Now, I often grieve for my mother and remember her wise words of wisdom.

For me it is truly one of the best medicines I have at my disposal and it's always free. Some people in these days of political correctness and rules or regulations has determined this is not proper behavior and might not see this my way. To laugh, when you're grieving is not acceptable, but it has worked for me. Whenever I fear for my sanity I often find something funny. When I am overwhelmed and again fear I might even have a heart-attack, I find something amusing. I definitely find amusement often in those rules or regulations as well. It can relieve frustration and disbelief quite well.

I worked in offices in the past. Many times some man would make a remark to me that would be considered 'sexual harassment' now but instead I laughed, with humor and cynicism combined. I found the majority of those men became friends. I never felt threatened. I never reported them.

Don't take life so seriously. Find time to laugh and in my case, find time to see the ridiculous in overwhelming situations that arise. I can't summon amusement, but it's always there when I need it.

**Anger:** - Take a narrow, winding road through isolated mountains full of waterfalls, tall fir trees, moss and tough granite to a tiny town on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The town of Tofino is unique in its stubborn ability to ignore modern progress. There is no Wal-Mart, McDonald's or even Tim Horton's. It takes a long stretch of lonely road back to find what many think is necessary. Tofino is a town most artists would love.

My first sighting of the ocean, in the off-season, was awe, followed immediately by rage.

I was shocked. Normally I do not consider the sound of rolling waves lapping against the shore – anger. These waves did not lap or roll. These were definitely waves fueled by anger.

The waves that crashed against granite, wearing rocks away to pulverized sand made me feel they were pure, unbridled anger. There is no way to stop their relentless destruction. I was both fascinated and uneasy. The towering waves smashing with a boom against the rocks with a hissing splash of water were an absolute surety there are forces that can't be stopped. I realized the sands I walked on as the tide moved out and the holes and chips in the crags and rocks were caused by the power of the waves. The longer I watched the more I felt their anger.

As a writer, when I need to summon the fury and power of anger, I close my eyes and see the waves of Tofino. I feel it, I see it. It is a sight once seen, that can never be forgotten.

## Music

As I grew older hardships and disasters came my way. The first time I was aware and connected life to God was a song. After an incident that placed me in a situation by pure luck (I thought it was luck) I heard a song – ‘I believe there are angels among us’. I felt a presence – literally. I realized something had helped prevent a disaster. My Guardian Angel had placed me in safety.

When the worse possible hardship happened, I again felt a presence. A song – ‘There has to be a morning after, if I can make it through the night.’ was my sign. At this time I looked for it. I needed it and it gave me peace and helped me continue to function.

He is there if you look for Him, but in everyday living we ignore and don’t feel it. Take time to look and feel. It will be there. Open your mind.

**Researching:** - When I was younger I researched just for the sake of researching. I would hear something and it stemmed copious amounts of searching whenever topics fascinated me.

Now, as I write, some research is not so fascinating. Right now my latest work involves doing research on a coroner’s office and their duties. I thought perhaps it was just in my mind – I enjoyed Crossing Jordan and Quincy Jones - television dramas. Unfortunately, although there is a lot of information I have – I need more. I must be accurate. It may only be one paragraph – but regardless, it must be accurate.

Some people say they don’t like history. I think that is too broad and general. There has to be parts of the past that are interesting to everyone.

I started **Alberta Wild Rose** by talking to another guy about all those abandoned gold mines (and there are many). British Columbia put out a map of real, true abandoned mines and ghosttowns. Some you can reach by car and some you can’t. That fascinated me as well. I wanted to reach the ones that couldn’t be seen by a vehicle. The Lost Lemon mine started my story. No one knows if it’s true or not. There is the legend of a curse with people who went insane or are killed in horrible ways after claiming they touched the gold. As a fiction, not a ‘theory’ article I was given free license to pursue beliefs combining real historical figures and as much fiction/ideas as I wanted.

When you do your research examine all sides and form your own opinion – not someone else’s. Enjoy as research is really one of the pleasant parts of writing.

## **C***onclusion*

I hope I have shown ways to use sights and sounds to enhance your writing. Just use the wonders that surround you wherever you live. It's free.

**'Good luck and God Bless'**