

# On A Search For Voice

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## ABSTRACT

The search for voice is a crucial part of feminist theory. Voice is based on both self-definition and interactions with communities. One challenge is to delineate between outside sources that hinder and foster growth in voice. Sharing personal experiences is crucial in understanding voice. A journey of voice is demonstrated through reading and writing.

## RÉSUMÉ

La recherche pour une voix est une partie cruciale de la théorie féministe. La voix est basée et sur la quête de soi et sur les interactions avec les communautés. Un défi se détache des sources externes qui entravent ou qui encouragent le développement dans la voix. Le partage d'expériences personnelles est crucial à la compréhension de la voix. Un parcours de la voix est décrit à travers la lecture et l'écriture.

From my perspective as a young feminist, I have been struggling with how to approach ideas of voice. After long deliberation, I have decided that the best way for me to convey feminist theory regarding voice is to use my own experience. One of the primary parts of feminist theory is the quest of a female to find her own authentic voice and thus it is necessary to investigate voice in a feminist context.

I want to demonstrate the importance of personal experience in feminist theory through defining voice. Since I am a writer, my approach will be literary as I examine searching for voice through reading and writing. It is extremely difficult to define voice because it means different things to different people. For me, coming to know one's voice is about understanding and taking space for the self. Voice is about communication and the sharing of experiences. Voice deals with finding one's own truth as well as allowing many truths to coexist. To know one's voice is not about appropriating the space of others. In order to take up space, one must give space to others. Space is physical, emotional, psychological, and intellectual. The search for voice, then, deals with self-definition and self-determination.

The development of voice has been, and continues to be, discussed by feminist theorists and philosophers. Before delving into my experiences with searching for my own voice, it is necessary to investigate the conflicts that exist in theories of voice. The tension focuses on issues between the

voice as individual based and community based. An authentic voice begins with personal experience. Women's lives, though, are relational and therefore the community and interaction with external bodies is necessary in the development of voice. Voice cannot exist in isolation. If voice is both individual and community based, how is this tension reconciled? How do we draw the distinction between outside influences in the community that enable voice and those voices that are oppressive?

For Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan, in their book, *Meeting At The Crossroads*, voice exists in relationship: "Voice, because it is embodied, connects rather than separates psyche and body; because voice is in language, it also joins psyche and culture. Voice is inherently relational..." (1992, 20). A voice cannot stand alone because it is developed, in part, through interacting with community and culture.

Issues arise when we analyse these outside sources. Brown and Gilligan, in their article "Listening for Voice in Narratives of Relationship," ask: "Whose voice? In what body? Telling what story about relationships (from whose perspective and from what vantage point)? In what societal framework?" (1991, 43)? These questions deal with, in part, power structures. The position of an individual in a society's hierarchy reveals his or her biases. Those who are typically marginalized (including people of colour, women, the poor, and disabled) in the political and public sphere are not given space for their voices.

This oppression is so ingrained that it is a force which moulds the oppressed. Morwenna Griffiths uses the metaphor of a web to demonstrate the intrinsic nature of oppression: "It [the self], too, is made of nearly invisible, very strong threads attached to the circumstances of its making and under the control of its maker. It, too, is made to suit the purposes of its maker, but the circumstances of the making are not under her control" (1995, 2). Dominant society, as the powerful maker, creates frameworks of voice which are characterized by their authority of definition. Judith Butler offers particularization on this power structure: [P]ower imposes itself on us, and, weakened by its force, we come to internalize or accept its terms" (1997, 2). The subsequent challenge is how to deal with this oppressive outside authority while also trying to foster positive communities which encourage the validation of personal truth and experience.

Brown and Gilligan offer insight into this challenge in their description of a teenage girl named Tanya who is dealing with her own search for voice: "Tanya struggles to hold on to her experience - to know what she knows and to speak in her own voice, to bring knowledge into the world in which she lives - in the face of authorities and conventions that would otherwise muffle her voice and bury her knowledge" (1991, 56). Here, knowledge is associated with voice. Tanya's voice speaks about her experiences, which form the basis of her knowledge. Authority and rules which seek to override the personal suppress the individual's knowledge and thus, power exists in the hands of those who oppress others. Oppression is about denying space for females like Tanya to express themselves through their own truths. An elaborate scheme of oppression is in part the propaganda perpetuated by those in power to ensure powerlessness in the lives of the oppressed.

For the individual, this theme of oppression may not be understood on the level of one person's struggles. Many individuals such as Tanya are struggling simply in the context of their own experiences. One method to deal with oppressive authority is to connect with those who share similar challenges. Two experiential forms of connection are reading and writing (which will constitute the latter half of this paper). A system of voice oppression can be seen more clearly in the connections between individual experiences. When

a woman sees her issues as part of a web of issues, it is easier for her to deal with the authority of outside sources that seek to define her. Any notions that her experiences form an isolated case of hysteria can be eliminated when she sees the patterns of oppression in the lives of other women.

Up to this point, dominant society has been investigated as the main source of oppressive authority. It would be a generalization to leave this claim without further refining it. The nature of the power of the dominant hierarchy often fosters oppression but it is not possible to simply point to those who are privileged (white, male, wealthy) in our society as the culprits of oppressive authority. Non-feminist communities are not inherently oppressive. Groups based on ensuring human rights and the elimination of other forms of oppression (such as racism) are often focused on the same goals of allowing self-definition and validating personal experiences. It is difficult and ineffective to label groups as oppressive or enabling of voice. Only tendencies can be articulated, such as the assertion that feminist communities enable the search for voice to a much greater degree than the dominant hierarchy. As well, for example, one family's structure could be enabling to one individual and oppressive to another individual.

In fact, delineating between positive and negative outside sources of authority is a considerable challenge in the search for voice. Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule in *Women's Ways of Knowing* offer a framework for determining which outside sources contribute positively to a woman's experience of voice: "[It is] relationships that provide women with experiences of mutuality, equality and reciprocity that are most helpful in eventually enabling them to disentangle their own voice from the voice of others. It is from just such relationships that women seem to emerge with a powerful sense of their own capacities for knowing" (1997, 38). A relationship that allows space for the individual to search, grow, listen and speak is an outside source that helps the search for voice move in exciting and nurturing directions.

These positive relationships exist in symbiosis with a path of personal validation. Belenky et al. write: "For many of the women [that the authors interviewed], the move away from silence and an externally oriented perspective on

knowledge and truth eventuate in a new conception of truth as personal, private and subjectively known or intuited..." (1997, 54). Here, an empowering internalization creates a new truth. Outside knowledge that seeks to define voice loses its authority in the experience of learning to validate personal space.

Intuition, as well, deals with a personal validation of truth. It requires listening to the voice within the self and diminishing the voices of authority figures. Belenky et al. address intuition: "Women's growing reliance on their intuitive processes is ... an important adaptive move in the service of self-protection, self-assertion, and self-definition. Women become their own authorities" (1997, 54). The process of self-definition in order to empower the self as an authority is a process of looking at personal truth which is then strengthened in the context of community.

Although seemingly contradictory, the search for voice is thus both individual and community based. Individual voice is about valuing personal experience and focusing on intuitive processes. This involves validating the self from within the self. Voice, as it has been shown, is also relational so it exists in the context of community. According to Belenky et al. isolation leads to "...separation and individuation [which] can leave women feeling vulnerable and unconnected" (1997, 65). When she is isolated, a woman may feel as though it is difficult for her to express herself among the overwhelming voices of dominant society. When that same woman is a part of a community in which she shares experiences, she is better able to express her voice. Her voice is nurtured by the experience of a community. When a woman's search for voice begins to involve the community, she is challenged with delineating between enabling and destructive voices. Outside sources that seek to define voice are oppressive whereas outside sources that seek to encourage the personal development of voice through the sharing of experiences are considered enabling influences.

Voice, then, is not something that is easily obtained, sustained or understood. I know this to be true from my study of theories surrounding voice but I know it more clearly and fully through my own search for voice. The tensions and struggles that exist in feminist theory surrounding voice are

both important and necessary for foundation and context. It is crucial that I travel beyond the theoretical and in doing so examine my own search for voice. I will begin by revealing my bias and sharing some of my experiences with voice in the context of family and education before delving into my search for voice through reading and writing.

As a young writer, I seek to come to know my own voice. I consider myself a feminist which is a term that I have learned is unpopular with many professors, family members and other people that I encounter in my daily life. Being a feminist for me is about, in part, dismantling the hierarchy and eliminating the centres that make women and other oppressed groups outsiders. Feminism is about celebrating women. I relate strongly to bell hooks' assertion: "I came to a feminist consciousness in the patriarchal household of my upbringing" (2000, xi). My family is defined by the structure of a mother who stayed at home to tend to the household and raise two children while her husband worked. Growing up, I had strong examples of a traditional patriarchal set-up in which women's work goes unpaid, unacknowledged and unappreciated within the family and within society as a greater whole. I was rewarded with smiles of approval and comments that I was a "good girl" when I followed the precepts set out for me in domestic tasks such as helping my mother with baking and housecleaning.

The reward of pleasing my parents through my early domestic behaviour contributed to a need to continually please my parents as I grew up. As I began to understand feminism in my teenage years, I was aware of an arising tension. This struggle is articulated by Tanya (discussed earlier): "I do not want the image of a 'perfect girl' to hinder myself from begin a truly effective human being ... yet, I still want to be nice, and I never want to cause any problems" (Brown and Gilligan 1991, 55). I wanted to please my parents and teachers. My need to have a voice that belonged to me wrestled with that desire to be nice based on their ideals.

Although my patriarchal household did not encourage a search for voice, it remains a place where I am inspired by my mother's strength in the midst of such a structure of patriarchy. I have come to accept that contradictions can fully exist and do not need to be necessarily solved. My family is both a source of enabling and oppressive authority in my search for voice. bell hooks articulates an important

contradiction: "I had to leave that space I called home to move beyond boundaries, yet I needed also to return there" (1996, 50). A cycle of moving forward while understanding the past has nurtured my own voice.

A need to concentrate on my search for voice began in earnest when I entered university in 1997 although I did not recognize the need until years later when I began to write about my experiences with education. My parents and teachers were outside authorities that constructed my voice and now the expectations of university professors became added to my voice - professors who had been built up in my mind as towers of profound knowledge. Many spoke of theories that were presented as ultimate truth. The definition of literature was reserved for the works of white male authors like Chaucer and Hemingway. I needed to keep a scholarship and the required grades ensured I accepted and perpetuated their concepts of theory and literature. There was little room for individual ideas or space to challenge the status quo. I felt as though I was drowning and my anxiety built. My anxiety grew to such a degree that it hindered my education. I needed to share with professors my special needs - longer times for tests or take-home exams, absences from class, etc... I had to reveal my weaknesses and found myself seeking help from the oppressive voices that held the authority of my education. I was surprised, disheartened and increasingly anxious by the unwillingness of many professors to assist me. I was a good student and if I needed outside sources to prove it, I had my transcript and other professors to back up my claim. I worked hard but learned differently. I saw that many professors did not welcome this voice.

Fortunately, I encountered professors who could see me as an individual and did not see my anxiety as a cause for unrest. Belenky et al. articulate what I see as a major difference between the goals of these two types of professors: "Understanding involves intimacy and equality between self and object, while knowledge ... implies separation from the object and mastery over it" (101). University is (or should be) about understanding and not solely about the dissemination of knowledge. Understanding promotes the empowering of voice and a community of voices which leads to positive change in the dominant / oppressive dynamic of our

society. Many of these enabling professors who focused on understanding taught Women's Studies courses. In these courses, women are the focus which is important in the face of other academic disciplines that are primarily focused upon the experiences of men. In History classes most of the attention is given to the history of white, well-known men. For example, it is more common to learn about the fur traders in Canadian history than it is to learn about the Native women who greatly assisted those fur traders with their thorough knowledge of the land. Women's History, then, includes the experiences of women and other oppressed groups. I began to understand that studying one's voice and allowing women's voices to be at the centre of discussion are essential for a woman to come to know her voice and celebrate it. The personal is the basis of all that we do and who we are. Through these courses, I have come to see that women's experiences - including my experiences - are what shape feminism.

From these experiences of education and family life, I have emerged as a writer. My writing is about my search for authentic voice and giving space for a variety of voices to be heard. As a feminist, reading constantly fuels my writing. It is necessary then for me to demonstrate my search for voice through these two avenues of experiences.

Nancy Mairs in *Voice Lessons* investigates her own voice through her interactions with reading and writing. I was inspired by her candid descriptions of her experiences. I particularly identified with the following observation made by Mairs about reading which reflects her experience with an author: "...Virginia Woolf and I shared a bedroom the summer I turned thirty-six" (1994, 54). There are occasions when I too feel that I am sharing my space with an author's words. These occasions create a dialogue with my schemas and experiences. Once I read or hear another person's story, I become involved and changed by the encounter. My personal sense of knowing examines what I have read and I evolve as a result of the experience. What I choose to read, typically feminist literature and poetry, creates a community of sharing and encourages my voice.

The poetry of Native women poets Louise Halfe and Jeannette Armstrong emphasizes the importance of the community that surrounds voice. For these women, voice is not solitary. Instead, it is

affected by the voices of the land and by the voices of the past. Their emphasis on nature and the language of the land demonstrates the interconnectedness of all living creatures.

In the poem "Wind Woman," Armstrong writes: "Maggie told me I had heard / the wind woman sing / she told me that I would remember that song always / because the trees were my teacher" (1991, 85). The land is teaching the speaker of this poem about music and about her own sense of self in the present. Each time I come back to this poem I am reminded of a feeling of interconnection. A reminder that I am part of the cycle of life nurtures my voice. I am not alone; I am a part of the earth.

The theme of connection continues in Armstrong's "First People:" "I draw together / with my hand / parts of the finished world / I sing the body free / I stand in awe of the pattern" (1991, 57). Here, the speaker's body becomes a connection between the past and the present. This connection both frees her and allows her to recognize cycles. She sees herself in the context of a pattern while still acknowledging the importance of her body and her hands. This poem fosters my own voice as I can both celebrate my sense of self and my role in greater patterns of space and time. These celebrations do not exist in contradiction, rather they are fuelled by each other. Voice can be both individual and a part of the greater community, and Armstrong's work shows the degree to which they are greatly interwoven.

For Jeannette Armstrong, voice goes beyond words. Her voice is inherently entwined in her home, which she identifies as the Okanagan land. She writes: "Voices that move within as my experience of existence do not awaken as words. Instead they move within as the colors, patterns and movements of a beautiful, kind Okanagan landscape" (1998, 76). This is a wonderful validation of my own nameless sense of voice that exists within me. There are textures and formations of idea and emotion which are part of my voice but do not exist in language. Through articulating her experiences with a voice that is not expressed in words, Armstrong shares with me a part of her story that enriches my story and my sense of voice.

I recall the first time I read Jeannette Armstrong's *Breath Tracks*. It was the middle of the winter and I could hear the wind rattling my

windows. After finishing the book, I was left craving the connection that Armstrong taught me through her earthy poetry. I put on an oversized coat, making sure to remember to put on my mittens, scarf and hat. Clutched in one hand was *Breath Tracks* while the other hand fiddled with the gate lock. Soon I was standing knee deep in the crunchy snow of my backyard. The trees stood strong and could only be coaxed to sway by the raging wind. I stretched my arms as wide as I could to take up as much space as I could. I felt connected to the life around me. I listened quietly and I knew that I had an important place in the story that the earth was telling me.

Jeannette Armstrong's *Breath Tracks* sits on my bookshelf next to Louise Halfe's *Blue Marrow*. They are two books that speak strongly to me about searching for voice through interconnection. *Blue Marrow* is a rich collection of poems that empowers me as a woman through the women before me. Halfe writes: "Grandmothers hold me. I must pass all that I possess, / every morsel to my children. These small gifts / to see them through life. Raise my fist. Tell the story. / Tear down barbed-wire fences" (1998, 5). Louise Halfe writes from a Native woman's perspective. The marginalization of Natives is a crucial element to her poetry. She attempts to fight against the racism and sexism in her life by making her voice heard. In reading Halfe's poetry I begin to understand the importance of stories from women of the past as well as the women who surround me. My parents gave me my paternal grandmother's name. Calling my name also calls upon her and the stories of her life. It is a gift to hear stories about these women who came before me. In Halfe's poetry, I find a new respect for my mother's stories of her childhood and of her mother. I can come to see that although my voice is my own, it is part of a tradition of women's voices. It is my responsibility and honour to pass stories to the next generation. If I continue to share what I have learned, those who come after me will not have to re-learn what already has been learned. Halfe gives a sense that the past is a fuel for the present and that these women of the past are with her.

For Halfe, memory helps her to articulate herself in the present. She writes: "I return to the Moon glade, turn up the sod, lift my songs. Dream. / Grandmother dances at Midnight. Grandmother

Moon, my Shadow dreams the dark. / Grandmother, the Women in Me" (1998, 90). The memory of her grandmother gives the present a new sense of reality as she uses her grandmother in describing herself. bell hooks articulates this use of memory: "Fragments of memory are not simply represented as flat documentary but constructed to give a 'new take' on the old, constructed to move us into a different mode of articulation" (1996, 50). Using memory allows Halfe to explain herself on a different plane of understanding. She is no longer using the common concept of reality but allowing her voice to find present reality, in part, by using her grandmother in the past. Through this poem, I understand my voice is more complex than linear thought. My search for voice also takes me through memory - both my own and the collective memory of female consciousness.

Halfe goes on to write: "Climb down, my Grandmothers. / ... / Come heal us. / ... / Your energy so powerful. / ... / We need for our healing" (1998, 6). The grandmothers heal the present through their strength as Native women. Since reading Halfe's *Blue Marrow*, I have come to see the need to listen more closely. If I treat myself as a solitary person, then I shut out the community of generations that is available to me. Through Native poetry I have come to understand that my voice is part of the weave of our earth and those of the past. Understanding this interconnection invigorates my voice.

One of the greatest influences in my search for an authentic voice is a novel entitled *Potiki* by Patricia Grace. The story revolves around a family's struggle to save their village's land. The past, the land, and a sense of family are carefully interwoven in this story that primarily deals with coming to know, appreciate and celebrate voice. One relevant theme is that of change and cycles. Grace writes: "Gradually the stories were built upon, or they changed" (1986, 41). Here, I understand that voice is dynamic. As experiences change, we cannot stay the same and therefore our sense of space changes. Morwenna Griffiths adds to this concept of change: "To change oneself personally and collectively, requires a leap of the imagination, from the current assumptions and patterns into new forms of identity" (1995, 191). Change is both building upon our stories and a movement into new experiences and concepts of self. I do not change into some

completely different person but evolve through assimilating past stories with new ways of feeling and thinking about my voice. This process helps me to articulate my voice as well as recognize the unique development of my experience into a powerful voice.

Grace goes on to write: "Good had followed what was not good, on the circle of our days" (1986, 145). The notion of circles is interesting as it demonstrates the relevancy of cycles. When I am struggling with my voice inside of my anxieties, I can be soothed by Grace who reminds me that good can follow bad. Circles are not the only shape that help to describe voice in *Potiki*. Grace also writes: "A story not of beginning or an end, but marking only a position on the spiral" (1986, 180). This quotation alludes to the work of Halfe in that the past, present and future create a continual present. My voice is on a spiral that continually changes. All time frames are relevant to my changing voice.

From my perspective as a woman struggling with finding voice, I could particularly relate to the following: "It was funny how people saw each other. Funny how you came to see yourself in the mould that others put you in, and how you began not to believe in yourself" (Grace 65). My voice has become lost, at times, in the context of the ideologies of others. When I worry about what others think of me, I forget my personal value. I see myself in the space that others allot to me. My anxiety, in part, lies in this lack of self-validation. Belenky et al. articulate this struggle: "[When women] believe that all knowledge originates outside of the self, they must look to others even for self-knowledge" (1997, 48). To combat allowing others to create my sense of personal space and voice, I turn to writers like Jeanette Armstrong, Louise Halfe and Patricia Grace. These women help to strengthen my voice so that I can resist allowing my self-knowledge to be created externally. Their words and experiences contribute to my voice in encouraging ways while leaving room for my personal growth.

For me, reading and writing have always been symbiotic partners. It is natural, then, for me to make the transition between looking at reading and my experiences with writing. One of the most important themes of Nancy Mairs' book on voice is the concept of voice change. Mairs writes about

how she stopped writing when she got married (1994, 17). I could relate to this difficulty. When I began university, I stopped writing. As with Mairs, my voice changed. When my experiences and my surroundings both changed, I felt disconnected from my voice. The journey back to writing involved letting go of the authority of classic literature like Shakespeare and Dickens. It also involved understanding and accepting where I am in life. Nancy Mairs notes: "I can write only from this body as it is now..." (1994, 49). I make no apologies for what my writing is not because it is a reflection of who I am and where I am on my journey of voice. In quest of my authentic self (that is, a self which is defined on my grounds and through my own space), I began to write again. I now understand that I am only as good a writer as I decide that I am. My writing is about discovery as I seek my voice. Writing helps me to accept the changes that I cannot control and understand that my voice can change without losing myself. Since finishing university, I have been writing full time as my career and it is in the center of the words that I read and write where I find myself firmly standing and growing in my voice.

One of the themes in my writing is what Nancy Mairs calls the "literature of personal disaster" (1994, 123). To deal with anxiety and other personal difficulties, I write about them. The words on the page take space and a sense of reality is brought to my struggles. In *Voice Lessons*, Mairs writes about her experiences with her Multiple Sclerosis condition and her husband's cancer (1994, 2). Literature of personal disaster is not a lament of horrible life events; instead the author of such works "wants not to whine, not to boast, but to comfort" (1994, 127). In fact, according to Mairs, this type of writing works best when the author moves past his/her "separate ordeals to speak generally, and generously, of the human condition" (1994, 133). The goal of my writing, whether I am writing about struggles, simply discussing everyday life experiences or moments of elated joy, is to bring meaning and understanding to the human condition.

Mairs, in reference to the literature of personal disaster, writes: "These are books about going on. All the way. To our common destination. To which none of us wants to go ignorant and alone. Hence, into the dark, we write" (1994, 135).

This quotation is about moving courageously into the unknown for the sake of healing. It is also, though, about sharing and creating a sense of community through writing so that we do not have to go alone. As I travel those paths of healing, hopefully encouraging others while finding encouragement, Mairs' words urge me to continue.

The courage for me to celebrate my words on paper comes through inspiration, in part, from women like Nancy Mairs and Audre Lorde. Lorde is a writer who communicates with her readers through her beautifully crafted personal truth. She celebrates poetry and in turn I celebrate my own poetry. Lorde asserts, "[p]oetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought" (2000, 16). Poetry, then, is bringing the gift of voice to restrained silence. The feminist theory that Lorde brings to voice relates to the importance of celebrating creativity in all women.

One of my favourite parts of Lorde's "Poetry is Not a Luxury" is her discussion of the difference between thinking and feeling. The majority of what I write is about feelings, which are often maligned in our society in favour of thought. There is a continual quest for knowledge in Western society. We are validated through societal rewards of power and respect through what we know and what we think. Worldly travel, high levels of formal education, wealth, and elite family background are all rewarded. Feeling is seen as weak, temperamental and whimsical. Not ironically, women have a tradition of valuing feeling over formally acquired knowledge. Lorde aptly articulates these notions: "The white fathers told us: I think, therefore I am. The Black mother within each of us - the poet - whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free" (2000, 16). Freedom is associated with feeling and poetry. For me, true freedom, then, can be found in my poetry, in my feeling and in my subsequent validation of who I am. In our society, we are constantly seeking to have or know more. The answers are seen as something that is externally found. What if everything we need is here (Grace 1986, 69)? My writing soothes me as it demonstrates that all I need to know is already inside of me. When I learn about the experiences of other women, I am not learning from outside sources. Instead, I am coming to better understand the collective female consciousness which all women share. My writing helps me to feel

the consciousness and celebrate its wonderful freedom.

My approach to this essay has been unconventional. I have attempted to remove the essay from a purely academic context. I have instead used my own experience and combined it with my research of some influential women writers. The core of feminism is a search for voice. The feminist theory of voice that I have shown here incorporates the importance of space, communities of sharing, listening to the land, remembering the voices of the past, the co-existence of truths, intuition, the collective consciousness of women, reading, writing and feeling. It is obvious that the theory that I have presented is multi-faceted. It is not a simple theory with guidelines that can be easily followed by going through certain steps to find voice. This theory, though, is important because it alludes to the idea of journey. To find voice is a journey through dark places that, when traveled heartily, inevitably creates light.

My quest to find my voice is ongoing. I have realized through the process of writing this essay that the search for my own voice is a journey. I must celebrate the cycle of discovery. Feminism begins with a quest for voice. Women must learn to celebrate the self through our own personal senses of value and voice. This essay has helped me with my celebration.

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