

# MY FIRST ENGLISH WRITING CLASS

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I hate to attend a first class, or meetings and conferences, because I hate to meet strangers. I can't help feeling strange, uneasy and apprehensive. However, I usually try to smile at them and pretend to be comfortable.

As I have always been interested in learning to write, I enrolled in the course about writing from personal experience. When I walked into my first class and saw all the strangers, the familiar feeling of uneasiness began to stir inside me. I put my coat on the chair next to mine and tried to look around and smile. As it was early, our teacher kindly told us to feel comfortable and talk to each other. I had no one to talk to and I did not feel comfortable.

After our teacher introduced her course and distributed all the written materials, she requested that we introduce ourselves and tell the reasons for choosing this class. I could not remember everyone's name but found myself among English teachers, counselors, artists, and interior decorator, full time mothers, grandmothers, doctors, businessmen, nurses, a lawyer, a psychologist, professional writers, a social worker, and a research scientist. As each one shared his or her reasons for attending the class, I listened. One member's husband was killed recently; she wanted to write of her experience as a widow to help other widows. One woman wanted to tell of her life

with an eleven year old disabled son. A nurse wished to write about her family. An african-American member would like to research and seek her roots. One artist described how a local community aided a helpless elderly homeless person. One doctor wanted to polish his writings and report on his forty years of neurosurgical practice and teaching. The lawyer was interested in exploring his Irish background. There were a few who were divorced and had to bring their children by themselves.

When it was my turn, my uneasiness left me. I just told everyone that I wanted my family, especially my grandchildren, and my friends to know me and my FAITH. When everyone was finished, suddenly I felt warm, comfortable and closer to a group of strangers in a new class.

The I remembered that God does not look at outward appearance but looks at the heart. When I look at people with different faces, educational backgrounds, races, financial and social status, it is impossible for me to feel really comfortable. But if I try to look into their hearts, I can see the same needs, compassion, and love.

May God help me to give a heartfelt smile to a stranger, knowing that he or she has a heart like mine, life experiences like mine, and needs like mine. 