

## LISTENING | RESPONDING

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### *What We Pay Attention to*

- We honor the writer and the writing by carefully listening and paying attention to:
- Bravery, ambition, and risk in the writing;
- Lively descriptions of characters so that we can see, feel, and hear them
- Reoccurring or continuous themes
- Uniqueness of the writer's own voice
- Vividness and exactness of detail
- Sharp dialogue
- Action verbs
- Literary devices such as alliteration (repetition of sounds), and personification

### *How We Respond*

- To maintain a safe, confidential space in which to write whatever comes to us, we follow certain practices in responding to new writing:
- We hold the writing of others in confidence;
- We treat everything as fiction, even when it's not, in order to honor the work and the "character" as literary constructions;
- We refer to the narrator/speaker, not the author, as the voice of the piece;
- We remember that while healing often occurs through our writing, this is not a therapy group, and we maintain our focus on the writing;
- We concentrate on the writing at hand, not on anecdotes of our similar experiences;
- We are all invited to read and may choose not to;
- We respond to another's writing with only what we like, what stays with us, what moves us; and not, at this stage of vulnerability, with what will make it stronger.