



# Therapeutic Writing and Emotional Healing in Preeti Shenoy's Wake Up! Life is Calling and Life is What You Make it

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## Abstract

Therapeutic writing has increasingly been recognized as a meaningful way to process emotional distress and develop self-awareness. This paper examines how Preeti Shenoy presents writing as a tool for emotional healing in *Wake Up! Life Is Calling and Life Is What You Make It*. Using close textual reading, the study analyses how the protagonists engage in personal writing practices such as journaling and letter-writing to confront internal conflicts. The paper argues that Shenoy's narratives portray writing not merely as expression, but as a structured process of emotional understanding, acceptance, and recovery. By situating these narratives within the broader idea of expressive writing, the study highlights how literature reflects and reinforces writing as a practical method of psychological healing.

## I. Introduction

Contemporary life places increasing pressure on individuals, particularly young adults who struggle to balance academic expectations, career goals, and personal identity. These pressures often result in emotional strain that remains unexpressed or misunderstood. In such contexts, writing becomes more than a creative act; it becomes a private and accessible way of processing emotional experience.

Preeti Shenoy's novels frequently explore internal struggles through simple yet emotionally grounded narratives. In *Wake Up! Life Is Calling and Life Is What You Make It*, writing emerges as a recurring method through which characters confront confusion, distress, and emotional instability.

This paper aims to examine how therapeutic writing functions as a mechanism of emotional healing in these two novels through close textual analysis.



## II. Review of Literature

The concept of therapeutic or expressive writing has been widely discussed in psychological and literary studies. James W. Pennebaker argues that writing about personal experiences allows individuals to organise thoughts, reduce stress, and gain emotional clarity (Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016). This approach suggests that writing is not only expressive but also transformative.

Scholars studying contemporary Indian fiction have noted that writers like Preeti Shenoy often centre their narratives on emotional vulnerability and recovery. Bobade (2025) observes that *Life Is What You Make It* reflects a psychological journey where the protagonist confronts mental health struggles through self-awareness. Similarly, Rupa (2024) highlights the role of emotional resilience in Shenoy's fiction, particularly in relation to identity and personal growth.

However, most existing studies remain descriptive and focus broadly on themes of mental health. There is limited critical attention to the specific role of writing as a structured healing process within these narratives. This paper attempts to address that gap by analysing how writing operates as a deliberate and recurring strategy for emotional recovery.

## III. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach based on close reading of the selected texts. The analysis focuses on:

Instances where characters engage in writing (journals, letters, reflections)

The emotional state before and after writing

The language used to describe internal conflict and clarity

The progression of self-awareness through written expression

By examining these elements, the paper identifies patterns that connect writing with emotional processing and recovery.

## IV. Analysis

### 1. Writing and Self-Realisation in *Wake Up! Life Is Calling*

Akash, the protagonist, appears outwardly successful but internally dissatisfied. His struggle is not rooted in failure but in a lack of emotional clarity. Writing becomes his first step toward confronting this discomfort.

When Akash begins journaling, his thoughts are initially scattered, reflecting confusion and pressure. However, as he continues writing, his reflections become more structured. He begins to question socially imposed definitions of success and recognises the gap between external achievement and internal fulfilment.

Through writing, Akash gradually shifts from passive dissatisfaction to active self-examination. The act of putting thoughts into words forces him to confront truths he had previously avoided. Writing, in this sense, functions as a mirror rather than an escape.

### 2. Writing and Emotional Recovery in *Life Is What You Make It*

Ankita's experience is more intense, involving depression and emotional breakdown. Unlike Akash, her writing emerges from a state of psychological distress.



Her letters to herself are deeply personal and fragmented, reflecting instability and vulnerability. These writings allow her to articulate feelings that she cannot express in social settings. Over time, her writing shifts from confusion to acceptance. Importantly, writing does not immediately resolve her struggles. Instead, it creates a space where she can acknowledge them without denial. This gradual process reflects the realistic nature of emotional recovery.

Ankita's writing illustrates that healing is not sudden but built through repeated engagement with one's own thoughts.

### 3. Writing as a Shared Healing Practice

Despite differences in their experiences, both Akash and Ankita use writing as a means of:

Identifying internal conflict

Organising emotional chaos

Developing self-awareness

Moving toward acceptance

Shenoy presents writing as accessible and personal, requiring no external validation. It is neither dramatic nor complex, but consistent and honest.

This aligns with the principles of expressive writing, where the emphasis lies not in literary quality but in emotional authenticity.

### V. Discussion

The analysis shows that Shenoy's representation of writing closely reflects psychological theories of emotional processing. However, unlike theoretical models, the novels demonstrate how this process unfolds in everyday life.

Compared to existing studies that focus on themes of resilience or mental health, this paper highlights the mechanism through which such outcomes are achieved. Writing is not simply present in the narrative; it actively shapes the characters' emotional journeys.

By integrating writing into the characters' daily lives, Shenoy normalises it as a practical tool rather than an abstract concept. This makes her work particularly relevant to young readers who may not have access to formal therapeutic spaces.

### VI. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that in Preeti Shenoy's *Wake Up! Life Is Calling* and *Life Is What You Make It*, writing functions as a consistent and effective method of emotional healing. Through journaling and self-reflection, the characters move from confusion and distress toward clarity and acceptance.

The paper contributes to existing scholarship by identifying writing not just as a theme, but as a structured process within the narrative. It shows that literature can reflect real methods of emotional coping and make them accessible to readers.

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