Tutoring Philosophy Statement

I have always believed that writers should write. By this I mean, the only way to refine this skill and passion of ours is to work at it, to be in labor with it as much as possible. And from personal experience, I know all too well how easy it is to fall into complacency. The amount of times I’ve remarked to myself, “I should write more,” is probably in the thousands. And this remark almost always comes immediately after I write something in a journal or form a quick poem or story. We should never regret writing. Sure, I’ve written many things that, in hindsight, I’d like to change. But never have I regretted the act of writing that went into whatever it is I wrote. I believe it is crucial to write something, whatever that something may be. How else could we be in a position to comment on the writing of others if we cannot fully recognize that countless little triumphs and disappointments have led up to these words being on the page in front of us.

I also believe as tutors, we should be empathetic toward our writers. We need to recognize the process they went through before walking through our doors. They are making a conscious decision to enter an unfamiliar space with personal content—because writing, no matter the subject, is always personal—knowing full well that a stranger will point out everything wrong with their work, and at the end of this process, they’re supposed to be grateful to us? There’s so much vulnerability that they are voluntarily assuming! We have such an enormous privilege of seeing their work. Rather than being complacent or giving into a very natural instinct of avoiding vulnerable situations like this, they forge on into our
(likely) intimidating territory. And the absurd amount of vulnerability they assume is kind of ironic, considering this perceived powerlessness is necessary for them to gain command and control over their own writing. We should commend them for this kind of courage, or, at the very least, let empathy underscore the discourse of every conference.