



Introduction to Journaling

What is it?

Journaling is one of the easiest and most powerful tools to help you develop a greater understanding of who you are, how you came to be the way that you are, and what direction you want to go in your life, both at home and at work.

By getting your thoughts and feelings out of your head and writing them down, you gain insights you would never get otherwise.

Your journal is a place where you capture your impressions, especially the emotions and feelings that come from the experiences you are having. It connects you much more deeply to your experiences -- both the mundane and the extraordinary. And this is how we learn.

*“At the centre of your being,
you have the answer, you
know who you are and you
know what you want”*

- Lao Tzu

How do you journal?

You can write about how you feel about people, events, experiences, conversations, meetings, insights, frustrations, your aspirations, your hopes or concerns, any questions, issues, challenges and your ideas.

Writing whenever you can will capture as much and even more of the essence of your personal journey than relying on memory ever can. Write on a bus, a train, a plane, first thing in the morning or at the day's end, whenever and as often as you can. As well as writing, paste stuff in your journal e.g. photos, ticket stubs, pamphlets, programs, brochures, postcards, notes, etc.

Write freely. Don't worry about spelling or grammar. Don't worry about smudged ink or cross-outs -- your journal is for you and you alone. You may share it with someone later, but when you are writing, write it for yourself. Don't write to impress anyone. Be true to yourself.

How often?

Try to create a new pattern, a habit for journaling. Commit to writing something every day even if it is only one sentence. It can be last thing before you go to bed, as soon as you get home from work, over your morning tea or coffee before you go to work, on the way home – if you use public transport!

Decide what would be a good time for you to aim for and do your best to honour the commitment to the journal. It is a critical part of the journey towards insight and personal growth. Find time! Set and stick to your time commitment. Take your journal with you wherever you go.

Journaling ideas

Start with the thoughts that the quote at the top of the page provokes.

- List five ways that an experience affected you
- Write about something you saw – a facial expression, artwork, a photograph, a gesture
- Write about your feelings on a certain event, idea or person
- Include ticket stubs, postcards or photos and write about what they mean to you.

You don't have to be a great writer, perfect speller, or creative thinker to keep a personal journal. Journal writing simply means that you regularly write down your thoughts and experiences.

What your journal could include:

- Reflections
- Stories
- Concerns
- Cartoons
- Opinions
- Drawings/diagrams
- Goals
- Dreams
- Ideas
- Poems
- Feelings
- Observations
- Insights
- Mind maps
- Pasted-in bits
- Assumptions
- Jokes
- Photos
- Quotes
- Wishes

“Don’t wait for a light to appear at the end of the tunnel. Stride down there ... and light the bloody thing yourself.”

- Sarah Henderson

Try to be as precise as you can about the emotions or feelings you experience. It will really anchor the memory for you.

Your own journal

Get a lovely notebook/journal to write in – a book that is visually appealing to you and your sense of touch. Make sure the blank pages are made of paper that suits your style and your pen. Now you're all set – time to start writing.