

Journaling

to Excavate Your Authentic Self

by life coach, Jennifer Blair

A journal is a private place to record your inner thoughts, feelings, “ah-ha” moments and desires. Journaling is a form of self-expression, healing, learning, prayer, meditation, creation, and it is an illustration of your personality and your inner most being. The more you write, you will gain a better understanding of who you are and what you want your life to look like.

Albert Clayton Gaulden, founder and director of The Sedona Intensive, requires his clients to journal as part of his 5-day Intensive Clearing program. He states, “Writing your way out of a bad place is the surest way to leave room for the good things in life. My clients keep daily diaries or journals as a way to check in with themselves. It is the retro-brilliance of therapy today. I recommend that everyone keep one – beginning with six year-olds!”

Your journal is your most trusted keeper of your life’s history – it will become your archive. It is a place to record your deepest feelings, darkest secrets, hidden emotions, greatest joys, biggest fears, and longings for what you want in your life. The more you write, the more you will know about yourself. Dream, Desire, Discover, Let go, Love.

Some of the benefits of journaling include...

1. Learning about Yourself

Journaling gives you a deeper connection to who you are as a person and gives you insights to know what you want to do with your life; self-discovery.

2. Enhancing your Self-Care

Consistent writing causes you to stop and think about yourself. Get to know what you need to do for yourself to stay happy and healthy...spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically.

3. Increasing Self-Confidence

Recording your life helps you to see the progress in pursuing your dreams and gives you courage to pursue your passions.

4. Setting Goals

Writing about your goals and seeing the progress helps to monitor how you are achieving them.

5. Relieving Stress

Writing helps you to release your inner thoughts, fears, frustrations and anger. It gets the stress out of your body.

6. Letting Go of the Past

Journaling will often bring up unresolved issues. It can be an exercise to unearth what needs to be cleaned out or de-cluttered so that there is room for the new experiences, people or things you want in your life.

7. Experiencing Serenity

Peace and calm is often reached through the process of writing. Many people use their journal as a place to pray and meditate.

How do you get started?

Find a comfortable spot, a place where you feel safe, loved and inspired. It can be a favorite chair, your bed, a fun coffee shop; any place where you are free to let your mind go. Make a cup of tea. Light a candle. Set the mood. Go to the park and throw down a blanket. Take yourself to your favorite restaurant and write while you wait for your food. Carry your journal with you and write when you are inspired. Choose a journal that inspires you.

Clear your mind, relax, and let your thoughts flow freely. Be sure to record the date, and if you want, the time and place. Do not censor anything, and do not worry about punctuation, grammar, spelling or anything else. Do not edit, but draw, doodle, and write – let it flow. Anything that comes out is right. Do not judge your thoughts or feelings...they are YOURS, there are no rights or wrongs.

How often do you need to write?

Whenever, wherever you want. Your journal is there for you when you feel like writing or reflecting about anything. Preferably, I suggest several times per week for consistency and rhythm. In the morning it can set a mood or intention for the day (It is not a "to do" list, however.) At the end of the day, it can be a clearinghouse to release or bring closure to any issues so you can prepare for a solid night's sleep.

A Word of Caution...

Don't leave your journal in a place where others can read it – Protect it so you are free to express yourself. Also, never write angry letters to others in your journal. If you need to release your anger through writing, use a separate piece of paper so you can dispose of it in the way that feels best to you.

Now that you are ready, some suggestions on what to write:

1. Answer a Powerful Question

The list below will inspire the flow of words and thoughts.

2. Capture your Feelings

What caused the feeling, what were you doing at the time you were triggered? What can you learn about yourself in this moment?

3. Get Inspired

Refer to a daily thoughts book, any inspirational book, a book of quotes, or even the Bible or other spiritual book. Write about the thought for the day, or simply open the book and see what presents itself to you.

4. Use Affirmations

These present-tense statements set an intention about how you want your life to be. Always write them as "I am" statements. Ex: "I am safe in all of my relationships, and I give and receive lots of love." In her book, "I Can Do It," Louise L. Hay writes, "An affirmation opens the door. It's the beginning point on the path to change. In essence, you're saying to your subconscious mind: *I am taking responsibility. I am aware that there is something to change.* When I talk about doing affirmations, I mean consciously choosing the words that will either help you eliminate something from your life or help create something new in your life."

5. Express Gratitude

Knowing who and what you are grateful is very powerful.

6. Dream

Write about your dreams, either when you first awaken in the morning and remember something from the night before or a have new vision of what you long for.

7. Set Goals

Write a goal that brings out a child-like excitement, one that you can really imagine. Fully describe it by seeing it, touching it, smelling it, feeling it, hearing it.

8. Record Your Experiences

Describe what gives you strength or challenges you to grow. Write how you have persevered and overcome obstacles.

9. Draw or Doodle

Use color to reflect your mood. Cut out photos or pictures. Don't be limited by words. Be creative and have fun.

Questions to Inspire...

- *What are you feeling right now?* (Sample feelings: happy, sad, shy, excited, sorry, proud, embarrassed, angry, guilty, surprised, afraid, impatient, jealous, hopeful, hurt, loved)
- *Describe your FAVORITES, and how they inspire you:* (Some fun ideas: Color, season, person, holiday, time of day, book, trip, hobby, place, friend, ritual, trait about yourself, accomplishments.)
- *What is the next best step you could take in my life right now?*
- *How would you describe yourself to someone who does not know you?*
- *Make a list of what you are grateful for...Smile.*
- *Describe your perfect day.*
- *Who supports you in your life? Who doesn't?*
- *What excites you, makes you feel alive?*
- *What is your soul's deepest desire?*
- *Is there something from any point in the past that you wish you could take back or do over to make it right? How did it feel, then and now?*
- *What are you most afraid of?*
- *What new thing would you love to learn or experience?*
- *Find a special photo or an image. What are your thoughts about this?*
- *How do you like to celebrate your birthday and/or your anniversary?*
- *If time and money were of no concern, describe the things you long to do. What do you crave?*
- *What's missing in your life?*
- *Is there a secret you have always wanted to tell, but were afraid?*
- *What do you believe about God? Spirituality? Religion? Higher Power? How do you use your beliefs in your everyday life?*
- *What are your unique gifts and talents?*
- *What concerns you about the world, and what would you like to do about it if you could do anything?*
- *List your passions.*
- *What do you want people to say about you?*
- *Do you live your life according to what is most important to you?*
- *What do you value most?*