



## The Basics of Journaling

### 1. What is Journaling?

**Journaling** is a “think it and ink it” process of stimulating the mind, body and heart and then capturing the resulting thoughts and feelings on paper or disk.

Different journaling tools and exercises encourage us to think in different ways. Once we capture these thoughts on paper, we can explore different sides of our nature. We can identify beliefs that hold us back. We can glimpse our potential and then monitor ourselves realizing it. We can discover insights, creativity and wisdom we didn't know we had.

Journaling allows us to consciously work with the hidden resources of our subconscious mind. With journaling, we can intentionally anchor new information in the subconscious. We can also retrieve material from our subconscious that is not normally available to us.

Journaling helps us hold steady our fleeting thoughts, sensations and inspirations so we can give them more attention, reflection and meaning.

### 2. Why Journal?

*“The more you use your brain, the more brain you will have to use.”*

—George A. Dorsey

Is your mind your best friend or your worst enemy? Our mind can be our worst enemy when we're not aware of how it works. Many of us take our mental processes for granted. And when this happens, our thoughts think us. We think we're alert and thinking creatively but in reality, we're trapped in an endless loop of old thoughts continually repeating themselves.

Our minds tend to play the same messages over and over again. About 95% of what we do, think and say comes from old patterns in our subconscious minds. And unfortunately, this old thinking is often negative and limiting. It sabotages our best intentions...it keeps us stuck.

**So how do we break from these stuck, limiting patterns? With journaling!**

Journaling teaches us how we think, create, learn and intuit. Journaling helps us break through our habitual patterns to discover our innate creative capacity, genius and wisdom. And we can draw out this knowledge and wisdom with the right journaling tools and techniques.

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Journaling enables us to work with the vast resources of our subconscious minds. Through journaling, we can indirectly retrieve information from our subconscious that is not normally available to us. It also helps us intentionally anchor new ideas into the subconscious. Journaling is a powerful tool even when used casually. When used with purpose and an understanding of how it works, its power to reveal, heal and expand our capabilities grows exponentially.

When you have completed your journaling, ask yourself, “What am I missing? Is there anything else? Use the questions often. The subconscious mind is always answering. We must only practice asking and then listening to ourselves.

### 3. How Journaling Works

*“The positive thing about writing is that you connect with yourself in the deepest way, and that’s heaven. You get a chance to know who you are, to know what you think. You begin to have a relationship with your mind.”*

—Natalie Goldberg

When we understand how journaling works, we are better able to use it skillfully to meet our needs. Here are some insights as to why many well-known circuit speakers and authors consider journaling to be ‘the best hidden secret to success.’

#### **Slow your mind down so you can see how you think**

Journaling quickly captures our flighty thoughts and feelings on paper. Unless we write them down, thoughts too easily disappear. (We think about 60,000 thoughts per day. How many are you aware of?) Once we can see what we’re thinking, we can learn how we think. And then we can use different journaling exercises to learn to think in different ways.

Our minds work at about 1000 words per minute. When we write, the mind slows down to about 100 words a minute. This allows thoughts to be recorded more deeply. Also the slowing of our mind creates space for deeper and higher thoughts to emerge. A new level of awareness awakens. And this supports a more focused, creative thinking process.

#### **Quadruple your learning by stimulating the senses**

Want to quadruple your memory? Write down what you’re learning so you activate more of your senses. If we only hear information, within a day or two we typically recall 10% to 20% of what we heard. If we write it down, we can double our recall from 20% to 40% because we can now see it. Writing is also kinesthetic so we absorb more through motion. And some of us sub-vocalize what we write, so we hear the information again.

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Then if we review what we've written, we can double our memory again from 40% to 80% because we anchor the material from different perspectives at another time. Remember the three key steps to learning: recall, write, review.

## **Work with thoughts on paper**

Journaling draws information out of our heads and onto paper. When we can visually see the information, we can do more with it. We can group it, synthesize it, add to it and change it. As we work with the information on paper, we bring it back into our minds—this is how most of us learn. Most creative people doodle and make lots of notes and lists.

## **Create a bigger picture**

Ever tried to burn just one log or twig? It doesn't work very well. But pile up many logs or twigs and you'll get a roaring blaze. Synergy happens. The whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. The spaces between twigs are as important as the twigs themselves.

The same principle applies to our thoughts. If we have one fact on a piece of paper, it's hard to draw many conclusions about it. But if we write down a few more facts, we can start to see relationships, trends and movement. We are able to see and sense between the written words. The more we review the information, the more new dimensions can be seen. Individual events can be interconnected and we can draw on our intuition to bring more meaning to the material. The information comes alive.

As we develop higher and more impersonal connections and relationships among thoughts and concepts and feelings, we create and raise our consciousness.

## **Change your perspective**

Have you ever been lost in a dense, dark forest? Literally, you can't see the forest for the trees. In overwhelm, we get confused. Well, imagine flying over that forest, being able to see it in its entirety, in the context of its surroundings. The higher perspective brings new clarity and understanding.

When you have lots of facts or concepts and you reduce them to a few main points, you synthesize. You change your perspective to draw out what's most important from a myriad of details.

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of a summary or review. We bring together lots of information through our journal writing. Reading and reflecting on what we write helps us step back and see the information from a larger perspective.

Summarizing it all into a few sentences brings new insights and anchors conclusions more deeply. It's like magic.

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## **Begin to think with all of your brain**

Let's review the functions of the two hemispheres of the brain. The **left** brain is logical, rational and linear, while the **right** brain is more creative, spontaneous, intuitive and fun. The **left** brain is better with facts, events, things and quantity. The **right** brain is better with relationships of things, wholeness, concepts, spirituality, feelings, emotions, qualities, meaning, essence, purpose, integration, balance and harmony. The **left** brain is very direct while the **right** brain is more indirect, metaphoric and symbolic. The **left** brain relates more to individual words, while the **right** brain relates more to language, prose and poetry, music, images, beauty and pictures.

Most of us have a dominant brain hemisphere. Males are predominantly left-brained or analytical, linear thinkers. Females are more likely to be right brained or intuitive and emotional thinkers. Obviously, we are most effective if we can draw equally from both hemispheres so we can use the full range of mental processes.

Research has found that the left brain will remember only 7 or less items when presented with a list. As the list becomes larger, the left brain has a hard time comprehending it. This situation invites the right brain to engage and use its big picture, intuitive approach. The right brain will see the list from new perspectives. When you stand back from your journaling and take a bird's eye view, this allows the integrating right brain to do its processing.

## **Stay objective in subjective worlds.**

In life, we tend to perceive that we are our thoughts, emotions, feelings and dreams. Journaling allows us to detach from our thoughts and feelings so we can experience them more objectively. Often, when we get the subjective and unfounded thoughts out of our heads, we can actually see how foolish they are. We become more objective, and this helps keep us present, grounded and in right relationship to subjective realities. It helps us stay conscious and more aware of our will, ethics, identity, responsibility and integrity.

## **Know yourself better.**

We get a deeper sense of who we are when we can study our thoughts and feelings on paper. In our written thoughts, we can explore different sides of our nature. We can unlock our unconscious and reveal hidden aspects. We can identify beliefs that hold us back. We can get in touch with our innate talents and gifts and then see ourselves share them. We can discover our own wealth of insights, imagination, creativity and wisdom.



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## **Connect with your subconscious mind**

It's not hard to change our conscious minds but changing our subconscious minds is a different story. And it's our subconscious that controls much of what happens in our lives.

It is a vast storehouse of limiting beliefs, reactive emotions, old ineffective patterning and self centered programming. It is also our gateway to our intuitive and divine connections. Unfortunately, though, the baggage we carry from our past filters and distorts our higher guidance.

Journaling with intent will bring you freedom, inspiration, growth and meaning. Make friends with your mind and your heart. Agree to work together as partners. And you'll awaken to a whole new world of possibilities!

**Why journal? Just look at some of the benefits it brings! Pick the 7 you most want.**

## **The A to Z's of Journaling Benefits**

Awareness and authenticity	Non-judgmental, clarifies needs
Balance	Opening, optimism
Clarity, commitment and creativity	Peace of mind, planning, purpose
Decision-making ability	Quality of life
Expansion and empowerment	Results, release, relaxation and revelations
Focus, fun	Spiritual connection and serenity
Goals and growth	Truth and transformation
Healing and harmony	Understanding
Intuition, insights, imagination and inspiration	Values
Joy	Wisdom and wholeness
Knowledge of self, reality, truth	⌘ explanation, exploration and expansion
Learning, love and letting go	You get to know yourself better
Manifestations, motivation and meaning	Zest and ZZZZZZ - better sleep!

## Getting Started

### A Journaling Process

*“I never know what I think about something until I read what I've written on it.”* —William Faulkner

There don't have to be any rules for journaling. It's exciting to be open and creative—to find your own style and express yourself. But following some general tips may dramatically increase your results. Here's a simple 4-step process: **Sync, Think, Ink and Link.**

#### 1. SYNC

Bring together (synchronize!) supportive elements to set the stage for your journaling. If possible, choose a quiet place during your prime thinking time. A selection of colored pens will stimulate more of the right brain. Get your journaling book ready. Write the date and the topic (your intention) for your journaling session. It's powerful to create a ritual with strong general intentions before each journaling session. The more you respect and honor your journaling practice, the more you invite your deep inner knowing to participate.

#### 2. THINK

To draw information from our unconscious minds, we require three things: a need, repetition and authority. So emphatically ask your subconscious a question or state your request, and do this three times. Be really clear about what you want to achieve. Remember: clarity is power. You want to imprint the question or request deeply in your subconscious for this is the source of your best answers and insights.

#### 3. INK

Now start writing. Write a bit faster than normal. This helps us get out of our habitual patterns in writing. Asking the subconscious mind for answers and writing faster allows more of the mind to speak out. Your writing does not have to look or sound perfect. Typos and spelling and grammatical errors are okay.

**Do not stop writing!** If you feel at a loss for words, just make something up. Listen more deeply and write whatever is on your mind, even if you think it is irrelevant to the topic. Do not censor. No filtering. The key is to keep writing. If you get really stuck, write out the question or request over and over again until new thoughts surface. Just keep writing. Tell your truth as quickly as you can.

Get the sense that you are even writing before you are thinking. Allow awareness to awaken. As you become more experienced at journaling, you'll become more aware of how you hear or sense your information. As you do this, you will turn up the intuitive voice that has all of your answers.

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## **4. LINK**

This is one of the most powerful steps, yet very few who journal ever use it. When you have finished writing read over your material. Look for shifts in writing style or content, spelling errors that may be Freudian slips, symbols and sentence structure shifts. These may shed a new perspective on your experience. Intentionally step back and look at the bigger picture. You'll see other perspectives and gain new insights. You may even want to circle words or phrases or highlight them.

To conclude, write down a maximum of 3 summary sentences on whatever comes to your mind after reading what you've written. This final entry may record new insights. It may be a summary of your journaling. Or it may be just a few points or action items. Simply write whatever is important to you or whatever comes to your mind. If you got some great insightful results, make an entry in a Thoughts Index (create this at the front or back of your journal) of your journal book so you can easily find it in the future.

## **Get Your Right Brain Involved**

**How can you invoke more creative right brain activity?**

**How can you get more out of your journaling? Here are some suggestions:**

- Relax before and during your journaling session
- Use color
- Involve your physical senses
- Use motion
- Work with graphics
- Include music
- Spend time in nature
- Play!



## **Journaling the 7 P's- Personal/Executive Performance Process**

The 7 P's invoke questions to stimulate your journaling activity. As you reflect on your actions and interactions with **People, Things and Processes** review and reflect on the following questions to assist you in active journaling.

### **1. Patterns, processes, procrastination, habits:**

- Where can I be more efficient in my life?
- What 5 things have I been procrastinating?
- What are my time wasters?
- What excuses keep me stuck?

### **2. Problems, past, pain:**

- Where am I vulnerable?
- Where do I hold myself back?
- What am I afraid of?
- Where do I not like myself?
- What stresses me?
- How are my strengths perceived as a weakness?
- What major block needs to be resolved?
- For what problems must I ask for solutions?

### **3. Perceptions and perspectives of myself and others:**

- What are the needs/desires of my personal life / work life?
- What is God's agenda for me?
- What contacts or friends do I want to develop more?
- How can I enhance my inter-personal skills?
- What negative or limiting thoughts keep jumping into my mind?
- What key choices am I ready to make?

### **4. Prosperity:**

- How can I create another or larger income stream?
- How can I increase my overall abundance?
- In what areas do I want to receive more learning?
- How can I be more productive and effective?

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## **5. Principles and values:**

- What 3 areas in my life do I want to recommit to?
- Where do I need to clarify my stand or position?
- What deeds or actions need my forgiveness or acceptance?
- What can I do to increase balance in my life
- What value is most important for me to express now?

## **6. Purpose, potential, passion, power, possibilities, path:**

- What are my deepest heart-felt desires, dreams and visions?
- Where are my life purpose and goals unclear?
- How can I experience a greater sense of meaning in life?
- What new ideas are teasing me these days?
- Where are some opportunities for me to give?

## **7. Peace of mind, play, pleasure, pampering:**

- When do I feel greatest happiness in my life?
- What can I do to have more fun in all areas of my life?
- How can I get more stillness, solitude and peace in my life?