



Journaling For Success

If someone would have told me years ago that journaling would change my life, I'd have laughed and brushed it off. Me, journal?! Never! I didn't like to write. Why and how would I ever be able to commit to doing such a thing! Years later, it occurs quite differently for me. Let's look at this tool called journaling and see what's so special about it, shall we?

Firstly, journaling is perhaps *the* most powerful personal development tool because through it we capture the thoughts in our minds, the passions and longings of our heart, the shadowy mysteries of our subconscious and the wisdom of our authentic selves. When we reflect on the words we have written, we bring to light new dimensions of who we are.

Journaling is helpful in sorting out 'random' experiences and seeing the patterns in our lives and in our relationships. Through a journal, we can start to make more conscious choices and decisions. We can work through changes, dealing with blocks and negative patterns along the way. Journaling helps us change our beliefs and explore new ideas in privacy. It is also a great place to capture a snapshot of how we are thinking and feeling at a particular time in our life. *And as we understand ourselves more clearly, our life changes.*

I invite you to really give this self-discovery tool a try. If you're already an avid journaling fan, I invite you to go to deeper levels of understanding and expression. You can write it in diary fashion, but why not experiment with other forms of writing like prose, poetry, lists and goals. You can draw in your journal, or stick things in (pictures, photos poems, newspaper clippings, and leaves). Use diagrams or symbols, or play with abstract images. Try different medias - paint, pastels, textures, pens...color is great for expressing you. You need no special skills or talents, it's about process not technique - there is no wrong way to journal.

According to Christina Baldwin, "flow writing is the foundation of learning to trust our own minds... and it allows us to learn that no matter where we start, words will come to us."

Flow writing is about getting past the editor, the voice that wants to avoid any delicate topic and that writes bland and boring pieces because it won't dare look at the truth. Give yourself permission to let whatever needs to come up come up, to the complete dismay of the censor in you. Here is what Natalie Goldberg has to say about flow writing: "Say what you have to say. Don't worry about being correct, polite, and appropriate. Just let it rip. Say what you want, just go for it. That's how the writing can take a substantial turn toward authenticity."

I, who had always carefully avoided addressing the core issues in my life, was suddenly describing in great many details my anger, frustration and fear of the emptiness. My first notebooks became safe and precious containers for all my questions, doubts and uncertainties.

I spent a long time exploring the 'great emptiness.' I started questioning where it was coming from and why it should be so huge. I wrote answers to my questions, wondering each time where they all came from. I realized my old full-time job felt very safe.... No risk-taking involved. No chance of failing at becoming the creator I had always longed to be.

I got to the point where I loved writing down questions because my own answers were always such a surprise. I still wasn't sure where they were coming from, but I was writing them down. There seemed to be more to me than sheer emptiness after all... And plus, I quite liked my answers. They seemed to fit, better than any advice I had ever received from others. They made sense. I was starting to trust my own voice.

Some suggestions for getting started:

Begin sentences with...I remember; I don't remember; I know; I don't know; I want; I don't want; I feel; I don't feel. "These can take us in positive and negative directions, in obvious and hidden places, in the conscious and the unconscious."*

Whenever I seem to get stuck and don't know how to "keep my hand moving," I try different approaches. Sometimes, I keep going back to my starting point over and over again. Sometimes I just stay with my thoughts and write about my fear of looking at an

issue. Over the years and the notebooks, staying with my thoughts and my writing has helped me learn to cut through my resistance.

One very helpful piece of advice for me over the years, from Christina Baldwin: when you don't know what to write next, ask yourself: what is the next question you need an answer to. She also highly recommends writing dialogues when we get stuck, as one very efficient tool to get to the heart of the matter.

A few writing exercises:

Who are you?*

Who is the one who resides in silence?

If you are not your ego, who are you (or who would you be)?

Write about the self you are becoming.

Own your growth and power.

Discuss humbleness of heart. Write a new spiritual definition of discipline.

Write a dialogue between yourself and the sacred

Write a dialogue between your needs and your desires.

Write a dialogue between yourself and your sore throat! (What does it have to say that you need to know?)

* Source: *Life's Companion* by Christina Baldwin

Additional Ideas for writing:

Write about your day or your week ('write' includes drawing, sticking things in or whatever...)

Write Acknowledgements to yourself on areas you've stretched yourself

Write statements of Gratitude for what you have or experienced in your day

List 10 positive adjectives used to describe you

List 10 skills you have right now

Name 3 things you could do this week to nurture yourself (and do at least one of them)

Go back into your early memories and ask yourself what you wanted to be when you grew up. Why did

you want to be a...? What attracted you to this? Write about this, or stick in pictures of it, or draw about it

Think about your earliest memories when you did just what you wanted to do, no matter how unproductive or unimportant it seems to you now

Make a list of 5 things you liked doing when you were a small child, 5 things you liked doing as a primary school age child, 5 as a teenager and 5 as a young adult. Look over your lists... What gave you pleasure about these activities? What was the setting...indoors, outdoors, beach, time of day and so on? Were you alone or with others? Was there a purpose apart from the sheer pleasure of the action i.e. was there a finished product, a task to be completed and a gift for someone...? What circumstances allowed you to concentrate on the activity?

List 5 people (living or dead, real or imaginary, famous or not) and note the qualities you admire in them...how could you develop these qualities in yourself? Make a list of people or events that support(ed) you, are on your side...

These can form the start of your fan club...you can even make a collage of them in your journal or stick up photos to remind you who is on your side. As an addition, include people who you may not have met, but who are inspiring or role models to you.

Tips: It's a good idea to find a quiet setting, and maybe do a bit of relaxation first. You can use your journal every day or when you are moved to... Experiment and you will find a rhythm that works for you. It can be useful to date entries. A word of caution: be selective about sharing...with a trusted friend is fine, but keep your journal pretty much to yourself — that way you will feel safer to experiment and dig deep. If you think your chosen journal might be too precious or pretty to actually write & scribble in, choose another one, or use loose-leaf paper in a folder. Have fun with your journey!

To your success,

Coach Christine

Bio:

The author of this is Christine Silvey. As a certified Life, Career and Personal Development Coach, Christine is passionate about empowering YOU to actively create exactly what you want for yourself and for your life without struggling! To find out more about coaching or to contact Christine, please go to <http://www.empoweredyou.com>

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