



# Welcome! What is Journal Writing?

**Writing** down your thoughts, feelings, experiences, and reflections – as an ongoing practice.

**Recording** your personal thoughts, observations, and experiences – you are documenting your life and inner world.

**Engage in self-expression** – it is a practice of self-reflection and leads to self-awareness.

# Why Journal Writing?

*Journaling can help you:*

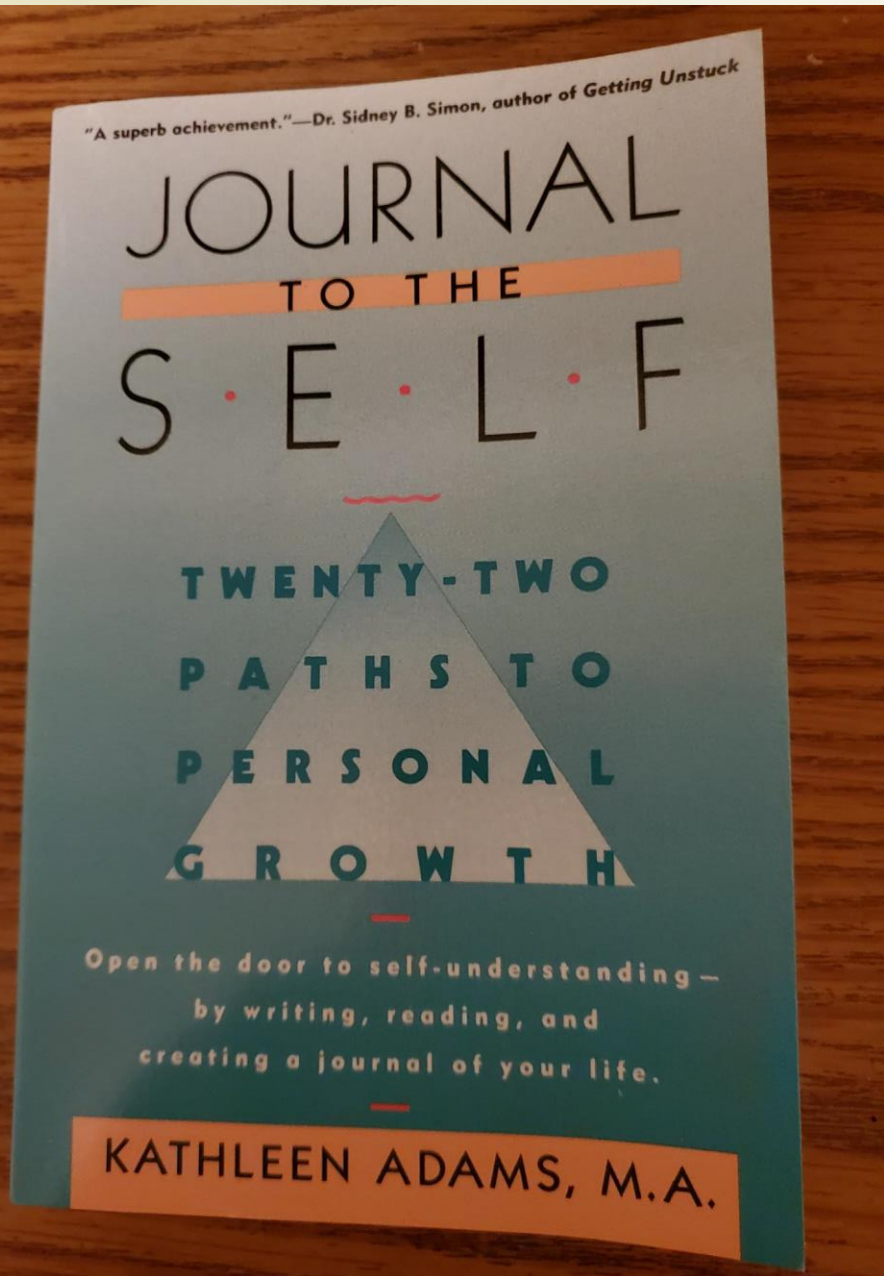
- Discover your thoughts and emotions
- Offer a creative outlet
- Help you cope with stress and change



# How does Journal Writing work?

The practice and process of writing, creating, reflecting leads you down the path to greater personal growth through self-understanding. |

**We will do some brief writing exercises today.  
Do you have pen and paper handy?**



## 22 Paths offer a Mix of Journaling Techniques

Today we will cover a few to get you started!

- ✓ Warm up writing
- ✓ Springboards
- ✓ Gratitude
- ✓ Flow Writing

# Many Journal Writing Options

## ➤ Reflective Journal:

This form of journal writing focuses on personal reflection, introspection, and self-analysis. Reflective journaling encourages you to consider your emotions, experiences, and personal growth by asking yourself questions and exploring your thoughts in depth.

## ➤ Gratitude Journal:

A gratitude journal focuses on regularly documenting things one is grateful for, promoting a positive mindset and being able to notice good things in your life as gifts.

## ➤ Mood Journal:

Mood journals focus on tracking and understanding one's emotions and mental state over time. By recording daily moods, thoughts, and triggers, individuals can gain insight into their emotional patterns, identify potential stressors, and develop effective coping strategies.

## ➤ Travel Journal:

Travel journals document experiences, memories, and reflections from trips and adventures, often including photos, ticket stubs, or other memorabilia.

# More Formats

## ➤ Creative Journal:

Journaling can help boost creativity and provide an outlet for self-expression. Creative journals offer a unique way to explore and develop your artistic abilities, ideas, and insights.

## ➤ Productive Journal:

Journaling can help you stay organized, focused, and motivated. Whether you're striving for personal growth, professional success, or a healthier lifestyle, productive journals such as bullet journals, fitness journals, goal tracking journals can help you achieve your goals. Think of this kind of journaling as a "to-do" list that helps to keep you organized and helps you track daily, weekly, and monthly goals and tasks.

## ➤ Nature Journal:

A journal focused on your relationship with nature. For those who have never thought of this kind of journal, start small! It supports us making closer connections with nature and how by appreciating nature we improve our overall well-being.



# Most Popular Forms of Journal Writing

- Personal journal (diary)
- Reflective journal
- Gratitude journal

*Which appeals to you?*





# Benefits of Journal Writing

- Increase well-being
- Reduce anxiety
- Organize thoughts

*Do you think you might want to try it?*






How do I get started?

Set a goal.

Don't worry, you may want to add to it later or change it over time.





Let's start with a sample  
warm-up writing exercise.

Take a few minutes to write down  
words that come to mind that start  
with the letter "T"

# Words that start with “T”

Warm Up  
Writing Exercise

What words made your list?



# Journal Writing Approaches

- ▶ **Springboards** (Using a quote, visual image, or complete the sentence to prompt writing)
- ▶ **Lists** (can write a list on anything. Can help organize thoughts, foster creativity, help with decision making)
- ▶ **Journals to Go** (short writing entries, a theme word, a moment in your day, best thing/worst thing)
- ▶ **Gratitude/Mindfulness** (about depth, not length; noticing meaningful things for which you are grateful)
- ▶ **Character Sketch** (written description about another person, real or fictional)
- ▶ **Stream of Consciousness/Flow Writing** (simply start writing, see where your writing takes you, helpful to reflect on what you wrote)
- ▶ **Personal Motto** (reflecting and capturing your beliefs and values)
- ▶ **Time Capsule** (capturing today's moments for future you to read in the future)
- ▶ **Creative Expression** (short poems, short stories, drawings)

# What are Springboards?

Two main types:

**1. Questions**

**2. Statements/Quotes**

Visual images can also be sources of inspiration



# Get writing with Springboards

- Quotes that inspire or provoke
- Song lyrics
- Questions that have been on your mind
- Sentence completions –
  - Today I feel XX years old
  - I am excited about . . . . .
  - 3 things I want to do today, this week, this month
  - I am proud of myself for . . . . .
  - I am happy when I . . . . .
  - Today I am grateful for . . . . .

Using a quote to inspire  
your writing

# Writing Exercise 2

## Using Springboard quotes



"TRY TO BE A  
RAINBOW IN  
SOMEONE ELSE'S  
CLOUD."

- MAYA ANGELOU

# Writing Exercise 2

- Write for 5 minutes.
- Take a break. Read what you wrote.
- Are you satisfied with what you wrote? Do you want to write more?
- See if you have enough ideas to write a little more or to add to what you have written.



Was this inspiring?  
What came to mind?

# Writing Exercise 2

## Using Springboard quotes



# Springboard example questions to try in your journal

1. What is my greatest talent?
2. What is the best compliment I have ever received?
3. Write about a time when I did something I was afraid to try. How did I feel afterward?
4. When I am feeling confident, what emotions do I experience?
5. What makes me happy?

## More Springboard example questions to try in your journal

6. What do I like?

7. What do I need?

8. What are 5 things I am good at doing? How do these things make me feel unique?

9. What is the bravest thing I have ever done?

10. How do positive thoughts promote confidence?

11. When do I feel proud of myself?

# Why Springboards are helpful in journal writing

- “Pushes” you into action to start writing.
- Helps launch you into a direction.
- Helps you focus on a topic.
- Helps clarify what you want to write about.



Springboard questions are also commonly known as journal “prompts”

- In what ways have I grown this year?
- What are important life lessons I have learned?
- What are 3 top priorities in my life right now?
- What would I do if was granted three wishes?
- What is a bad habit I would like to change?
- Do I have a secret talent?

## Writing Exercise 3



Write about what comes to mind when you observe and reflect on this photo.

## Writing Exercise 3



What did you write about?



Want to try a sample  
Gratitude Journal Entry?








## Defining Gratitude

A feeling of being thankful and appreciative. An example of gratitude is **how someone would feel if a friend did something exceptionally nice for them.**



# Why Gratitude?

- A gratitude journal makes us focus on paying attention to the good things in life we might otherwise take for granted.
- When we intentionally focus on some of these positive things, we begin becoming more attuned to the everyday sources of joy in our every day life.
- Many find that the emotional tone of our life can shift in profound ways.

# Gratitude Journal Writing

From Habitnest.com's  
blog on gratitude

People who practice gratitude:

- Feel better about their lives
- Are more optimistic about the future
- Report fewer health problems
- Experience heightened satisfaction in their relationships
- Have an increased sense of resilience in the face of stressful life events
- Discover an enhanced ability to empathize with others
- Reduce the experience of toxic emotions
- Sleep better
- Experience improved self-esteem

# Gratitude Journal Writing

A feeling of being thankful and appreciative. An example of gratitude is **how someone would feel if a friend did something exceptionally nice for them.**

Practicing gratitude is how we acknowledge that there's enough and we're enough.

- Brene Brown, author



Life is a series of thousands of  
tiny little miracles.

Notice them.

[OurMindfulLife.com](http://OurMindfulLife.com)



## Start small and be specific

*Notice something* small that is part of your day and in your every day surroundings.

*Reflect* on a few things in your daily life.

*Select* one item for which you are grateful today.

### Examples

- I am grateful for my friend's email. It reminded me of positive people in my life.
- I am grateful for the light that keeps the room bright, allowing me to write in my journal.

# Writing Exercise 4

Do you have something for which you are grateful? Something you noticed and appreciated? What can you say about it?



# Gratitude Writing

- Find things to be grateful for and write them down.
- Be attentive to even “everyday” things, people and surroundings in your day.
- Today I am grateful for . . . .



# Gratitude Journal Writing

Taking a moment to pause and give thanks for the present moment. A regular practice of mindfulness and practicing gratitude can help us become more aware of moments that make us feel good and give us increased patience during challenging periods.

Gratitude journal writing has benefits for mental health and well-being. Gratitude writing can help us feel more satisfied in life and can boost self-esteem.



# Flow Writing

1. A slower form of writing. Can be meditative for some.
2. You may start on one topic and your writing takes you in new directions. Let your writing take you where it naturally flows.
3. Write what comes to mind. A list approach may be familiar and useful.


## Writing Exercise 5

Apply “flow writing” to write about the taste of lemons.





# Journaling Check-in What's True for You?

1. Learn about yourself/increase self-awareness
  2. Reduce stress
  3. Track and organize your thoughts
  4. Planning activities
  5. Emotional well-being
  6. Increase self expression
  7. Problem solving
  8. Be more creative
  9. What else?
- 



# Get Started Journaling!

## Observe, Reflect & Savor the Ordinary

Be on the lookout for small moments of beauty, outdoors or in your home. A tiny leaf on the pavement, a berry or petal, a light to brighten a room, a pretty design in a dish or bowl. Once you tune into your small moment of beauty, gaze at it for several minutes, noticing the feelings and sensations it awakens within you - joy, calm, excitement, awe. Be present with that feeling. Write about your moment!

# Will you write this week?

- Start small.
- Make a short list each day.
- Write about 1 activity in your day and how it made you feel.
- Write about someone you interacted with and what you talked about.
- Observe something and reflect upon how it matters to you.
- What you write does not have to be perfect or long.
- Enjoy the process.
- If writing doesn't work, draw, doodle, sketch, paint, type.

# Journaling Resources

## **Books**

Journal to the Self, Kathleen Adams, M.A. (Grand Central Publishing, 1990)

After Brain Injury: Telling Your Story, Barbara Stahura and Susan B. Schuster (Lash & Associates, revised 2017)

The Personal Growth Journal, Emily Calabresi (Rohrer, 2020)

My Life in Lists, A Journal to Record Loves, Goals and Dreams, Nicole Barlettano (Crestline, 2020)

Start Where You Are, A Journal for self-exploration, Meera Lee Patel (Penguin Publishing, 2015)

## **Web sites and Apps**

Brainsparker - <https://brainsparker.com> (this is also an app)

Penzu.com (where you can write an online journal)

LiveJournal. [www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com) (an online community)

# Your Journal Your Gift to Your Personal Growth



Thank you!