

Journaling: A Key component for the First Month of Membership

One of the most important tools I will encourage you to practice throughout this membership, is journaling.

Keeping a journal has many positive benefits. Journaling can help with personal growth and development and can profoundly improve your well-being. By regularly recording your thoughts, you'll gain insight to your behaviors and moods. Journaling can be used for problem solving and stress reduction.

It's been proven to improve mental health and physical health. It can also lead to building self-esteem. Writing in a journal is also an effective tool for use in the healing process.

Groundbreaking research on elite performance and ultra-achievement is now confirming that keeping a journal on a regular basis boosts mental focus, increases self-confidence, elevates your mental attitude and increases the levels of happiness that you feel.

There are different forms of Journals and some people keep various journals for different reasons while others keep one journal and just use one for everything. For example some people keep a separate journal for Gratitude-Intentions- perhaps astrology and then stream writing thoughts and ideas.

Mixed media is a way of journaling. There is a great amount of power in the written word but occasionally words are hard to find so by drawing or making a collage, you can create a representation of feelings that move beyond analytical writing.

In "The Artists Way" by Julia Cameron, she suggests "dumping out" by writing three pages hand written or, in a stream of conscious, writing about 750 words every morning. This will improve your perspective on life by gaining clarity. With research in psychology, a type of journaling that usually involves exploring issues can literally correct the course of your life.

Journaling strengthens immune cells called T lymphocytes. It has shown to be associated with decreased depression and anxiety and increases positive mood, social engagement and the quality of close relationships.

According to Maud Purcell, a psychotherapist and journal expert, writing accesses your left hemisphere of the brain, which is analytical and rational. While the left-brain is occupied, your right side of the brain is free to do what it does best, creating intuition and feelings. In this way, writing removes mental blocks and allows us to use more of the brainpower to better understand ourselves and the world around us.

I have been journaling since I was a young girl. I've always loved the feeling of keeping a nice book next to my bed and writing about my feelings, my day, and also doodling around the pages with colored pens, pencils or markers. The doodling and coloring was a form of art therapy for me. I saved all my journals and looking back at them also helps me understand about what was going on for me, my inner child and helps with self exploration. I normally journal first thing in the morning with my morning cup of coffee. I listen to soothing music, sometimes light a candle and in a cursive penmanship, I begin the process of conscious stream writing.

I don't think about what I'm writing, I just write what comes to me with the feeling that these pages might get thrown away afterwards. I know these are safe and private and that there is no judgment to feel ashamed about what I'm putting down. I let it all out and this allows for freedom and a release of what I'm holding onto internally. I also carry around my journal if I know I'll have time in the day where I'll be sitting alone and might want to journal again. By journaling I gain insight to my inner self and I'm able to find my inner light through the process.

A journal is a tool to help us process our feelings and thoughts. It's also very beneficial to journal before bedtime to help clear your mind of thoughts that might keep you up at night.

Tips for Journal Writing:

Start writing about where you are at this moment in your life. Describe your living situation, work relationships. Are you where you want to be

Stream Consciousness: Don't censor your thoughts or correct your grammar. Use a cursive penmanship for a flow of writing expressing your inner feelings and thoughts.

Cultivate an attitude of gratitude by maintaining a daily list of things you appreciate.

In a separate section of your journal, keep a list of positive, inspiring quotes and affirmations you can refer back to that will boost gratitude and happiness.

Journal in different mediums for your creative intuition and to express your feelings. Color draw shapes, collage and images are all examples.