

## Journaling

Keeping a journal can provide a window into your soul. There is something about sitting down and writing that opens up your life. It is a way to check in with yourself. What are you feeling? What do you notice? What needs your attention? I use writing as a way to explore what is happening in my life. If I'm feeling stuck somewhere, writing about it can change my perspective and open new paths. Often I'm surprised by what my hand writes. Sometimes I ask questions and see what arises.

## Approaches

There are many different approaches to journaling. Even if you don't like to write, try on some different journal styles. There might be one in particular that resonates for you. Start with whatever appeals to you. Make up your own system. There is no right or wrong, just what works for you. Here are some possibilities:

- Set aside a time of day to journal on a regular basis. Use this as a time to check in with yourself.
- Develop a habit of writing when you are stirred by something – a conversation, a book, a movie, anything that really has your ideas flowing.
- Write when you are particularly happy or unhappy. Explore your different emotions.
- Do morning pages (any time of the day) – this is the technique described in Julia Cameron's book 'The Artist's Way', in which you write for 15 minutes in stream of consciousness. The idea is to get past the inner critic that usually censors your thoughts and to begin to learn what is there when you don't try to control your thoughts. (see her book for more details)
- Do writing as a form of collage. Cut out pictures that appeal to you from assorted magazines and glue them randomly into your journal. When you write, open the book anywhere and write there. This can get past the urge for perfectionism.
- Write a poem or story every day. Notice what is happening around you and write about it. Don't worry about quality. Just write.
- Explore dreams, relationships, parts of yourself, get organized, generate ideas.
- Access information stored in the subconscious mind or the 'higher self' by just sitting down and writing and seeing what shows up.

## Suggestions

Create some sort of 'entrance ritual'. Follow a pattern when you journal such as sitting in a favorite chair, taking some deep centering breaths, lighting a candle, or using a special pen. Date every entry. Don't worry about penmanship and don't erase. If you change your mind, just line it out and write the new word(s). Write in your own natural voice. This is for you. While most people will respect your privacy, you probably don't want to leave your journal laying around where it will tempt others.

## Choices

The book can be a spiral notebook, three ring binder, blank bound book or an artist's oversized sketch pad. You can even use scraps of paper and keep them collected on one place. Use one journal for everything or try separate journals for different purposes – dream work, spiritual work, general journaling. See what works for you. I do best when I keep most things in one place. I use a special color pen to indicate dreams and a note in the margin to indicate spiritual work. My favorite book format is a simple spiral notebook in a smaller size. Use whatever writing instruments appeal to you. I mostly like pencil. But I do keep a separate Idea Journal, in which I use colorful gel pens.

## Resources

[Journal to the Self](#) by Kathleen Adams

[The Artist's Way](#) by Julia Cameron