

# *7 Days of Journaling*

*with Denise Druce*



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# Introduction

Hard times require a tougher toolbox. In these times of stress and isolation, the pen can be “your second voice”. I hope these 7 days help you start, or continue a Journaling habit. ‘Expressive Writing’ has been proven to help improve mental and physical health. It helps people who struggle with depression, anxiety, and overall expression. The contents of your journal may not be that exciting, but taking 5 minutes a day to put your thoughts and feelings on paper has a therapeutic effect. Find a private place where you won’t be disturbed. Your writing is just for you. If you are worried about privacy, you can destroy your writing after you get it out on paper. The magic is in getting it out. So how does it work?

First, it’s a way of disclosing or expressing emotions rather than stuffing them down, which we all know is harmful for our health. So many of us carry secret pain or shame that we can’t share with others, that consumes our thoughts, and takes its’ toll on our bodies. Through writing, our pain gets translated into black-and-white words that exist outside of ourselves. Once outside of us, we have more choice about how we want to deal with it.

Second, there is science to the physical action of writing with an actual pen on actual paper. Writing by hand activates more parts of the brain than typing. Writing by hand can be rhythmic, therapeutic, and calming. Like walking or swimming, writing by hand is a way to sort things out and inspire creativity.

A third reason to grab a pen. Writing things out helps you get things out of your head. Kind of like an external hard drive storing data that is clogging up your computer. Think ‘brain dump’. The words don’t have to make sense, you’re just letting the swirling thoughts find their way to paper, and out of your brain. You can access the paper anytime, if you want to. Vividly describing your goals in written form is strongly associated with goal success, and people who very vividly describe or picture their goals are much more likely to successfully accomplish their goals than people who don’t.

And finally, people who journal tend to be better at goal setting, and goal getting. There is a process of visualization in hand-writing. When you write about a goal, a dream, or a vision for your life, your brain is going through the process of seeing it happen. Your writing is a form of manifesting the things, people, experiences and feelings you desire for your life.

So let’s try it on. Seven days, seven journaling prompts.

# Journaling Prompts

# Day 1

Looking back at the past year. How ARE you, really? For 5 minutes (longer if you like), let go and explore your deepest thoughts and feelings about the past year. What significant experiences have happened in your life in the past 12 months? Try to address the issues most important and significant for you. It's all OK, it all gets to be here.

[illegible]

## Day 2

Looking back, what event or events stand out as highlights in your life? The moments when you experienced pure joy. Where were you, who were you with, how did you feel? What is the most recent moment you can recall that you felt this way?

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## Day 3

Coming to the present. Pause and take three deep breaths. Feel yourself sitting on a chair, cushion or floor. Check in with your body. What physical sensations do you notice? What emotions are present in this moment? What is your mind occupied with? Be honest, be real, capture an ordinary moment in your present life experience. No judgement, it all gets to be here.

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## Day 4

Staying with the theme of present centered awareness. Check in again. Find a seat, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Notice body, notice breath, notice energy, thoughts, and feelings. Now...what is really here? Take a few more breaths and see if you can connect with the wise one that resides here. The inner wisdom, the inner guide. What does that part of you have to say right now? Any insights? Maybe it's just a color or image. Write it down and sit with it for a few minutes. This inner guide has been longing for your attention. What happens when you give it your full awareness?

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## Day 5

Let's look ahead. Pausing here, center yourself. Take deep breaths. If you could create the perfect day for yourself, wave a wand and everything would fall into place, what would that day look like? Who would you be with? How would you wake up, how would you fill those 24 hours? Describe this perfect day in as much detail as you can. Then, sit with how writing these words make you feel afterwards.

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## Day 6

Let's look ahead one more time. Center yourself, breathe deeply. Feel into this moment. As you look ahead, what do you fear? When you think about tomorrow, next week, next year, the coming decade, what thoughts show up when you allow yourself to feel concern, worry, fear or anxiousness. Spend a few minutes getting your concerns out of your head and onto paper. Then, pause. How does your body feel right now? Look back at your notes from Day 5 and compare body sensations. Which do you want to live in...fear, or creation? Notice your tendencies. Which of these is most familiar to you?

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## Day 7

On day 7, carve out a little more time. Allow yourself to look back at your pages from the previous six days. What insights have these pages shown you? You looked back, you got present and you looked ahead. You welcomed the light and the dark, the joy and the fear. Now after reflecting on these pages, pause again. Begin writing what is here for you right now. What thoughts, what feelings, what ideas are showing up for you right now? Don't judge, don't censor. Just write.

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## Congratulations!

You made it through one full week of journaling. I hope this exercise has given you some insights, and more importantly, inspired you to continue this practice. Use these prompts again, or create your own. I am certain that there are things on these pages that are pointing you in some direction. Listen to these quiet insights and guides. Your best teacher is within you. Put your hands over your heart and feel that beat. The answers are right there.

