

# How to Use a Journal for Self-Discovery

Most of us have a lot of things on our minds, yet we don't put enough of it down on paper. Many of those ideas and thoughts bouncing around in your head can sometimes start to feel overwhelming. You may have secret hopes, dreams, love interests, failures or ups and downs going through your head.

It can be hard to remember each of those and it can be very difficult to keep all of your thoughts organized without writing them down somewhere. A great way to remedy this, as well as clear your mind a little, is to write everything down in a journal. Keeping a journal is great for anyone and is an awesome way to express yourself away from any judgment of others. Below are some tips for starting your first journal.

## 1. Protect Your Privacy

You must first think of ways to protect your privacy when you start a journal. This is especially true if you plan to add ideas that you don't want people stealing. Always reserve the first page of your journal for your name and phone number or email address. This way, if it gets lost, you might get lucky and have it returned to you. If you like to write online, you may consider getting a personal email set aside just for your journal entries. Alternately, consider getting a flash drive to keep your entries on and make them password protected.

## 2. Date Your Entries

If you are only able to establish one habit when writing in your journal, it needs to be adding dates to all of your entries. This will allow you to reconstruct your entries chronologically by dates. It can also let you notice the silence in between certain entries.

## 3. Keep and Read What You Write

Many don't feel the need to go back and read what they have written. However, it can be of great importance to go back and read what you wrote previously. You can be pleasantly surprised with how much you knew before and how far you have come.

#### **4. Write Thoughts Down Quickly**

Many people who journal regularly know all too well about "journal block." This is the same as writer's block and you can lose everything you want to write down if you don't get it out in time. To outsmart this block, write everything down as fast as you can or as soon as you have a thought come to mind. Don't tell yourself you will write it down later because you might miss your chance.

#### **5. Be Truthful**

Your own personal truth is not your enemy. You are writing for yourself, not for anyone else. Do not try and talk yourself out of getting to know yourself better and trying to understand how you really feel about things. You have to give yourself permission to tell the truth about everything. Also, give yourself the ability to go at your own pace. If you are having a hard time facing your own truth, you can slow it down a little.

#### **6. Write Naturally**

The best thing about keeping a journal is that there are no rules to follow. Don't overthink what you are writing or how you are writing it. Write naturally and enjoy the process. You will gain more from it than you realize.

#### **7. When You Start, Don't Stop**

When you start a new entry, it is best to start with the present moment. This could be what is going on in your life that day or that week. It is best to keep the thoughts and ideas flowing. Add in how you are feeling about everything going on as well. When you come back to read old entries, you will find it easier to relive the moment if you were more

descriptive about how you were feeling as things were happening in your life. While writing, don't take time to go back and edit or rewrite anything. Let everything flow out naturally.

### **8. Start with A Quick Meditation Moment**

In order to get yourself ready for a writing session, take a few moments to take some deep breaths and meditate. You can use a variety of things to help you get in the mood for writing. The use of deep breathing, soft music, stretches or candles are all great things to help get your creative juices flowing.

Do any of these methods resonate for you? If so, please share your experience below.