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## **5 Benefits of Keeping a Personal Journal**

**By Patti Testerman**

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Everyone who has kept a personal journal knows that writing is a therapeutic process that helps integrate seemingly unconnected life events. Some believe the process works because the physical act of writing (using your hand-eye coordination) occupies your left brain, leaving your right brain free to access emotions, intuit connections, and create new insights.

How else can journaling help?

1. Journaling reduces stress by getting “monkey mind” thoughts out of your head. Mind chatter is a powerful stressor, stressor is a powerful health-buster, and journaling the chatter is a proven chatter-buster.
2. Writing about problems gives your right brain food for creative problem-solving. It’s amazing what happens when the creative part of your nature starts working on a problem—you’ll soon find solutions bubbling up from your subconscious.
3. Keeping a daily diary is one of the best techniques for discovering patterns, particularly those that are self-defeating. For example, a diary kept over the course of several months will clearly show any reoccurring difficulties like overeating, stress eating, poor (but similar) choices in relationships.
4. Want to better know yourself? Journal. Writing can help clarify your thoughts, your emotions, and your reactions to certain people or situations. In addition, as you read back through past journals, you’ll have ample evidence of the things that make you happy and those that are distressful.
5. Journaling can help clarify events, problems, or options. When you’re beset with a mind full of fuzzy, disconnected thoughts flitting here and there, writing about the event or issue will help bring focus and clarity. It will also help you decide on which action to take, or option to choose.

Patti Testerman is content manager at [JournalGenie.com](http://JournalGenie.com), the only online site that analyzes your writing and then gives you instant feedback. Want to discover self-defeating patterns, or find better ways to communicate in a relationship? Check out our site.

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## Journaling Techniques

By Christin Snyder

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So far we have discovered many of the benefits journaling provides. Some of them include: at-a-glance records of health/diet issues, spiritual/emotional healing, dream interpretation, and creative inspiration. The list is ongoing, but the point is they can be of great benefit to anyone who uses them.

Journaling is something that can be personalized to suit the needs of every individual. Journals are not just diaries where you spend hours each day recording all your deepest, darkest, secrets. Journals can be very practical, and in many cases, can simplify the lives of those who use them. Everyone can find at least one style of journaling to benefit from, regardless of how busy their lifestyle is.

Below are some of the different types of journals that can be created. Keep in mind one does not have to be a writer at all to benefit from journaling. In fact, many writers, myself included, didn't realize their passion for writing until picking up a journal. Words can work for all of us.

#### \*Dream Journaling

Recording dreams in a journal gives you a window into your subconscious. Our dreams reveal the depths of our being. Dream journals allow us to better remember our dreams, to view repeating patterns, and to explore and interpret our own unique dream language. Many who keep them are surprised by how much they learn about themselves, and how effective these journals are in the healing and growth process.

#### \*Personal Diaries

These are the standard lock and key books many of us have kept since childhood. This kind of journal allows us to record daily life experiences, our thoughts, feelings, and actions. This type of journal serves a great purpose, it allows us to express ourselves freely without judgment. Reviewing these journals over time allows us to see how much we have grown and changed. Often the old ones are humorous ;), and we can see just how much wiser we've become.

#### \*Food/Exercise Lifestyle Journals

These journals are wonderful for those embarking on new health/improvement goals. By recording your progress, you are able to look back and see at-a-glance how far you've progressed. This is a powerful way to remain motivated to achieve goals. This type of journal is also beneficial as a way to track your health and answer any potential questions healthcare providers or other advisors may have for you.

#### \*Mood Journals

The benefit of this style of journal is to track our emotions and find the reasons for different emotional shifts, mood swings etc. For people with anxiety disorders, depression, or shifting hormones, these types of journals provide tremendous benefits in being able to look at the effects of various elements. Record in this journal your feelings, why you are having them, and anything that may be having an effect such as diet, medication, stress levels etc.

#### \*Quotations Journals

These journals are wonderful for a variety of reasons. Use them as a quick pick-me-up, sparks for writing, or to inspire others. These journals are the simplest to keep because it only takes a moment to add a quote or phrase to your collection. Let this fun journal keep you inspired.

#### \*Writer Sparks Journals

For those of us who love to write, this journal can be a great tool for dealing with writers block and keeping the creative juices flowing. Ever noticed how those great ideas always seem to pop up at inopportune moments? Have you ever just sat there staring at the blank screen wishing something would come out? Keeping a small notebook/journal with you can help you to record these little ideas as they come up, or you can jot down your idea and add it later. Whenever you want to write, open up your journal and out pops some great material to get you started.

#### \*Electronic Calendars/Journals in one

In the electronic age we are provided with a whole new set of options. Our planners and organizers can also be incorporated into journaling through different software programs that allow you to keep your information encrypted and safe from prying eyes. This is a convenient way to keep everything organized in one centralized location, and can keep even the severest procrastinator in the habit of keeping notes.

These are just a few examples of the many different styles of journaling. Everyone can find a method or combination of methods that works well for them. Now that you have seen the benefits, the various style ideas, and the keys to successful journaling I hope you will be inspired to use writing as the healing tool it can be.

Christin Snyder is a motivational author/speaker whose passion is helping others realize their fullest potential. Visit her on the web today for inspiration, personal empowerment tools, and writer resources. <http://www.dailypowerwords.com>

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