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## **The Art of Keeping a Journal**

**By Janice Hoffmann**

### **The Art of Keeping a Journal by Janice Hoffmann**

Journal keeping is basically without rules. It is an uncensored invitation to cut & paste, sketch & chart, and to visualize and unravel every great and small thought. At its most basic it is a decision that your life has value.

Just listing your experiences and endeavors can reveal incredible things and encourage you to work for the nearly impossible, the rigorous, and the unseen. Recently, during a course on INQUIRY, I was asked to make a list of one hundred things I didn't know. Here a simple list became a prospect for the unknown and an introduction to something new. As Henry Miller states, "Writing, like life itself, is a voyage of discovery."

I have also discovered that journal keeping is a great way to zero in. For instance, if you were preparing to run a marathon and wanted to improve your performance as a runner. You might put together a book that included:

- Diet & Nutrition
- Speed & Strength
- Warm up & Cool down
- Visualization & Meditation
- Cross training
- Profiles of great athletes
- And perhaps a section reserved for ideas and challenges yet to come.

It has been noted that elite athletes keep meticulous journals on their training and competition, not only to advance and validate their hard work and progress, but to mentally prepare them for athletic mastery.

Journals are wonderful for developing projects or keeping to a theme such as wealth building and spiritual practice. It can be used as a restorative retreat or a creative landscape. - A playground of sorts for your professional goals and a keepsake for travel, weddings and anniversaries.

- Try personalizing your own journal by creating an arrangement that is both practical and natural.
- Ask questions and dialogue with the world.
- Use it with regularity and see if this kindles some sort of journey.

Above all enjoy the adventure! WRITE UPSIDE DOWN, USE DIFFERENT COLORS OF PENS, collect inspiring song lyrics & meaningful quotes, or start on the last page and see where it takes you.

The basic nutrition for a journal differs. Yet the more you nourish it, the more confident and the more willing your imagination & intelligence will be.

Janice Hoffmann is CEO and Founder of Success Is Sweetest [www.successissweetest.com](http://www.successissweetest.com) A New York City based career and lifestyle coaching boutique.

## Learn From The Characters

By Matthias Reightman

Your life is shaped and influenced by the people that you live with, work with, and hang out with. People are definitely the single biggest source of influence in each other's lives. If you think of your life as a story, the people in your life are the characters in the story. Just like you can learn from characters in any good novel, you can learn many things from the characters in your own story.

I met a woman once that kept a journal specifically about things she was learning from the people, or characters, in her life. She had just spent a summer backpacking in Europe and the pages of her journal were filled with biographies of the characters that she met that summer. Some were more influential than others, of course, but she was intentional about learning from even characters that showed up in her story for just a few minutes. I was so impressed by her commitment to learning from living and I was inspired to create a similar journal just for the characters in my own life.

Since starting my own characters journal, I have learned more from people than I ever thought possible. I began the journal by listing the main characters that were frequently a part of my days. These included my family members, closest friends, and co-workers that I interacted with often. I wanted to make this list of main characters because sometimes the people we are closest to are the hardest ones to be intentional about learning from. By having a list in the front of my journal I was reminded of them often.

My journey of learning from the characters in my life has been simple and yet profound. I take a few minutes at the end of each day to record things I have observed or learned from others. Sometimes I see characteristics in other characters that I want to make a part of my own character. Other times I see things in people that I want to warn myself against ever becoming. Whatever the case, I am careful to observe the world around me for anything I might learn about living better. For example, a few months ago I met a woman that had the loveliest ability to tell engaging stories. I recorded her talent in my characters journal that night with a special note that I want to learn how to tell stories better. One day my father told me a story about his childhood. My characters journal that night told of a newfound respect I had gained for my father by learning more about his life. Some of the best lessons of my life have come from the main characters in my life. I would never have learned or remembered many of these lessons without keeping track of them in a characters journal.

Consider starting a journal of the characters that are a part of your story. You'll be glad you did.

Matthias Reightman has been advising people to learn from the characters in their lives for years. Check out more at <http://www.allcharacters.info>

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