

# The Joys of Journaling



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## Introduction

Journaling is one of those often talked about activities that we feel “must” do. Similar to meditation, doctors, authors, coaches, and self-help gurus invite us to journal for a variety of different reasons.

Gratitude journaling, food journaling, reflective journaling, video journaling, and many, many more. No matter what kind of journaling you do, similar to meditation, it’s beneficial.

You may be saying, “UGH! Another thing to add to my list!” By the end of this eBook you may be saying, “I can squeeze in 10 minutes to record an audio or handwritten journal each week.”

In the following pages, you will come to understand how journaling can positively impact you, what to include in your gratitude journal, how to get the most out of your journaling experience, and some prompts to get you started.

## The Positive Impact of Journaling

Journaling offers a wide range of benefits for mental, emotional, and even physical well-being. Here are several of the key advantages:

### Self-Reflection and Awareness

Journaling provides a dedicated space for self-reflection, helping you gain a deeper understanding of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It promotes self-awareness, allowing you to identify patterns in your thinking and recognize areas for personal and professional growth.

### Stress Reduction

Writing about your thoughts and emotions can act as a form of emotional release, reducing stress, and promoting a sense of calm. Journaling can help you process and cope with challenging situations, making them feel more manageable.

**74%**

of people who do or have journaled saw emotional venting as a benefit.

<https://habitbetter.com/top-ranked-benefits-of-journaling/>

### Clarity of Thought

Putting your thoughts on paper can help clarify complex emotions and untangle confusing situations. It encourages structured thinking, allowing you to organize your ideas and gain a clearer perspective on issues.

### Goal Setting and Achievement

Journaling is an effective tool for setting and tracking goals. Writing down your aspirations and outlining actionable steps can increase the likelihood of achieving them. Regularly reviewing your progress in a journal provides motivation and accountability.

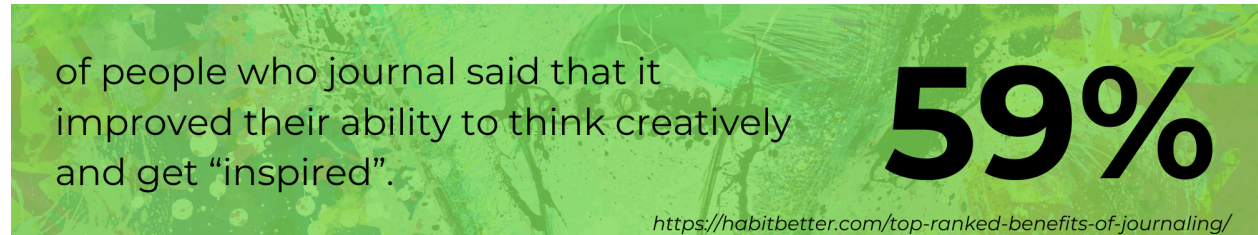
**Journaling helps me set goals and achieve them.**

**77% of those who reported journaling chose this as one of the benefits.**

<https://habitbetter.com/top-ranked-benefits-of-journaling/>

### **Enhanced Creativity**

Freewriting or exploring creative prompts in a journal can stimulate your imagination and foster creativity. Keeping a journal allows you to capture and develop ideas that may later become the foundation for creative projects.



### **Improved Emotional Intelligence**

Journaling helps you recognize and regulate your emotions, contributing to increased emotional intelligence. It can also enhance empathy as you explore different perspectives and reflect on your interactions with others.

### **Problem Solving**

Writing about challenges and brainstorming potential solutions in a journal can facilitate problem-solving. It encourages a proactive and constructive approach to overcoming obstacles.

### **Memory Enhancement**

Keeping a record of significant events and experiences helps improve memory retention. The act of writing itself can reinforce the memory of events and details.

### **Gratitude and Positivity**

Journaling about things you are grateful for can cultivate a positive mindset and increase overall life satisfaction. Focusing on positive aspects of your life can shift your perspective and improve mood.

### **Physical Health Benefits**

Research suggests that expressive writing in a journal may have positive effects on physical health, such as improved immune function and reduced symptoms in conditions like asthma and rheumatoid arthritis.

### **Personal Development**

Journaling serves as a tool for personal development, allowing you to track your evolution over time and set new goals as you grow.

### **Professional Development**

Journaling helps us to set goals and achieve them. For this reason and more, journaling is a suggested practice for some of my coaching clients who are working on interpersonal relationships, advancing their careers, developing their leadership skills, and reducing stress.

### **Time Capsule and Reflection on Growth**

Looking back on past entries provides a unique perspective on personal growth and serves as a time capsule of your life journey.

The benefits of journaling can vary from person to person, and finding the approach that works best for you is key. Whether it's daily reflections, goal-oriented journaling, or creative expression, the act of putting pen to paper (or hands to the keyboard or voice the recorder) can have a positive impact on various aspects of your life.

## 5 Ideas of What to Include in a Gratitude Journal

There are many reasons to keep a Gratitude Journal. Whether you're on a healing journey or want to add thankfulness to your day to live a freer, more contented life, writing down your thoughts is a powerful tool. This is why Gratitude Journals are so popular.

If you've ever wanted to start writing a Gratitude Journal and are stuck wondering what to write about, try these ideas. You'll have plenty to write about in no time!

### 1. Enjoy the Details

It's easy to write about how much you're thankful for your home or best friend. The problem? You'll quickly run out of material or be stuck repeating yourself if you list the same people every day. Instead of talking about the people or things in your life you're grateful for, dig down into the details about what exactly you love about them. For example, maybe you love how your best friend sat up with you all night when you needed someone to talk to.

### 2. Get Into the Moment

Take a minute to center yourself. By using mindfulness or meditation to pause and calm your thoughts, you are able to pay attention to where you are right now emotionally, physically, or even spiritually. Once you're relaxed, let your mind drift where it will. Look for specifics to be thankful for— use your 5 senses to cues: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. For example, you might hear the sound of wind chimes outside or smell dinner in the oven, which are both enrichments to be grateful for. Write about them.

### 3. Ask Why

If you already have a grateful thought, try digging down a little to find out what about this makes you feel so much gratitude. Ask why you feel this way, and keep asking why until you find the root. For example, you might be writing about how you're grateful for chocolate chip cookies and discover you love them because your grandmother always made them for you. Express your gratitude for these 'buried treasures.'

### 4. Change Directions

If you've been writing about the same topics every day, look for ways to discover gratitude and memories in other areas of your life. Maybe you've been focusing on family for a while. If so, try turning toward work, past experiences, or nature for new inspiration.

## 5. Do Something Else

If the thoughts aren't coming, give yourself a break. This isn't a race. Walk away and do something else for a bit, such as emptying the dishwasher. Let your mind drift through this activity. What about this job can you be grateful for (clean dishes? The time you shared with your family cleaning up the kitchen together after dinner last night? The meal you're going to eat next on these dishes?) Come back and write about these experiences.

It's surprising to see just how much there is to be grateful for, isn't it? The best part? The more you journal in your gratitude, the more your own attitude will shift to one of compassion and kindness. A grateful heart is a happy one!



## How to Get The Most out of “Gratitude” Journaling

If you have recently started gratitude journaling, you may be wondering if you’re getting the full benefits from your daily, weekly, monthly, or annual ritual. This is something you must decide for yourself of course, however there are several practices you can do to get the most out of your journaling. Below are some simple ways to receive the maximum benefits from your journaling practice.

### Try Different Formats

When most people think of journaling, they think of writing letters to themselves or simply writing sentences about their feelings. Yet this isn’t the only format you can journal in, and the truth is, it may not be the most effective for you. Other formats when it comes to gratitude journaling can be lists, bullet points, diagrams, or tables. Consider journaling fabulous five moments daily! Consider changing up your journaling format, or better yet, employing more than one format in your journaling. This will ensure you are getting the most out of your journaling time.

### Write Yourself Compliments

In gratitude journaling, people tend to write about all the aspects or people they are grateful for in their lives. This can work well, provided you make sure you remember to be thankful for the most important person, **yourself!** Put YOU in your journal. It’s a great practice to write a few memorable moments, thoughts, or features you like about yourself each time you journal. This way, you can reflect on how your day (week, month, or year) went and observe your transformation as you become a better version of yourself.

**TIP:**

Look to the movie STUTZ with Jonah Hill and his therapist for inspiration. One take away is the idea of ‘Best Version’ as a prompt to remember to be the best version of yourself. One of my family members was so inspired by this idea that they ink BV on their hand as a constant reminder. What would your prompt be?

### Remember to Learn the Lessons

No one’s life is perfect. When gratitude journaling, you may find that you have days where you make significant mistakes that you’re embarrassed by or even make you feel ashamed. This is normal and okay, and even something you could be thankful for! Instead of approaching your mistakes as setbacks instead, include them in your gratitude journaling as lessons and approach them with an open mind and be grateful for the lesson you had the opportunity to learn.

Wherever you are in your gratitude journaling journey, you are most certainly benefiting from the practice.

If you want to make sure you're getting the most from journaling remember 3 tips:

1. Experiment by playing around with the format a bit
2. Compliment yourself
3. And embrace your mistakes as a means to learning

After all, your gratitude journal is a safe space for you to express everything you are grateful for without any outside judgment.

## Journal Prompts

Journal prompts are a fantastic way to spark creativity, self-reflection, and personal growth. Here are some journal prompts across various themes:

### Self-Reflection:

- What are the three things I'm most grateful for today, and why?
- Describe a challenging situation you faced recently and how you overcame it.
- What are your top five values, and how do they guide your decision-making?
- Reflect on a mistake you made and the lessons you learned from it.
- What advice would you give to your younger self?
- What advice would you give to a friend who is dealing with a challenge you are currently facing?

### Aspirations:

- What are your long-term aspirations?
- What steps can you take to get closer to your aspirations?
- Describe a dream you've always had that you haven't YET pursued. What's holding you back?
- What habits or behaviors do you want to cultivate or eliminate to improve your professional or personal life?
- How do you envision your ideal day?
- What can you do to make it a reality?

### Creativity and Inspiration:

- What book, movie, or song profoundly impacted you? Why?
- What sparks inspiration for you?
- Describe a place that makes you feel at peace and inspired. Why does it have that effect on you?
- What does success mean to you, and how do you measure it in your own life? How has the way you define and measure success changed over time?
- Create a bucket list of experiences and adventures you want to have in your lifetime.

### Mindfulness and Well-being:

- Explore a moment in your day when you felt truly present. What were you doing, and how did it feel?

- Write about a self-care routine or activity that brings you joy and relaxation.
- List three things that always make you smile, no matter how challenging your day has been.
- How do you handle stress, and are there healthier alternatives you could explore?
- What is a personal mantra or affirmation that resonates with you?

### Relationships:

- Write a letter to someone you admire or appreciate, expressing your gratitude.
- Describe a moment when you felt truly connected with someone. What made it special?
- Reflect on a disagreement or conflict you had recently. How can you approach it differently in the future?
- What qualities do you value in your closest relationships, and how can you nurture them?
- Write about a time when someone positively influenced your life and how it changed you.

Journal entries can even be stories you want to remember. Here are a few of my personal published examples which crystalize moments I want to remember:

## Vested in Gratitude

By Barb Girson

It was a special birthday. My daughter, Robyn, flew home. She's in New York. We rarely get to be one-on-one, so I was relishing the time. We laughed our heads off and ran around the entire time. We did some of our favorite activities, which are shopping and dining. We took a day trip to a quaint town, Yellow Springs, Ohio. We strolled in and out of the art shops. Simple pleasures. I saw a tie-dyed vest—a '60s throwback—and tried it on. I liked it but, being practical, I deliberated over the purchase, asking the clerk to hold it. When I went back, the store was closed. "Oh well," I thought, "maybe it was not meant to be." Today I went to the mailbox and saw a bulky package. Since I noticed it was from Yellow Springs, I tore it open. There was my colorful vest! To my surprise, Robyn had snuck back and found the store's name. She collaborated with the clerk by emailing and sending pictures back and forth. She asked the clerk to include a handwritten message for the card, then had it mailed. For what this vest means, I am grateful.

##

This story was first published in **The Gratitude Book Project®** from **TheGratitudeBookProject.com**  
**Donna Kozik, Editor**

# Age is Only a Number

**By Barb Girson**

My mom believed in the power of self-talk. She was determined not to grow old. She would confuse us about her age and was believable because she was youthful. We would joke that she and my older brother will be the same age if her subtraction continues. When she was about 88, she decided to have an 80th birthday party. What started out as jest became an lifelong quest to remain young. Mom passed away at 92, 4 days short of turning 93 (or so we thought). We quipped that she wanted to shave another year from her total. While going through mom's belongings, we realized the extremes she took to keep her secret. She scribbled the graduation year from her college medallion. We found three birth certificates. Two had the year inked over, making her younger. The file date was left untouched --11 months before the altered birth date! We found one unchanged birth certificate making her one year older. This discovery was months after we filed her death certificate. We marked her grave a year younger and kept this story as our family's history or mystery. I am grateful age is only a number.

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**Donna Kozik, Editor**

## Conclusion

We hope this eBook helped you have a better understanding of journaling and the powerful tool it can be in your life.

Journaling can be inspiring, healing, or historical. It can be fun, funny, or pragmatic. Whatever you want it to be.

And when it comes to HOW to journal, you have a lot of options there too. You can get out good old fashioned pen and paper, type it on a Google doc, record a video, or even an audio message. Whatever feels right to you.

Sometimes the simplest things can bring the greatest reward. How will you get started?



## Leadership, Team and Individual Training/Coaching

If you would like to help yourself and/or your team improve self-awareness, increase influence, gain executive presence and develop better communication skills, [contact Barb Girson](#) to learn more about our workshops and coaching in areas of executive, leadership, communication, business, career & sales.

### Top 5 Areas of Coaching

Sought by clients

1. Improving Well-Being
2. Leading Others
3. Increasing Influence
4. Pursuing a Promotion/ Career Development
5. Improving Communications