

INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALING

Journaling is the art of writing your thoughts & feelings without self-deception.

The content of the journals is your thoughts & feelings.

The three main tools of journaling are 1. handwritten notebook & pen 2. computer writing with keyboard & screen 3. audio recording with miniature digital recorder.

There are several other less popular journaling tools, such as video-journals, where you film yourself while speaking your journals extemporaneously or reading your written journal; and then graphic journals, where you create an artful composition of images, hand-drawn and possibly integrating photos, or downloaded googled images, assembled to metaphorically represent your thoughts & feelings.

I will describe some of the pros and cons of the first three methods only:

1. handwritten notebook & pen – the pros

handwriting is more intimate more personal

very accessible and portable

ability to add drawings and doodles

handwritten notebook & pen – the cons

handwriting style may be poor

spell check will need dictionary

slower than computer

2. computer writing with keyboard & screen – the pros

neat clean and finished as is

spell check, word count etc available

tag and search for subject and names available

structured journal programs available

password protected

computer writing with keyboard & screen – the cons

less portable

less personal

can easily be read by others if not protected

3. audio recording speaking as you think – the pros

feelings are clearly expressed

emotions apparent

technology is simple

audio recording speaking as you think – the cons

difficult to edit

external hard drive needed to store journals

transcribing to text needed for sharing or publishing

After the tools, the next major considerations are the where and when to do the journaling work. This is dependent on the nature of your household and your work-life. The best place to write is somewhere private, with little traffic by others, and where you can protect and keep safe the journaling. At what time of day or night to journal is similarly dependent on your life style, when you have the most control over getting time for yourself to collect and access your thoughts & feelings without being interrupted.

There're several valuable internet sites that discuss and appraise the journaling world in terms of personal healing, spiritual rebirth, problem solving and peace within.

I quote from www.tinybuddha.com:

"The more light you allow within you, the brighter the world you live in will be."

Phrases commonly read there are 'working privately at the inner levels of your life,' and 'writing to access the power of the unconscious,' and 'helps recognize patterns in your life,' and 'gain perspective and control.'

There are several books I feel are worthy looking into such as:

'Pain and Possibility' by Gabrielle Rico

'Following Your Path' by Alexandra Dickerman

'The Inner Child Workbook' by Cathryn Taylor

And several methodical techniques of journaling being offered on the internet that appear very thorough and well thought out:

www.intensivejournal.org based on Ira Progoff's method 'At a Journal Workshop'

www.journalingsaves.com

www.penzu.com

This last is a vendor offering a computer application with a structure that enables the following useful functions to be integrated into the journaling: password protection, reminders, font selection, pdf conversion, email entries, picture import, tag, search, spell-check and data storage.

Journaling is a process of connecting with your self, a way to invite your thoughts & feelings forward into consciousness. They are there for everyone, more or less hid-

den, often deliberately ignored, so it takes desire and practice to coax them out from unconsciousness. Journaling regularly, at a private time of day or night, is essential. Blocking out the opinions and reactions of others is necessary. Grammar and writing style should not be your concern at the early stages of integrating journaling into your life. This is for you and your life story. It can bring profound personal understanding of your self and others. Your writing, with time and practice, may become clear and insightful, worthy for others to read and hear.

There are downsides to journaling – you may not like to admit to feeling and thinking in certain ways that show you uncharitable, unsympathetic, hostile and perhaps inappropriately affectionate. There are people who will avoid you feeling uncomfortable because of your honest and direct expression of your feelings. You may lose friends. I have. You may conclude that counseling and therapy are necessary to deal with emotional issues and your resistance to face reality. So make friends with your demons. Be patient and courageous with yourself! Three of my favorite wise sayings in this regard:

“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.” Albert Einstein, and this from Sigmund Freud:

“The mind is like an iceberg, it floats with one-seventh of its bulk above water.”

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” Socrates

No matter what, journaling is the most self-enriching trip you’ll ever take.