

Journaling F O R Joy

✦ THE WORKBOOK ✦

Journaling FOR Joy

✧ **THE WORKBOOK** ✧

*Writing Your Way to
Personal Growth and Freedom*

A breakthrough lifebook from the author of
LIVE YOUR DREAM

Joyce Chapman, M.A.

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This book is dedicated to those who dare to be true to themselves and journal for joy.

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Introduction

WELCOME TO THE ADVENTURE OF YOUR LIFE. *JOURNALING FOR JOY: THE WORKBOOK* is your takeoff point for one of the most exciting journeys you can ever embark upon—the journey into yourself. On this journey you will be your own personal tour guide. Along the way you will be invited to laugh, cry, remember and let go, to travel through your past, to acknowledge your present, and to create your future. You will take a close look at who you are now and what you want in your life, inviting your deep inner knowing to come forth. You will assume your rightful position as the main character in your own life. You will determine your future out of conscious choice.

Journaling for Joy: The Workbook offers a method of journaling in which you, the journaler, will write from your heart and soul and with a single focus: to bring your work to the point where joy emerges. Most of the exercises in this workbook can be done over and over again. Although the workbook has been designed to write in the space provided, whenever you feel motivated to write more just use your favorite blank journal and write away. No matter how much writing it takes to get you there, your explicit purpose and intention is to experience the joy that comes from knowing yourself as an intimate friend, and living the life you have created for yourself out of conscious choice.

Journaling for Joy: The Workbook reveals a special and magical way of molding each of your life's experiences into an outcome of learning and joy. You will move through whatever causes you emotional pain, stress, fear, and confusion until, far back in the distance, you can view it all from the perspective of wisdom and gratitude—as a rich tapestry woven from all the powerful and mundane experiences that have unfolded in your life.

Journal writing invites you to pay serious attention to your life—to ask yourself every day, “Where am I in my life journey right now?” And further: “What is my life telling me right now? Who do I want to be? What do I want? Where do I want to go?”

Self-inquiry and self-discovery will give you more information about yourself than if you had read a whole library of books and consulted countless experts. Journaling will become your tool for self-understanding and will provide a way to discover what is keeping you from feeling healthy, creative, and joyful. Journaling can be the mouthpiece for the inner voice. It becomes a highly personal form of inner work, a work that is yours alone to do. It is the work that bring you home to your own truth, a home where the joy presides.

Whatever the circumstances, whenever an individual keeps a journal, there is a way to live life from choice rather than reaction. There is a way to take the driver's seat in life rather than remaining a passive backseat passenger who does not know the destination and is not paying attention to the route. There is a way to be in charge of life and be joyful.

SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT JOURNALING

- Journaling is a natural process.
- The subconscious offers wonderful gifts of truth from the inner self.
- The act of writing makes thoughts become real and brings a deeper level of release than just verbal communication or thinking can do alone.
- Don't stop writing – journal through the negative thoughts and beliefs. You need to write through all the layers of stored emotional and psychological perceptions so that you can heal your past.
- There is no right or wrong way to journal.
- Never judge, censor, or correct your journaling.
- Allow your gut reaction or intuition to come forth.
- Set no performance standards on yourself.
- Cancel out the thought that you can't write well.
- Write for yourself.
- Allow yourself to play – have fun!

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT JOURNAL WRITING

1. What, one more thing I have to impose on myself?

Once you begin to reap the rewards of your writing, journaling stops being a burden and often becomes the activity you look forward to most and obtain the greatest value from.

2. I'm afraid someone might read my journal. What should I do about this fear?

Hide your journal, or if you've written something you don't want to keep, throw it away or burn it. Remember, it's your journal and it's perfectly OK to keep it private and do whatever you want with it.

3. What if I tell myself the truth in my journal and become frightened by the changes I see that need to be made in my life?

Respect the self-protective function of fear, but give more power to self-expression and free choice than to the fear. Remember, as remote as it may appear, joy is the other side of fear.

4. Someone told me that journaling can make people emotional, and sometimes even makes them cry. Will that happen to me?

It's true that some people are emotional during the writing process, but being emotional is a healthy, cleansing part of the process. And, of course, everyone experiences the journaling process differently. Emotions and tears may be released (and may need to be released) as the writing taps into deeper undercurrents of the psyche. If these emotions seem to be overwhelming, consider seeking professional help.

5. Would I ever want to read all this stuff?

Your writing may simply serve the purpose of clearing out the clutter from your mind—a worthwhile result even if it is never read again. On the other hand, writing that at first seems purposeless may lead to valuable insights as your ideas develop. Rereading your writing later and observing what occupied your mind at a particular time is often very meaningful and instructive.

6. Is there much point in writing down everything that happens every day?

Journaling for Joy: The Workbook is a natural process that goes beyond this kind of routine recording or logging of the day's events. It leads you to examine and extract the feelings and meaning behind your experiences.

GUIDELINES

As this workbook is a simplified form taken from *Journaling for Joy* just to get you started and spark your interest in beginning your inner journey, it is recommended that you:

1. Do one exercise at a time. Use as many additional pages as you feel you need to answer any of the questions found in the workbook.
2. As you do the exercises, jot down topics for writing you want

to do, journaling questions you want to ask yourself, and results you want to achieve through your own writing.

3. Whenever possible, set aside uninterrupted time for journaling in a space that is free from distractions, so you can really be with yourself.
4. Date your writing. A date positions each piece of your writing in its proper context and demonstrates the evolution of your thoughts and feelings.
5. Give your writing a title, whenever appropriate.
6. Read over everything after you write it. Ask yourself what is the feeling tone in my writing? What does this piece say to me? What conclusions can I draw from this writing? What action or further writing needs to take place? Adding your interpretation of the significance of the events that you record will bring clarity, insights, and richness into your life. Always end each writing with a feedback statement that summarizes your response to your work as you now see it.
7. Although the exercises are taken directly from *Journaling for Joy*, it is recommended that the book be a part of your journey. It is filled with writing samples of fellow journalers to inspire and, perhaps, touch you with personal glimpses into a shared reality. These writings can serve as a travel guide to prepare the pathway for your journey.

RESULTS YOU CAN ACHIEVE THROUGH JOURNALING

- To know who you are.
- To turn problems into opportunities, gifts.
- To learn to trust yourself as your own counselor.
- To release feelings, turmoil, stress.
- To access information from your subconscious mind.
- To find answers to what seems to be unanswerable.
- To capture the teachings of your past.
- To record experiences and thoughts you want to keep and remember.
- To awaken the writer's voice within you.

- To communicate with others when talking is difficult or impossible.
- To integrate what you are learning from a class, lecture, or life situation.
- To know yourself as a spiritual being.
- To heal the past.
- To live from being awake and aware of the presence.
- To create the future by conscious choice.
- To understand the connection between thought and health.
- To understand your “partners” in life.
- TO CAPTURE THE JOY!

By now you are excited about getting to know who you are! Journaling is about your self-expression. It invites you to discover your truth and identify your natural skills, talents, abilities, and insights. It welcomes you to discover the answer to the basic question, “Why are you here?” Through the act of writing things down, you allow yourself to wake up, be aware, and pay attention to what your life has to teach you.

1

CHAPTER

Discovering Your Truth



DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO BE HAPPY, YOU ALREADY HAVE? IT WILL emerge from within when invited and given the chance. The exercises in Chapter 1 are an invitation. It is the beginning of the journey back to your natural self—the self that is alive, full of joy, laughter, health, and creativity.

You will begin to remember that self as you write in your journal. Your thoughts will serve as a reminder, as a way back on the road to what you love. You do know what it is that you love, that which brings you joy, a sense of accomplishment, a sense of achievement. You may simply have lost track of it. Your writing will allow you to take the time to reconnect with the source of your inner knowing. Rest assured that your inner self holds nothing but the highest truth and good in store for you.

As a human being you are a precious resource containing everything you need to make your life exactly the way you want it. The seeds of the gifts you have to give are all there waiting to be nurtured. In this first chapter you will begin to open up the gifts you have to give to yourself and the world around you. You will start to discover your truth and identify your natural skills, talents, abilities, and insights.

You may be surprised by your insights as you journal to find your in-depth answers and reread those answers to write your feedback statements. It is inevitable that when you record your experience without editing, breakthroughs come. You will become aware of where you are and what changes you need to make to bring you back to yourself and *your* truth—not somebody else’s idea of who you should be and what you should do.

You will learn immensely from your writing over time. By keeping a daily record you will remain in constant dialogue with your life. You will have an opportunity to question, “If this is my life, do I like it? Do I want to change it?” You will start to take more responsibility for what happens in your life.

Through logging you will notice patterns and see relationships between thoughts, feelings, and actions. By becoming the observer, you then become the planner, the designer, the critiquer, and the organizer of your life. You will learn that there is a way to live life from choice rather than reaction. There is always a way to take the driver’s seat in life.

Somewhere inside of you is that great feeling of knowing that you were meant to experience peace, joy, and happiness as your natural birthright. The writing exercises in this chapter and in the chapters that follow, will help you listen to your inner voice and retrieve that natural state of being.

How do I feel right now about journaling writing?

What would I like journaling to do for me?

Here is my feedback statement that sums up what I learned and what my next step is.

A DAILY RECORD TO CAPTURE THE MEANING OF YOUR LIFE

When you keep a log of your experiences and read it over, weeks, months, or even years later, your writing may provide a treasured record of fond memories. Appreciation of our learning and our joy is inherent in each day's experience. It is brought out by the power of *directed intention* when we keep a written record of our events, feelings, thoughts, and what it all means. A good starting point for beginning to keep a daily record is to sit down at the end of your day, picture the day's events, and review your day. The following exercise questions are designed as a guide to help you in formulating your own daily record. Close your eyes and review your day. When you feel ready, open your eyes and respond to the following questions.

What was my first thought of the morning?

How did my body feel?

What was my first movement of the day?

What was the first thing I did?

What did I look forward to?

What did I dread?

What would an objective outside observer think, watching my movements?

What might not appear obvious to an observer, being known only to me?

What interactions did I have with other people?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Where did I go?

What were my thoughts?

What happened next?

What were the feelings I felt?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What did I notice about my body?

This is a description of who I was today.

What is it like to be living my life today?

What was my life about today?

Here is a description of my day, adding feelings, colors, sounds, and sights:

What occurred today that wants to be remembered?

What occurred today that needs to be resolved?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

In rereading what I have written in answer to all the questions, what does it say to me?

What conclusions can I draw?

What action is suggested?

KEEPING A LOG FOR EVERY OCCASION

One of the simplest ways to observe yourself is by keeping a log, or simple list recording the details you're interested in knowing more about. The following exercise questions are designed to allow you to be more aware of yourself, thereby beginning the self-discovery process.

What am I dissatisfied with?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What do I feel unfulfilled about?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What areas would I like to assume more control over?

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

What feelings or experiences do I want to increase in my life?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

If I could take a souvenir or memento from today, what would it be?

In rereading what I have written, this is what it says to me:

What conclusions can I draw?

What action is suggested?

Here is a list of what I would like to say to the people who entered my life in some form today:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Here is a log of my negative thoughts and words for a day:

What can I learn from what I have observed?

Here is a log of my accomplishments for a week:

When I look back over my accomplishments for the week, what can I learn from what I have written?

Here is a log of my frustrations during a day:

When I look back over my frustrations during a day, what can I learn from what I have written?

Here is a log of my communications for a day:

As I look back over my communications for a day, what can I learn from what I have written?

What's bugging me today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

As I reread what's been bugging me, what conclusions can I draw?

What recommendations can I make for myself?

Here is a record of my loving encounters for one day:

What message comes through my writing?

In my communications today, in what ways did I say what I truly felt, wanted, or needed?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

After rereading the above two questions, what can I learn from what I have observed?

What thoughts and interactions did I have today that raised my self-esteem?

1.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

What thoughts and interactions did I have today that lowered my self-esteem?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

In rereading my answers to these two questions, what is the learning there?

What was my state of energy today, from moment to moment?

What do these observations about my energy level suggest to me?

Here is a log of my feelings for a day:

In rereading my feelings for a day, what do I conclude?

Is there a feeling I wish to increase in my life? What is it?

Here is a log of the times that I experienced this feeling:

What is my learning about the feeling I wish to increase in my life?

Here is a log of what I would like to be able to erase from my day:

Here is a log of my successes today:

What conclusions can I draw from the answers to these two questions?

Here is a log of my thoughts over a period of 15 minutes without any interference (away from all distractions and noise):

What does my “mind chatter” tell me about the patterns in my thinking?



When your daily journaling is used as a learning experience, it becomes much more than a useless, somewhat compulsive ritual. It’s a small but very critical step to reread a journaling piece and draw out the learning from it. In journaling, when you become aware of the decisions you have made and are about to make, there is a fascinating side-effect: you begin to act out of this new awareness and you become the director and designer of your life.