



30 DAY JOURNALING CHALLENGE WORKBOOK

Improve Your Happiness And Wellbeing
By Harnessing This Powerful Tool



The mere act of writing your thoughts can lead to almost magical results. Journaling has been shown to relieve stress, boost creativity and even reduce anxiety and depression.

Writing is a great way to cut through mental clutter and break out of those pesky recurring thoughts. I often find that I gain valuable new insights after just a few minutes of writing.

Journaling has a multitude of benefits, so whether you'd like to gain clarity in your thoughts and feelings, explore new perspectives, or just vent, you're on your way to developing a great habit.

FIRST STEP - GET A JOURNAL

While you certainly can journal on any sort of paper, it's a good idea to have a dedicated notebook. It can be a simple spiral bound notepad or a lavish hardcover diary. A trip to your local stationery shop or office supply store will give you lots of options. You'll be spending a bit of time with this object, so it makes sense to choose one that you'll enjoy. Take some time to find a journal that *feels good* to you.

Blank Slate or Pre-Planned

In this journaling challenge I'm offering a series of daily topics to guide your writing. For that, you'll just need a blank journal. However, you might also join us in the challenge but use one of the many pre-planned journals on the market. No matter what your journaling goals, you're sure to find a commercially produced journal to fit your needs. Here are a few that you'll find on Amazon or at your local bookseller:

- ✓ **The Five-Minute Journal** - Grounded in the science of positive psychology, this journal helps improve happiness by focusing your attention on the good in your life.
- ✓ **One Question a Day** - A simple guided journal that offers one question per day, to be answered on the same day for five years in a row.
- ✓ **Start Where You Are: A Journal for Self-Exploration** - an interactive journal designed to help readers nurture their creativity, mindfulness, and self-motivation.

Longhand or Keyboard?

You might think that it doesn't matter how you record your thoughts, but there really is something powerful about handwriting. The very act of putting pen (or pencil) to paper slows your mind and helps focus on the task at hand.

While you may not be as fast a writer as you are a typist, I invite you to go old-school when journaling. Plus, it's another great excuse to find a pen or pencil that you really love. Personally, I favor good old-fashioned #2 pencils. I sharpen a bunch of them and have them nearby. If I'm traveling, then I pack a mechanical pencil so I don't have to worry about sharpening.

When and Where to Journal?

You'll get the most benefit from writing if you make it a daily practice. You don't need to spend a lot of time each day, but you'll likely find it easier if you devote a specific time that works for you. Any time of the day is fine, but there are some types of journaling that are best done in the morning (planning and preparing for the day) and some that are better suited for the end of the day (reflecting on the day's events). You'll also want to find a nice comfortable place to write.

Of course, you could write just about anywhere, but you'll have better results if you are free from distractions. It can be pretty tough to concentrate on writing when sitting on a crowded subway or in a noisy coffee shop. I like to write in the mornings at our kitchen table. It's the brightest and quietest room of the house and I love the sunlight streaming through the windows. Find a place that feels good for you.



It's all for You

Remember, this journal is just for you. There's no need to show it to anyone, or even talk about it. It's your private space, free from judgement and evaluation. Don't worry about punctuation, grammar or spelling. Your handwriting can be beautiful script or nearly unreadable chicken scratching (like mine).

No one is ever going to see it, so you can be as open and honest as you like.

Let's get writing!

Now that you're all comfy, journal in hand, it's time to write.

But, where to start? That blank page can be really intimidating. There's really no wrong way to get started, but I'll offer up some suggestions that may help. In fact, that's what this challenge is all about.

Each week, we'll explore different ways of journaling. Some will resonate with you more than others. As you try the different kinds of writing, be aware of what's most effective for you. What's working? What feels like a struggle? By the time the challenge is over, you'll have a good feeling for what styles of writing work best for you, depending on your goals.

WEEK ONE: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

To begin, our first week will be a series of guided journal topics. Each day I'll ask a question or give you a topic, then you'll write as much as you like about it. Remember, this is just for you, so you can be open and honest. Let's go!



Day 1 - Why am I journaling?

What do you hope this challenge will bring into your life? How do you think it will help?



Day 2 - What am I excited about?

This could be an ongoing project, a new adventure or relationship, or anything at all that gives you a little thrill when you think of it.



Day 3 - My proudest accomplishment(s)

Spend some time writing about something you've done that made you proud. It could be from your personal or professional life, big or small, recent or from years ago.



Day 4 - My definition of happiness

Happiness is a subjective idea. What makes you happy? When have you been happiest in your life? What led to that feeling?



Day 5 - The best day of your life

What made it so good? What did you do to make it happen? (feel free to change 'best day' to 'most fun day', 'most rewarding day', or the adjective of your choice!)



Day 6 - The hardest thing I've ever done

Our struggles make us stronger. What's one of the most difficult things you've ever done? What did you learn from the experience? How did it change you?



Day 7 - One of the biggest influences in my life

We're all impacted by those around us. Choose one or two people who have had (or continue to have) a big impact on your life. What was so influential? What did you learn because of them?



WEEK TWO: THREE GOOD THINGS

The Three Good Things journaling exercise is an easy and powerful way to boost your positivity in just a few minutes a day. Also known as "What Went Well" or "Three Blessings", it works by shifting your attention to the good stuff in your day, thereby raising your positivity ratio. The roots of this exercise go back a long, long time, but the modern version is usually credited to Dr. Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania.

Research has shown long-lasting positive effects for people who did Three Good Things once a day for only a week.

"Participants in the three good things exercise began to show beneficial effects one month following the posttest [daily for one week]. At the one-month follow-up, participants in this exercise were happier and less depressed than they had been at baseline, and they stayed happier and less depressed at the three-month and six-month follow-ups."

That's amazing! Just one week of writing down three good things that happened that day lead to six months of increased happiness!

It's simple. At the end of each day you'll write down 3 good things that happened and what you did to contribute to them happening. They don't need to be huge successes or windfalls, in fact, most days you won't have a big triumph to record.

So, let's do it. Each day for the next week, you'll write about three good things that happened. If you're journaling in the morning, write about things from yesterday. If you're an evening writer, journal about the good things from today.

Follow this formula...

For each good thing, write:

- ✓ ... a few words about 'the good thing'
- ✓ ... a few sentences giving more detail about what happened. Who was there? What was said? What were the circumstances surrounding this good thing?
- ✓ ... how you felt at the time. What emotions were you feeling at the moment this happened (and now, as you write about it)?
- ✓ ... what did you do to contribute to this good thing happening?

For example, one of your 'good thing' journal entries might look like this:

- ✓ *I had a good lunch meeting with Joe*
Joe and I sat down to talk about the new project over lunch. I had a chicken salad sandwich and a cup of coffee. We talked about the work that's going well and the problems we're having.
- ✓ *I felt good about the meeting. We uncovered some new information on the project and found a way around that roadblock. Plus, the sandwich was delicious. And I notice that thinking back about the meeting makes me feel happy.*
- ✓ *I contributed to this good thing by reaching out to Joe to schedule the meeting. Plus, I had done some work beforehand so we'd have a few things to go over at the meeting.*



Days 8-13 - Three Good Things

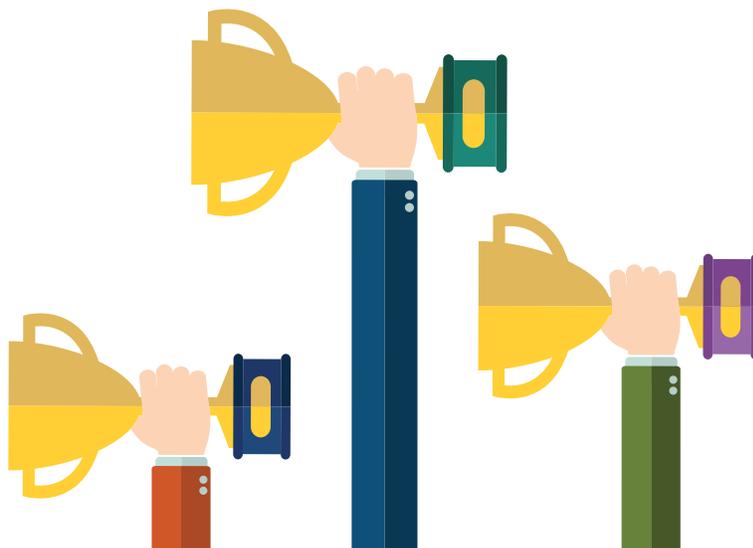
On each of these days, do the Three Good Things journaling exercise.



Day 14 - Looking Back on the Week

You've spent 6 days journaling the Three Good Things. How was that experience? What changes have you noticed in your mood, outlook and behaviours? Why do you think this is the case? If you haven't noticed any changes, why do you think that's the case?

For more about the Three Good Things, **check out this article.**



WEEK THREE: STRENGTHS

What are you good at? I'm sure there's a long list (even if you don't know it). This week, you'll focus on your strengths. For some, this comes easy. For others, it can feel uncomfortable (and a little self-aggrandizing) to shine a light on what makes you special. Fortunately, there's no need to worry about that here - you're writing in a private journal, so you can feel free to talk yourself up a bit!

By spending some time exploring the things you're good at, you'll discover new ways to apply those strengths in new ways and make them even stronger.

Day 15 - Strengths Story

Think of a specific time that you were at your best. It could be an interaction, a success, a challenging time through which you prevailed, or any time that you were proud of yourself for your thoughts or actions.



Got one? Spend some time writing the story of that time. Who was involved? What was the situation? How were you 'at your best'?

Now, go back and read what you just wrote. Next, try to identify the strengths that you displayed. Write about what strengths you tapped into that helped you be your best in the situation.

Here's a partial list of strengths to choose from. This is indeed an incomplete list, so you may have displayed other strengths.

Accuracy
Action oriented
Adventurous
Ambitious
Analytical
Appreciative
Artistic
Athletic
Authentic
Caring
Clever
Compassionate
Charming
Communication
Confident
Considerate

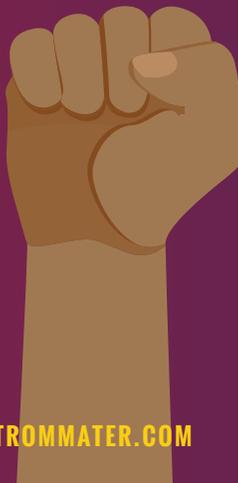
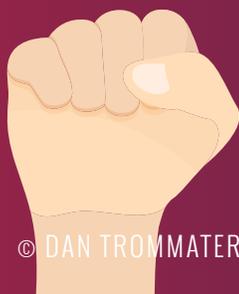
Courage
Creativity
Critical thinking
Curiosity
Dedication
Determination
Discipline
Educated
Empathetic
Energetic
Entertaining
Enthusiastic
Fair
Fast
Flexible
Focused
Forceful
Friendly

Generosity
Gratitude
Helpfulness
Honesty
Hope
Humility
Humor
Idealism
Independence
Ingenuity
Industriousness
Inner peace
Inspirational
Integrity
Intelligence
Kindness
Knowledgeable
Leadership
Lively

Logical
Love
Love of learning
Mercy
Modesty
Motivation
Observant
Optimistic
Open minded
Orderly
Originality
Organization
Outgoing

Patient
Perseverance
Persuasiveness
Persistence
Practical
Precision
Problem solving
Prudence
Respect
Responsibility
Self assurance
Seriousness
Self control

Spirituality
Spontaneous
Social skills
Straightforward
Strategic
Tactful
Team oriented
Thoughtful
Thrifty
Tolerant
Trustworthy
Versatile
Visionary
Vitality
Warmth
Willpower
Wisdom





Day 16 - Your VIA Character Strengths

Now that you've explored yourself at your best, let's dive into your strengths even more. Based on rigorous scientific research and created by Chris Peterson and Martin Seligman (the 'father' of Positive Psychology), the VIA Character Strengths assessment is a fantastic tool to uncover your strengths. For the next 6 days, you'll dig deep and explore your strengths.

Take the free assessment

You'll need to register an account there, but it's totally free and they don't spam you. It should only take you about 10 minutes to complete. You can choose to pay for fancy reports, but for the sake of this journaling exercise, the free assessment and results are all you need. Once you've downloaded your results, spend a few minutes reading it over, then grab your journal.

Write about what stands out for you. Were you surprised at the results? Does anything really resonate with you? How do you see your top 5 strengths playing out in your life?

Day 17 - Your Top Strength _____

Day 18 - Second Strength _____

Day 19 - Third Strength _____

Day 20 - Fourth Strength _____

Day 21 - Fifth Strength _____



Days 17-21 - Your Top 5 Strengths

For each of the next 5 days, write about your top 5 strengths. You can explore them any way you like. Here are some questions that might help guide your writing:

- How does this strength show up in my daily life?**
- With whom do I feel empowered to tap into this strength?**
- With whom is it more difficult to tap into this strength?**
- When is the last time I used this strength to deal with a challenge?**
- How can I employ this strength to greater effect?**
- Are there any downsides to this strength? If so, how can I mitigate that negative effect?**

For more on strengths, especially in a work context, **check out this article.**

WEEK FOUR: IMAGE JOURNALING

There's a great power in writing, but it's certainly not the only way to journal. One great way to broaden your journaling horizons is to add visuals to the mix. By embellishing your writing with images, you can deepen the experience. It can be a fun way to tap into other parts of your brain to explore your thoughts and feelings.

Art journaling allows you use the right side of your brain. If you have a very analytical job, it can be a great relief to balance out long hours of thinking or sitting at a computer screen.

I love the idea of art journaling because there are no rules. You are free to define 'art' for yourself. It could be a drawing (I'm personally fond of stick figures), a photograph, a collage, fingerpaint, you name it! You could start with an image (one that you create or one that you find), then write about it; you could start with some writing, then create (or find) art that explores the same ideas you wrote about.

Feel free to use a combination of mediums, both words and art, or just art.

You may be thinking, "but I'm not an artist. I'm no good at art or creativity." First of all, yes you are. Whether you know it or not, you ARE creative. And secondly, who cares? You're doing this journal for you. You don't have to call yourself an artist to enjoy art journaling. You can start anywhere - just start!

You don't need anything special to art journal, but you may want to employ some of the following tools:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Colored pencils or markers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Modeling Clay |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Watercolors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Pipe Cleaners |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Charcoal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Popsicle sticks |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fingerpaints | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Old magazines to cut up and collage |

I realize that the lack of limitation can be limiting in itself, so I'll suggest some topics for the next week.



Day 22-28 - Art It Up!

Here's a list of ideas to inspire your art journaling. Feel free to pick and choose whichever you like, combine a couple ideas to form a new journal entry, or make up your own!

- Choose a word that inspires you and create a collage, then write a paragraph about why that word 'speaks' to you.**
- Write about your favourite color, then create some art using only shades of that colour. Why is it your favourite? How do you feel when you see/wear it?**
- One line drawing. Put your pen/pencil/marker down on the paper and draw a picture without lifting it from the page. Write about the experience - how do you interpret the drawing? Do you like it? Why or why not?**

- ✔ **Pick a topic (this could be one of your strengths, something for which you're grateful, something you want to have more of in your life, anything really...) Cut images and words from magazines and make a collage to illustrate your topic, then write about the process.**
- ✔ **Use your smartphone's camera to snap photos throughout the day. At the end of the day, choose one or two and write about them.**
- ✔ **Start the day by writing about a topic, then as the day progresses, keep your eyes peeled for opportunities to photograph things to illustrate your journal. This will keep the ideas percolating throughout the day.**
- ✔ **Ink Blots - plop a few drops of ink on a page, then fold it in half and squish. When you unfold the paper, you'll discover a blotted shape. Let that image inspire and guide your writing.**
- ✔ **Search your memory (or the internet) for a favourite quotation. Copy it into your journal, then illustrate it with art of your choice (drawing, collage, etc). Write about how the quote inspires or affects you.**

There really is no wrong way to art journal. Feel free to do something different each day or pick one style and work it for a few days. Again, it's all for you.

For more about using images as a form of journaling, check out this article about my year of daily gratitude photographs.

Read 7 things I've learned from my year of gratitude photos

FINAL DAYS: WRAPPING UP THE CHALLENGE AND WARMING UP THE FUTURE

As we approach the end of the 30 day Journaling Challenge, let's spend the next two days reflecting on your experience and looking to the future.



Day 29: Reflection

Go back and read everything you wrote this month. What did you think of this experience? What types of journaling felt best to you? Which were most productive? What insights did you gain? What changes did you see? Write about your general (and/or specific) feelings about the journaling challenge.



Day 30: Looking Forward

Now that you've reflected on the experience, how will you move forward? How will this experience impact your life in the coming days, months and years? Will you continue to journal? If so, how? If not, why not?

CONGRATULATIONS!

You've made it through 4 weeks of journaling. That's no small feat. You're well on your way to make this a solid habit.

Take a look at your journal. 30 days ago, it was a gaping void of blank pages. Now, it's full of powerful insights and new perspectives. That didn't happen all at once. By taking small daily steps, you've achieved something to be really proud of.

What you've done (whether you know it or not) is to employ the concept of Continuous Improvement. The act of writing in a journal for 5 minutes a day is a pretty small action. But over the course of a month, those small steps have added up to a big deal.

You can apply this concept in all areas of your life. If you want to build any habit, you can't do it all at once. By taking small daily steps, you can make powerful changes in your life.

I tap into this concept by using Power Words. Power Words are a word or phrase you pick as a theme (my past ones have been gratitude, savouring, and reading) to guide the decisions you make as you move towards continuous improvement.

The idea is simple. You choose a Power Word that represents what you want more of in your life. It will serve as a gentle daily reminder to take small actions. By making small consistent steps, you'll find they add up quickly. You will indeed have more of what you want in your life. Power Words help you focus on what you want from life and help you navigate the small choices every day that accumulate into substantial change.

If you like this idea, I invite you to join us in the next 30-day Challenge.

JOIN THE JANUARY 2019 POWER WORDS CHALLENGE

If you struggle with New Year's Resolutions, you aren't alone. It's estimated by University of Scranton Psychology Professor John C. Norcross that less than 10% are actually achieved.

So why do most of us struggle to change our habits and make our goals a reality?

There are 2 main reasons New Year's Resolutions fail:

1. They usually focus on making large behavioural changes, rather than bite-sized habit improvements.
2. They rely on using willpower, and willpower is a finite resource.

Power Words Help You Focus on What You Want from Life

Your chosen Power Word helps you navigate the small choices every day that accumulate into substantial change.

It has power by the simple fact that you infuse it with power. Each time you use one, it becomes more powerful. This isn't "magic" – it's neuroplasticity. Every time you practice your Power Word, it makes your neural pathway stronger. This is how habits are created.

Join Me January 7th 2019 for a 30 Day Power Word Challenge

During the challenge you will:

- ✓ Pick a Power Word that you want to focus on for 30 days.
- ✓ Focus on a small habit each day related to your Power Word.
- ✓ Experiment with making changes in a safe and supportive environment.

You'll receive:

1. The updated Little Book Of Power Words that includes over 400 Power Words and instructions on how to choose your own Power Word.
2. Daily motivations over email or Social Media (you choose).



LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER!

SIGN UP NOW!