

e-tips...

to help you Live Well

How to Journal



A lot of evidence shows the emotional — and physical — benefits of keeping a journal. You may have experienced them if you've tried it. But how can you reap the benefits if you've lapsed with your journal, or if you've never started?

Journaling is very personal, so take time to experiment and discover what works best for you. Here are some tips from my 50 years as a journal-keeper.

Your Journal Tools

You can start with a simple notebook and a Bic pen. (School supplies are on sale right now, so go crazy!) Or you can go whole hog and spend money on a fancy leather journal from Italy and a pen from France. There's also a buzz about bullet journals or apps that let you journal electronically. For me, it's most important to find a format that's convenient to either carry or store in a place that makes it easy to journal. I also like journals that open up fully so I can easily write on both sides and to the bottom of the page. Find and use the tools that are most convenient and bring you joy and pleasure.

I use a Moleskin gridded journal and colored Uni-ball Vision pens. I can easily carry this light journal with me and it fits in my purse. I also like using a journal I can buy more of, so over time, I have a matched set of journals. (Yes, I am a little perfectionistic!)

When to Journal

Time for journaling has to be super easy. Find a consistent time of day or week; send yourself a prompt to remind you to journal. I journal on Sunday before (or during) my religious services. That day and time of day works perfectly with my schedule. I journal for five minutes or thirty minutes; it just depends on my mood. This is the time that I also read from my journal. It's my best therapy. I store my journal in my bedside drawer so it can be easily located, and is a little private.

What to Journal

My best advice about what to record in your journal is to know your why or north star and focus your entries on your journey toward that why. Weight Watchers uses a neat phrase, "Keep Your Why Close By." Journal entries can include emotions, thoughts and actions. They can be sentences, simple phrases or bullet points. You can include drawings, pasted scraps of important papers or photos. Whatever you choose, entries become priceless when they record your success, your struggles, and your lessons learned as you travel toward what's most important to you.

This spring I hiked Delicate Arch with my young nephew and his fiancé. When I journaled about the event, I realized this is why I want to LiVe Well. I want to be able to hike Arches National Park or Zions Park with my family for many years to come. This insight led me to sign up for a summer Pilates class that I've discovered is just the right strength training for me. Journaling really works!

I'd love to learn other tips or suggestions from you on how journaling helps you LiVe Well.

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