

e-tips...

to help you Live Well

## Three Ways a Journal Can Enhance Your Life



Some of my greatest treasures are my journals. I've kept them as a child, a young adult, a college student, a missionary and an aging adult. As an introvert, journals are my therapeutic place to reveal my feelings of joy, despair and everything in between. I write about my frustrations and accomplishments. Lists of experiences serve to conjure up memories that would be lost without the written prompt. Sometimes I even draw pictures of what can only be expressed with squiggles, dots and connecting lines. And it's pretty funny to see how my handwriting has transformed over the years.

So what is the value of this precious stack of oddly matched notebooks? I've discovered three valuable reasons to journal.

First, journaling allows you to understand yourself better.

Something magical happens as you nudge your emotions to move from your heart, up to your brain and then down through your fingertips to the ink on the paper. This process provides a slight bit of distance that increases clarity and understanding of yourself and the situations of your life.

Second, journaling reminds you of the little details of your life.

Without my experience list, I would totally forget daily tender mercies, moments of wonder in nature, loving gestures from my friends and family and accomplishments that I too quickly put behind me. This list reminds me to celebrate and give myself credit for what I've done. And that's crucial for me because I tend to look only ahead to the mountains left to climb rather than behind at the rivers I've crossed.

Third, journaling helps you see that you're stronger than you think.

A key to using a growth mindset is to know you can do hard things- and what better way of giving yourself proof is to read **your** story of resilience and fortitude? My journals document that at the time of a difficulty, I'm an expert victim. My wailing and whining screams up from the pages. But with documented recovery time, I see how I bounce back, higher and stronger. Three or four crucial experiences in my life, documented in my journals, give me confidence that I can overcome whatever life has to throw at me.

Barack Obama said, "In my life, writing has been an important exercise to clarify what I believe, what I see, what I care about, what my deepest values are. The process of converting a jumble of thoughts into coherent sentences makes you ask tougher questions."

Next e-tip I'll share ideas on how to start, restart or re-energize your journaling experience.

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**Intermountain Employee Assistance Program e-tips are messages that teach, remind, and inspire in our journey to live well.**

