

Five 10-Minute Journaling Exercises to Deepen Self Awareness and Get Unstuck

STANCE

Drop the “Dear Diary” approach.

Journaling for personal growth isn't about recounting your day to an imaginary friend.

Writing is powerful because it forces you to slow down (you think faster than you can write). It requires that you synthesize your experience into words. And reading written words engages different parts of you than thinking thoughts.

The next time you feel stuck, see what happens if instead of distracting yourself or calling a friend, you pull out pen and paper. Here are five short exercises I use to learn more about myself and get moving again.

Exercise #1

Daily Prompts for Any Occasion

At the End of the Day

Learn from what happened to deepen your self-awareness.

In Your Journal

1. What was the most challenging part of my day and why?
2. How did I deal with it?
3. What does that tell me about myself?

At the Start of the Day

Get unstuck and move on your goals.

In Your Journal

1. What is my goal or intention for today?
2. Why is it so important to me?
3. What part of that must I accomplish in order to feel like this day was well spent?
4. What's the cost if I don't?

Exercise #2

When You Have Competing Voices or an Internal Conflict

Hear them out. Ask each side of you:

1. What exactly do you want?
2. Why is it important?
3. What are you most afraid of?

Reread your answers and underline signs of:

- Pleasing others
- Fears or limiting beliefs
- Self judgment or criticism

Circle signs of:

- Optimism, hopefulness, confidence
- Phrases that energize or move you
- Things you've never said/written before

The voice with the most underlines could be your **protector or critic**. It's just doing its job, but it can't tell the future nor the difference between good/bad change.

The voice with the most circles could be your **authentic self or intuition**. It's trying to show you more possibility and point you towards choice.

Describe a compromise that honors both.

Exercise #3

When You Just Experienced Something Really Hard

Instead of pushing it away, let yourself remember it.*

For at least 3 minutes, put pen to paper and just write. Outburst onto the page.

When the swell of emotion subsides, reread what you wrote from the perspective of a good friend or benevolent figure.

Answer these questions from that perspective:

1. What is this person yearning for?
2. What's especially poignant about that?
3. What does this person most need to hear or remember about themselves?

Try to really take in the words of your benevolent figure. Notice how you feel as you sit with them.

Write down what comes up and repeat questions 1-3 if needed.

** Don't do this if you just experienced extreme trauma. Seek help from a licensed professional.*

Exercise #4

When You're Annoyed or Frustrated with Someone Else

Describe them.

Write down a few words or phrases.

Zoom out.

From a third person's perspective, what do you seem to be doing to each other?

Virtually every conflict we have with someone is one that has happened to us before.

See the pattern from your past.

1. Who do they remind you of?
2. How did they annoy or frustrate you?
3. What was really going on back then that might also be going on now?

Break the pattern.

What are ways you can disrupt the pattern by doing something different than you're used to?

If you're used to shutting down or avoiding, try opening up and sharing. If you're used to fighting, try listening.

Exercise #5

Prompts to Reconnect with Yourself

Get present.

- What do I hear, taste, smell, sense?
- Where is my body tense, tight or hot?
- What's the atmosphere like of the space around me?

Try to sense and describe subtle details and nuances to your experience of the present moment.

Get curious.

- What does disconnection feel like?
- What weather pattern do I feel most similar to right now?
- What's it like to be here writing in my journal right now?

Let your hand write freely with as little thought or interpretation as possible.

Accept everything without judgment.

Hi, I'm Eddie.

I help Asians in tech design their lives around who they really are, so they can actually enjoy the success they worked so hard to achieve.

You took the practical route to make good on the implicit promise you made to your family and culture, but now you feel stuck and unfulfilled. You wish you could “transcend” the forces pulling on you to be dutiful and practical, just like the self-help books say to do, but you can't.

Thing is, there's nothing wrong with those values. They helped your family survive for generations, and they are helping *you* survive today. Instead of fighting it, integrate it.

Find out how at stancecoaching.com



Love,
Eddie