

## The Benefits of Journaling on Your Mental Health



Some years back, I experienced some personal issues that left me feeling depressed and hopeless. After months of crying, regretting and generally just feeling bad, I decided to start journaling.

Through journaling, I was able to kick start my recovery process from depression and finally got better.

Journaling is a very useful way to deal with mental health issues and improve your overall wellbeing. Although it is not a one-stop solution for all mental health issues, it can be a very major part of the healing and recovery process.

## **What Does Journaling Mean?**

This is the process of writing or jotting down your thoughts, ideas, experiences etc in a journal. Journaling is a unique form of writing in which individuals can put their feelings and emotions into words.

## **Is There a Difference Between Journaling and Writing in a Diary?**

Yes. There is a difference between writing in a journal and writing in a diary.

Diary Writing is completely different from writing in a journal. What you write in your diary are majorly daily activities, notes, dates, records of information you want to remember etc. However, writing in a journal is more personal. It involves putting your feelings, perspectives, fears, goals into words.

Although a diary and a journal may seem very similar, their content makes all the difference. The contents of a journal usually lack focus and are more personal since you are letting go of your feelings and writing as ideas come into your mind.

**NOTE:** Many people are keeping journals in the name of having a diary. However, a diary is completely different from a journal.

## **5 Reasons Why You Should Have a Journal**

- It will help you reflect on yourself
- Writing in a journal will help you think more deeply and clearly.
- Journaling helps to calm your mind.
- It helps you to let go of your worries, doubts and fears.
- Writing in a journal brings clarity and a new perspective to a situation or experience.

## **Examples of Things to Write on in Your Journal**

If you have never had a journal before, you might be wondering what you would write in it. Below is a list of ideas you can write in your journal:

- ❖ Personal feelings on a subject or an experience.
- ❖ New Insights and perspectives.
- ❖ Personal goals and plans.
- ❖ Mistakes and failures.
- ❖ Records of experiences.

- ❖ Things you want to improve upon.
- ❖ Your fears and doubts.
- ❖ Things you are grateful for.

**NOTE:** There are no specific rules of what you can write on in your journal. What matters is that you are being honest with your feelings and being honest with yourself.

I write because it makes me feel like someone's listening or maybe I am finally listening to myself.

-Shubhangi Swarup

## How Do You Start Journaling?



Journaling can seem like a very difficult activity to start but just like exercising, the more you do it, the easier it becomes. Here are 4 steps a beginner can take to start journaling:

### Step One: Get a Journal

This is the first thing you need to do. It could be a physical book or it could be notepad on your phone or laptop. You could also download journal apps like [Day one Journal](#), [Journey](#), [5 minutes Journal](#) etc.

### **Step Two: Start Small**

Journaling regularly can seem very difficult at first. It is therefore very important that you start small at the beginning. You could start by writing short sentences or paragraphs until it becomes a habit. However, it is very important that you are expressing your feelings and emotions without reserve.

### **Step Three: Be Consistent**

To get the optimum results from journaling, you must stay consistent. It is not an activity to do in a week and then continue some months later. So, try to stay consistent as the long term benefits of journaling would be a major boost to your mental state and your overall wellbeing.

### **Step Four: Do not be Afraid**

If there is a rule for journaling, then it would be to always be honest with yourself. While journaling, you should be writing down your honest feelings without holding back. It defeats the purpose of journaling if you pretend about your true emotions and feelings.

## **What are The Benefits That Journaling Brings to Your Mental Health?**

Journaling brings many benefits to your general wellbeing but its impact on your mental health is even more noticeable.

**1. It helps you to let go of suppressed and pent up emotions:** Suppressing your emotions or feelings can be very dangerous. It could lead to drug use, alcoholism etc. When you write in a journal, you are able to release any repressed emotions you may have relating to an experience.

Journaling is a very useful tool for individuals with traumatic experiences. When you let go of your emotions through journaling, you are able to process your feelings and start healing.

**2. It helps you regulate your mood:** Journaling helps you control your mood levels. You are able to analyse your experience and make a conclusion. This helps to keep your mood stable and improve your mental health.

**3.It kick starts your healing and recovery process:** For persons suffering from depression, anxiety and other mental health issues, journaling is a good way to begin the process of getting better. By writing down your feelings, emotions and honest thoughts, you are able to trace the source of your pain and start recovering.

**4.It reduces stress and anxiety:** A [WHO](#) statistics revealed that an estimated 301 million people in the world suffer from anxiety disorders. This means that 3.5% of the global population has experienced or will experience anxiety at one point in their life.

Through journaling, you are able to lower your feelings of stress and anxiety contributing to your overall wellbeing.

**5. Journaling is a good way to stay grateful:** When you write down your feelings and thoughts, you are forced to look clearly at your situation/experience and the people around you.

It helps you realize that you have a lot of things to be grateful for. This way of thinking increases the release of happy and pleasure chemicals (serotonin and dopamine) into your brain which ultimately leads to a better mental state.

**6. Journaling is a mindfulness practice:** Mindfulness is a state of being present or aware of the moment. It involves totally focusing on your present activity, emotions and thoughts.

There are several types of mindfulness practices such as mindful eating, mindful walking, mindful meditation, mindful journaling etc.

When you write in a journal, you focus all your thoughts and emotions in a single medium. This helps to calm your mind and improve your mental health.

## **Key Takeaway**

Journaling is a very helpful activity to improve your mental wellbeing. To reduce stress, anxiety and other mental health issues, you should consider getting a journal or downloading a journal app.