



magazine™
Sharing Energy - Transforming the World

Subscribe At
www.energymagazineonline.com



Journaling to Heal Body, Mind and Soul

Mari McCarthy

There is no magical remedy that can mend all wounds or heal all ailments; that type of cure-all is the stuff of science fiction or fairy tales. However, you can easily access a holistic healing tool known for its remarkable mental and physical health outcomes: journaling. It costs virtually nothing and requires minimal equipment — yet has the power to transform lives. I have personally experienced the life-changing health benefits of journal writing and have also witnessed the stories of others in my therapeutic journaling community.

From James Pennebaker,¹⁵ the psychologist who pioneered writing therapy, to Julia Cameron,¹⁶ the author of the self-help guide, *The Artist's Way*, medical researchers and creative professionals alike have seen the value in putting pen to paper for decades. Journaling allows you to improve your mental clarity and our physical resilience, leading to wide-ranging benefits including reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression,¹⁷ faster recovery time from injury¹⁸ and strengthened immune systems.¹⁹

Journaling has healing properties for anyone who commits to it. The top three reasons for adopting journaling as a daily practice are:

Stress Reduction: When you journal about stressful events or painful emotions, you create a safe space where you can explore complex feelings. You give

yourself an outlet for honest and healthy expression. Find out where you are on the spectrum between ease and stress.

Relief from Physical Pain: Writing about physical ailments can help manage or minimize your pain, uncovering emotional distress, environmental triggers and coping mechanisms.

Release from Inner Conflict: If you tend to dwell on problems, regrets or dilemmas, journaling can be a helpful way to untangle your thoughts. By writing down your thoughts and feelings, you can gain perspective and identify patterns, potential lessons and action steps.

Regular journaling can lead to long-lasting mental and physical health benefits — from courageous counseling to inner strength to emotional release.

When you need someone to talk to — who will listen without judgment or criticism — open your journal and start writing. Empty your emotions onto the page without filtering them. Say exactly what you feel and what is bothering you, and stay open to any solutions or actions that arise while you are writing. This is journaling as a form of courageous counseling.

Antoinette turned to journaling when she was diagnosed with Stage I — and later, Stage IV — breast

cancer. She channeled the fear, rage and doubt from her illness into her writing, calling her journal “a private on-call therapist.” In those private pages, she had an unfaltering ally and listener. She could say anything she felt, without guilt or shame. During the most difficult time in her life, Antoinette did not feel brave. Journaling gave her the courage to ask questions, express desires, face fears and stay connected to loved ones. She continues to journal daily and her entries are about more than just her battle with cancer. She gives herself permission to rant and complain, but she also writes stories, records observations and expresses gratitude.

Finally, you can gain a better understand of your emotions through journaling. Complete this fill-in-the-blank exercise in your journal. Write: *When I think about ____, I feel really ____*. Pick a topic that has been on your mind lately, and do not stop at your surface-level observations. Ask: *Why do I feel this way?* Keep asking this question until you start to uncover deeper answers.

Ollie suffered from anxiety for years. His childhood was chaotic, he battled addiction at a young age and he lost his mother to suicide when just 19 years old. Several years after his mother’s death, Ollie had a

Regular journaling can lead to long-lasting mental and physical health benefits – from courageous counseling to inner strength to emotional release.

Have you ever considered you can build inner strength through journaling? Set a simple goal (for today, this week or even the next hour), and write about it in your journal. Describe what obstacles you are encountering in working toward your goal. What are you feeling right now? What does it tell you about your journey? How will you feel if you stick to your goal? Think of your journal as your accountability partner and cheerleader, and internalize that support.

Over a decade ago, Deb almost lost her life to alcoholism. Her heart nearly stopped due to an extremely high blood alcohol level, and she ended up in a treatment center to recover from her addiction. As part of her therapy, Deb began journaling, which she credits as a key element in her journey to sobriety. Her journal gave her a secure space in which she was able to write candidly about her feelings and experiences. Through journaling, she realized her dependence on alcohol had been her way to cope with an abusive relationship. Over time, Deb began using her journal as a tool to help her create the life she wanted. She journals daily to deal with the ups and downs of recovery and to make plans for her future.

mental breakdown and finally sought professional help. Throughout his childhood, his mother had told him never to tell anyone about what was going on at home — a directive that caused him to bottle up his emotions for years. Ollie’s therapist recommended that he start journaling, which he said changed his life forever. He began expressing all the complicated feelings he had kept inside since childhood, and it was such a relief to finally release them. Ollie now advocates for other men to develop a journaling practice because they are so often conditioned not to talk about their emotions.

Journaling is one path for healing the body, mind and soul. It is available to you 24/7, and its only requirements are time and persistence. Try adopting a journaling practice in your daily routine to see its positive impact in your own life. €



To learn more about author Mari McCarthy, please visit www.CreateWriteNow.com



References

1. Pennebaker, James W., and Sandra K. Beall. (1986). Confronting a traumatic event: Toward an understanding of inhibition and disease. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/19415586_Confronting_a_Traumatic_Event_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Inhibition_and_Disease.
2. Green, Penelope. (2019). Julia Cameron Wants You to Do Your Morning Pages. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/02/style/julia-cameron-the-artists-way.html>.
3. Mugerwa, Soul, and Holden, John D. (2012). Writing therapy: a new tool for general practice? *British Journal of General Practice*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3505408/>.
4. Rodriguez, Tori. (2013). Writing Can Help Injuries Heal Faster. *Scientific American*. Retrieved from <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/writing-can-help-injuries-heal-faster/>.
5. Murray, Bridget. (2002). Writing to heal. *American Psychological Association*. Retrieved from: <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun02/writing.aspx>.