

Journaling: A Practice to Navigate Uncertainty

“I reach for the page... I reach for it like a friend: for company, for counsel. I tell my journal what knots I’m in and together we untangle the threads. I murmur my dreams and together we arc towards them.”
-Suleika Jaouad, Between Two Kingdoms: Memoir of a Life Interrupted

Why Journaling?

Trauma and crisis can narrow our scope of vision, pushing us into urgency and survival mode where we oftentimes lose access to our full self (e.g. joy, play, resource, identity).

Journaling is a practice that can support us in slowing down, giving our mind and body a way to come back to connection with ourselves, offer us grounding and greater awareness in a way that frees up a broader view, and is an avenue that can illuminate the hopeful possibility of what we might bring into being.

Journaling can be a practice that helps us cultivate “Mindsight.” “Mindsight” is a term coined by Dr. Dan Siegel to describe our human capacity to focus our attention that allows us to see the internal workings of our own minds. (e.g. the difference between “I am sad” versus “I feel sad”)

In this way, journaling allows us space to shift out of the autopilot of ingrained behaviors and habitual responses. It can support us to “name and frame” the emotions we are experiencing, rather than being overwhelmed by them. Journaling can help us organize the data that is coming in, to template a way to be with our minds that gives us access to resource. And all of this builds resilience by holding the both/and in a connected way– the pain (struggle or question) and the supportive resource around the pain.

Different Approaches to Journaling

- Self-inquiry (Best and Worst)
- Stream of Conscious
- Bullet Journaling (lists)
- Gratitude Journal
- One line a day
- Morning Pages (the Artist’s Way)
- Unsent Letter
- Art (collage, photo, mementos)
- Prompts for reflection

Prompts for Reflection

- 1) What in the last year are you proud of?
- 2) What did this year leave you yearning for?
- 3) What’s causing you anxiety?
- 4) What resources, skills, and practices can you rely on in the coming year?
- 5) What are your wildest, most harebrained ideas and dreams?

Resources for Further Reflection

Mindsight by Dan Siegel

Bird by Bird by Anne Lamott

“Why I Write” by Terry Tempest Williams

The Isolation Journals <https://www.theisolationjournals.com/>