

30-DAY JOURNALING GUIDE

LET'S EXPLORE TOGETHER

not so small talk

DAY 1

ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR EMOTIONS

before we begin this journey, it's important to know, consider, and understand where you're at and where you want to be. emotions can act as a source of information that allows you to recognize and make sense of how you're feeling. putting a name to your feelings will help you better manage and deal with them effectively. when you're able to acknowledge, accept, and experience what you're feeling, you can view it with more clarity, and reflect on it to make decisions that support and benefit you.

exercise:

- in this current moment, i feel...
 - try to come up with two more words that describe how you are feeling
 - what is triggering this emotion?
- i want to experience more....and less...
 - for this to happen, i can....
 - how will this positively influence me?

DAY 2

UNDERSTANDING YOUR EMOTIONS

recognizing and experiencing our emotions can be a daunting task for some, but it is essential for healing and wellness. instead of releasing judgment on ourselves for what we think or how we feel, treat yourself with kindness. be compassionate, permitting your emotions permission to inform you. allow yourself time to observe how you feel. notice your feelings, shifting moods, and their causes. what emotion have you been experiencing the most?

exercise:

- write as if your emotion was speaking to you
 - lately, i've been feeling...
 - try to identify what's triggering this emotion
 - when this happens, i react...because...

questions to consider:

how can i act in response to this emotion that will better support and serve me? is there something within my control to change? is there something i need to accept?

DAY 3

IDENTIFYING YOUR NEEDS

beyond your basic needs, you have personal needs that must be met for you to be your best self. when those needs are neglected, you might feel frustrated, tired, overwhelmed, or some other form of uneasiness. questioning is a powerful tool you can use to gain more clarity about our current state and identify and vocalize what you require. you're then able to respond to those needs through positive actions that best serve you. so what is it you need?

exercise:

- think about how you're feeling
- ask yourself what you need regarding those feelings
 - explain your reasoning as if you were talking to a friend
- consider one thing you could do today that would help you meet one of those needs positively

questions to consider:

- what would i like to experience more of? how can i create space for that? what's my love language? am I showing myself love through that language?

DAY 4

HANDLING UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

when you place unrealistic expectations on yourself, you create unnecessary pressure and set yourself up for disappointment. you may draw false conclusions that cause negative feelings, thoughts, and actions. today you'll explore these expectations so you can adjust and create healthier ones that better support and serve you.

exercise:

- write down 1-10 significant expectations you currently hold yourself to
 - what would you say to a close friend who holds those same beliefs?
 - look at each statement and consider whether or not it's beneficial
 - (expectation) is helping me become the person i want to be because...
 - (expectation) is working against me because...
 - (expectation) makes me think/feel positively/negatively because...
 - now it's time to identify your motivation
 - who/what is influencing these beliefs? does (expectation) support what i value?
 - now it's time to forgive yourself and release that unrealistic expectation
 - i forgive you for...

DAY 5

LEARNING TO LET GO

letting go is an act of acceptance, permitting yourself to come to terms with reality instead of resisting it. acknowledging limitations, disappointment, faults, hurt, and other unpleasant situations and surrendering to what is. when you release what you thought something was supposed to be, you're able to embrace the present moment for all that it is.

exercise:

- divide your page into four columns
 - label the first column "name it"
 - think about what's weighing you down and needs to be surrendered
 - label the second column "feel it"
 - what you're afraid of happening if you relinquish control?
 - label the third column "imagine it"
 - how would you feel if you let go of what you're holding onto
 - label the fourth column "consider it"
 - consider what is within your control and set your intentions. release what's out of your control and let go of the outcome

DAY 6

KNOWING YOUR SEASON

experiencing transition is a natural part of life. just as earth experiences different seasons, your life goes through phases. understanding where you are in life will help you journey through it healthily. there is a season for everything. each one is of equal importance and depends on the others. If things don't take their course in winter, you can't experience the beauty of spring. although you can't control where you are in life, you can determine what you do while you're there.

exercise:

- take a moment and to reflect on what season of life you're in at the current moment
 - spring - it's a new beginning, and things are being planted
 - summer - seeds have been planted, you're learning to protect/grow them even as the storms of life come
 - fall - it's harvest time, and you're now reaping what's been planted and cultivated
 - winter - it's a time of rest, regaining strength

questions to consider:

- what can i learn? what can i do now to help me grow and mature as a person?

DAY 7

LETTING IT ALL OUT

one way to process your day, week, or month, is through a stream of consciousness writing. let your mind wander and put whatever thoughts come to your head on paper - in a natural and unstructured way. you can write with as much or as little detail. don't overthink it; just let it flow. write uninhibitedly, without filtering or judging what comes to the surface. let it be messy. once you're finished writing, you may choose to read what you wrote. this is a choice with no right or wrong decision. you can ask yourself basic questions as if you're a friend trying to understand better what's just been communicated. then ask yourself the harder, deeper questions. you may make some connections or gain insight into how you're feeling and why. but don't put pressure on yourself to reach some epiphany or breakthrough. the goal is to free your thoughts.

prompts:

- write the first thing that comes to mind
- write about anything that happened today, big or small
- in this present moment, i feel...

DAY 8

FORGIVING YOURSELF (AND OTHERS)

forgiving yourself and others is an integral part of the healing process. it's letting go of the blame, guilt, or shame that is associated with the painful experience. when you choose to forgive, you give yourself permission to let go of what is weighing you down and holding you back.

exercise:

- describe a hurtful moment in your life
 - how did this alter my view of myself and others?
- i forgive myself for...
 - how can i show myself compassion in this situation?
- i forgive (other party) for...

questions to consider:

- how can i let go of the beliefs i hold (because of this experience) that don't serve me?
- how can i look at this painful experience from a new perspective?
- what has this experience taught me? how has it made me a better person?
- is there space for reconciliation? if so, what would that look like?

DAY 9

CHANGING EMOTIONAL HABITS

i'm sure you've heard this before, but we are creatures of habit. it's true. we often rely on default habits, both physical and emotional. but if you realize your emotional patterns, you're able to introduce a new thought or feeling to replace the unwanted one.

exercise:

- divide your page into three columns
 - label the first column "think it"
 - choose an emotion you'd like to experience more of
 - describe a time when you last felt that emotion
 - label the second column "imagine it"
 - picture yourself doing things that will produce this positive emotion
 - label the third column "practice it"
 - think about specific actions you can take to experience the desired emotion
 - i can cultivate and nurture this feeling by...

DAY 10

DEFINING SUCCESS

it's empowering to define what success looks like for you, instead of allowing society or someone else to describe it for you. it fuels hope and helps you to see the unknown as a place of possibility. when you take the time to consider your current pursuits and reflect on your beliefs and values, you uncover the actual reason you want and pursue certain things. once this happens, you're then able to discover what your definition of success is.

exercise:

- what am i pursuing in my life?
 - think about who/what influences your need to pursue those things
 - determine whether they align with what you truly value and believe
- describe what a meaningful life looks like to you
 - this is significant to me because...
- consider your "why"
 - what about (what you previously stated) is important to me?

DAY 11

ALIGNING YOUR ACTIONS

once you realize and believe that you have the ability to create change, you can think about what you want your life to resemble. there are so many dreams waiting to be actualized, but it's challenging to know how to make them come to fruition. that's why it's important to write those aspirations down. the transformation will take place once you identify your goals and set intentions.

exercise:

- choose one area of your life and describe your end goal
 - think about who you want to be and what you want to see happen
- my current values and beliefs will help guide me toward this goal because...
- think of practical steps you can take that will enable you to meet this goal
 - by consistently doing these things, I can/will...

questions to consider:

- what's one thing i can do today to take a step toward a goal?

DAY 12

SPEAKING TO YOURSELF

what you say to yourself matters because it affects how you feel about yourself and influences your actions. it's important to send yourself positive messages that support and benefit you. one way to do this is through self-talk. speaking to yourself can be helpful when it's realistic, positive, uplifting, or soothing. you have the power to choose how you talk to yourself and what you say matters. when you say things in a kind and supportive manner, you build confidence, optimism, and resilience.

exercise:

- what i tend to say to myself sounds like...
 - this is something i would/wouldn't say to a friend because...
 - how accurate are these statements?
- speak to yourself as if you were a close friend weighing in on the situation
 - what you're saying to yourself is...

questions to consider:

- how can i change what i say so that what i say is more gentle? is what i say to myself reasonable and realistic?

DAY 13

GROWING IN UNDERSTANDING

self-reflection will help you find the balance your life needs. by zooming out and looking at the entire picture, you can become more aware of yourself and identify where your energy is going. when you make time, you can better see what's working and what's not and can determine what to maintain and what to change. so let's recognize, make connections, and respond thoughtfully to what is receiving too much attention and what is being neglected.

exercise:

- create a list of major life categories (e.g. health, relationships, finances, spirituality)
- identify what areas you're doing well in vs. areas that need more attention
 - think about where you're placing most of your energy
- pick 1-2 "areas in need" to focus on for the next few weeks or months
 - what steps do you need to take to move forward and improve those areas?

questions to consider:

- what is most important to me? are my actions aligned with my priorities? what can i adjust, change, or improve?

DAY 14

LEARNING FROM THE LESSONS

sometimes you end up in situations where you catch yourself thinking, "this feels very familiar." these are pivotal moments where it's important to do some self-reflection and to be honest with yourself. there are valuable lessons to be learned from reoccurring situations. if you don't acknowledge and learn from them, you will continue to revisit them - in different places and with different people. if you change your perspective, you'll be able to recognize the patterns and learn from them.

prompt:

- think about a problem that seems to be reoccurring
 - this makes me feel...
 - i notice myself saying...
 - what I tend to do is...this isn't benefiting me because...
 - i could improve this situation by...

questions to consider:

- what issues continue to reappear in various places of my life? what could (fill in the blank) be trying to teach me?

DAY 16

EXTENDING COMPASSION

self-compassion is treating yourself with the same kindness, understanding, and support you would extend to someone you loved. although we can be hard on ourselves, having self-compassion is necessary for you to accept all that is you.

exercise:

- think about something that makes you feel insecure or makes you feel inadequate
 - notice how you feel when you think about this thing and allow yourself to experience the emotion
- write a letter to an imaginary close friend who is dealing with the same insecurity or feelings of inadequacy
 - you know and understand them completely
- once you're finished writing, you may read this letter at a later time, but this time apply it to yourself

questions to consider:

- what would you say to them from the perspective of unlimited compassion? what words of support would you give them?

DAY 15

UNCOVERING HIDING PLACES

we all have feelings and underlying beliefs that we're not enough in a specific area of our lives. when we begin to feel this way, we can create space to test these long-held beliefs and take steps to alter them.

exercise:

- think about what you feel insecure about
 - write out the thoughts and beliefs this insecurity produces
- consider who/what helped to shape these thoughts and beliefs
 - explore the validity of what you uncover
- this is not entirely realistic/rational because...
 - a more loving and supportive expectation for myself would be...
- when i feel this way, i tend to (describe your actions)...
 - instead of doing this, i can...

questions to consider:

- how could i view this from a fresh perspective? what might i regret if i allow my insecurities to influence my decisions?

DAY 17

CELEBRATING THE VICTORIES

we are all on a unique journey and in the process of becoming. but many times, we focus on "to do" lists and what we still have to accomplish. as you progress, it's important to remind yourself of all the great things you've already done and are doing, whether big or small. when you celebrate the wins along the way, you give yourself encouragement, motivation, and a little confidence booster. so for today, let's celebrate your victories and focus on what you've already accomplished.

exercise:

- make a list of everything you've done over the past day, week, month or even year
 - you can list anything you want no matter how significant because a victory is still a victory
 - notice how you feel as you create this list

questions to consider:

- how do you feel after thinking about all that you've done and how far you have come?
what are you proudest of?

DAY 18

KNOWING YOUR STRENGTHS

sometimes you overlook or take for granted what you're good at. we focus on the qualities we like least about ourselves and the characteristics we wish we had. but when is the last time you recognized and celebrated your strengths? how would this influence the way you thought and acted? let's take a moment to consider these things.

exercise:

- write about what you enjoy doing and what you're good at
 - consider the following categories: intellectual, emotional, relational, social, etc.
 - notice how you feel as you're writing
- think about how can you use these strengths to support yourself
- explore ways these strengths could help and benefit others

questions to consider:

- how can you create space to do more of these things? how could you incorporate more (insert strength) into your life?

DAY 19

FOCUSING ON THE GOOD

the relationship that you have with yourself is crucial. to cultivate a healthy relationship with yourself, you have to become more intentional. one way to do this is by becoming curious and exploring your thoughts and feelings. doing so can lead to self-understanding, a change in action, and personal growth.

exercise:

- think of an area you would like to grow in
 - write an incomplete sentence and add 6-10 different endings
 - example: (gratitude) if i were more grateful today, i would...
 - ending: ...notice myself complaining less
 - ending: ...probably be happier
 - here's another example
 - example: (awareness) if i was a little more accepting of my emotions...
 - ending: ... i probably wouldn't be so hard on myself

DAY 20

MEASURING YOUR SELF-WORTH

self-worth is how you see yourself without thinking about external factors. building that self-value comes through self-understanding, self-acceptance, and self-love. when you get real with yourself, you get to know yourself better. you're able to see yourself with more clarity, and you can then learn to become at peace with what you find. and remember, external factors don't determine how valuable or worthy you are as a person.

exercise:

- imagine waking up tomorrow, and all you had was yourself. what would be of value?
- what i see makes me feel...
- i am still worthy because...

questions to consider:

- what would you struggle with the most? am i at peace with what i see? how would i see myself in the world? how would others see me?

DAY 21

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

you can cultivate gratitude by journaling all the things you're grateful for. by verbalizing what you're thankful for, you affirm the good things in your life. now, this doesn't mean that you ignore reality, you are allowing yourself the opportunity to focus on the present moment and all the blessings that have been given to you- people, experiences, opportunities, things, and anything else that you appreciate. writing out what you're grateful for helps to train your mind to see the good, even amid challenging situations. so let's focus on the positive and keep that at the forefront of your thoughts.

exercise:

- list 5-10 things that you're grateful for (people, experiences, things, etc.)
 - describe each thing you listed
 - explain why you're thankful for each one

DAY 22

ACCEPTING THE WHOLE YOU

when you accept your present self, you can explore every aspect of yourself without judgment and embrace all that you discover. this exercise is to help you understand yourself in the current moment and connect with yourself lovingly and compassionately. you will have the opportunity to explore your innermost thoughts and feelings, gaining deeper insights into areas where self-forgiveness, self-trust, and self-compassion are needed. let's address where you're currently at, acknowledge what you cannot change, and adjust your self-talk to embark on a kinder path.

exercise:

- make a t-chart
 - title the left side "i am" and the right side "but i also"
 - example: i am strong | have a soft heart
 - example: i am whole | desire deep relationships in my life
 - example: i am still learning | have learned so much from my past

DAY 23

CHALLENGING PESSIMISM

no matter how hard you try to remain positive, negative thoughts might still emerge. these thoughts are messages you repeatedly send yourself that produce negative emotions and lower your self-esteem. although negative thoughts may rise to the surface of your mind, you can learn to replace those messages with positive statements. these new thoughts can help you keep a more positive, realistic outlook.

exercise:

- write a negative thought you've recently had
 - cross out that thought and write the opposite statement
 - example: ~~i guess i'm not worthy of love and a healthy, supportive relationship~~
i'm worthy of love and will experience a healthy, supportive relationship

questions to consider:

- when i think these thoughts what feelings emerge? what would someone say to me if they heard this thought? how accurate is this statement?

DAY 24

LOVING YOU

you're amazing. i hope you know that. we can be our own worst critics, but we all have admirable qualities. there are things you know and don't know about yourself that others value. sometimes you might be overly hard on yourself and undervalue certain aspects of your character or miss positive facets of your personality noticeable to others. there is power in viewing yourself from an outside perspective. you might just be surprised by what you realize if you take a step back and observe yourself from someone else's eyes.

prompt:

- try to imagine what a stranger would think about you, someone who has an unbiased opinion
 - what would they say about you?
 - think about what you might need to hear in this present moment

questions to consider:

- what do they admire about you? how are you different from other people? what would be their positive twist on what you're self-conscious about?

DAY 25

PERSONIFYING YOUR EMOTIONS

your emotions seek to inform you. whether wanted or unwanted, you can choose to acknowledge, listen to, and learn from it. one way to do this is by separating your emotion and giving it its own identity. don't ignore it or fight it, allow it to speak to you. when you stop and listen, you can then decide if it's useful or leading you astray. if it's unhelpful, you can release the negative emotion, allowing space for a new, more positive feeling to emerge. but remember, your thoughts are just thoughts. they appear for some time, but they don't have to stick around forever. you can learn to control your emotions so they don't end up controlling you.

exercise:

- choose an emotion that you have been experiencing the most lately
 - pretend that emotion is a character in your head who has come to visit
- write what it would say to you
 - example: "oh, hey (name the emotion). what's going on?.. why are you here? what are you trying to tell me?"
- this may sound silly to you, but try thanking the emotion for what it's trying to say to you, then let it go

DAY 26

DISCOVERING YOUR COMMUNITY

there are times in our lives when we feel alone. even though you have supportive relationships in your life, it might be challenging to turn to those people in times of need. one way to support yourself is to identify your needs and think about the people in your life who can help to meet those needs. so let's take a moment to identify your support system and name the people in your life who make you feel loved and supported. but please remember that quality trumps quantity. the importance of your support system is not based on the number of people you're able to identify.

exercise:

- picture yourself back in high school and creating superlatives for your friends and family
 - think about what you might need help with, then choose a person who is "most likely" to meet that need
 - example: most likely to make me laugh when i'm feeling down (person's name)
 - example: most likely to give me the best advice based on my wellbeing
 - example: most likely to tell me the hard truths that i need to hear

DAY 27

BEING PROUD OF YOU

we celebrate a lot of things and people in life, but when is the last time you celebrated yourself? instead of focusing on what you're striving towards, let's take a moment to embrace the present. acknowledge how far you've come and how much you've already accomplished. extending self-compassion is something you learn to exercise and develop. so when moments of self-doubt arise, you can remind yourself that you're special and you're capable of accomplishing whatever you put your mind to.

exercise:

- imagine a close friend or family member was writing a speech to celebrate a recent milestone in your life
- write a speech (in 3rd person) recalling this event, your journey to this point, and your growth

questions to consider:

- what uplifting words would they say? what does this accomplishment mean to you? what does it mean to those around you? if there were any setbacks, what did they teach you? who would give the speech? who would be in the room listening?

DAY 28

ENGAGING IN INNER DIALOGUE

we all engage in inner dialogue that either supports or hinders our growth. your inner critic is the negative voice inside you that keeps you feeling small and unworthy. but your inner counselor is the positive voice that offers words of wisdom and encouragement. for today, let's become more aware of this dialogue and explore our underlying shame or fears.

exercise:

- write out a dialogue that your inner critic and inner counselor would have
 - write freely, allowing your inner critic to say whatever comes to mind, then allow your inner counselor to respond to what was said. here's an example:
 - inner critic: "nothing seems to be changing in my life. i feel like i can't do anything right."
 - inner counselor: "it seems like you're hoping things will be different, and you seem to be putting the pressure on yourself to make those changes."
 - inner critic: "exactly. i'm so frustrated with how things are turning out."
 - inner counselor: "i understand how you feel, but this way of thinking doesn't seem to be helping you. can you name one thing you can't change right now and one thing that you can?"

DAY 29

BECOMING A PROBLEM SOLVER

journaling is a great tool to use when you intend to process an event or situation and grow through it. even though you may have thought about what's been weighing on your mind, writing it down may help you see it in a different light and gain a fresh perspective.

exercise:

- write out the problem you're experiencing
- then write as many possible solutions as you can
 - write out everything that comes to mind, no matter how it sounds
- read what you wrote and cross off everything that is emotionally driven, or negative
- look at what's left and think about how it makes you feel
- if everything is crossed off, give yourself some time to sit and then start the process over again until you're able to gain some clarity

questions to consider:

- if i make this decision, would i feel proud of my actions later on? would the outcome give me peace? would this solution honor my boundaries?

DAY 30

RECEIVING A LETTER FROM YOUR FUTURE SELF

practicing self-compassion is a way that we can nurture ourselves. although you always control your circumstances, you can control how you treat yourself. by taking the time to acknowledge the pain, you can then offer yourself the love and support you need. one way to do this is by writing a letter to yourself. you can tap into the emotions you're experiencing while being more objective about your current situation.

exercise:

- think about an aspect of your life that's troubling you
- imagine that your future self wrote you a letter offering love, guidance, and wisdom to your current self
 - write a letter to yourself (in 2nd person) from your future self
 - what would the letter say? dear (insert name),..

questions to consider:

- what words of encouragement would they give? what would they have learned from your current situation? what would your future self be proud of? how would they view or explain your thoughts, feelings, and actions?

YOU DID IT!

YOU HAVE SO MUCH TO BE PROUD OF

as you continue to evolve and expand into unfamiliar spaces, cling to God and lean into His community. Whether your battle is internal or visible, know that you are not alone in this transformation process. We are evolving together.

thank you for being a part of this community.

brittney

donate

let's stay connected