A COMPLETE GUIDE

How to start journaling for self-care

Find your perfect journaling style

My Self-Love Supply

Welcome

Hello and welcome to this complete guide to personal journaling.

II would firstly like to introduce myself - my name is Sofia and I'm the founder here at My Self-Love Supply. Secondly, I want to express how grateful I am that you are part of our community and have decided to commit yourself to bettering your wellness and personal development. Your support means the world and I hope My Self-Love Supply can keep on encouraging you on your self-care journey for many years to come!

About this mini-guide

This guide has been designed into five main sections.

Each section relates to a particular type of journaling that we have identified: **reflective** journaling, **self check-in** journaling, **organisation** journaling, **creative** journaling, and **self-improvement** journaling. Each section is broken down further into very specific journaling techniques, all with different benefits and uses. Within each section, there will be a bunch of printable worksheets and prompt sheets which you can use to take inspiration from and copy into your journal.

This guide will be with you forever, so if you want to take a break for a few days, or come back to it later in life, you can! With that being said, try not to feel too overwhelmed and go at your own pace.

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Introduction to Journaling

What is Journaling?

Many people often have their own preconceived ideas on what journaling involves. The truth is that journaling takes a wide variety of forms and can be used in many different areas of your life. To put things simply, a journal is a place for you to express yourself, organise yourself, heal yourself, relax yourself, improve yourself, or empower yourself. Whatever you need from your life, your journal is there to assist you on the way.

Why Should You Journal?

You could easily list out a thousand benefits of journaling. There are so many ways to journal that there is truly something in it for everyone. With the different types of journaling come different kinds of benefits. As tempting as this may be to practice every form of journaling at the same time, it would be difficult.

To get the most out of your journaling experience you should first set your intentions. This involves identifying positives that want to get out of journaling. Examples of this may include stress relief, better organisation or more positivity. Once you figure out what you most desire, you can then start to choose journaling methods which cater to those benefits. In this E-book, five main branches of journaling have been identified, each with their own set of benefits.

Introduction to Journaling

Here you will find a summary of the advantages to each approach:

Reflective journaling:

Relaxing

Increases self-awareness

Declutters your mind

Self check-in journaling:

Can help in tracking recovery progress

May help reduce symptoms of anxiety

May help manage certain conditions or emotions (e.g. stress)

Organisation journaling:

Improves mental clarity

Increased productivity

Increased efficiency

Better planning

Creative journaling:

Expresses your creativity

Self-improvement journaling:

More motivation

Ability to track progress

Overall wellness

Introduction to Journaling

Another amazing reason to keep a journal is that it allows you to look back and reflect on the past. This could give you hope or motivation during difficult times, vivid memories that you can treasure, or it could just be interesting to see what you were doing a year to the day! It's amazing what we forget as time moves against us. Having the ability to keep hold of otherwise forgotten pieces of our lives is priceless.

Choosing Your Medium

Your journal can come in many different forms. Not just the classic notebook that is typically associated with journaling. A few alternative examples of medium include: phone notes, journaling apps, audio recorder, or a more visual image-based approach like Instagram. Most people tend to naturally be drawn to one of these mediums and will feel most comfortable using it. If you're unsure about which one suits you then just test each of them out for a week.

The most important thing to remember when choosing, is that the medium you use should inspire and motivate you to express yourself on a regular basis. If writing isn't your thing or you're short on time, then making a quick voice memo might be for you. Some people might just love a physical notebook that they can personalise and make their own. Personal tastes vary, so don't feel like you're locked into one particular medium. You might even find it helpful to use more than one.

Journaling apps are also something that is growing in popularity. Many offer a more guided approach, which can include prompts, mood tracking and goal setting. Some also have an extra layer of security to ensure it's kept to your eyes only. You may also like the idea of a more public journal. Something more similar to an online blog. This may help hold you more accountable whilst getting opinions and comments on the things you share which might challenge your thoughts in a positive way.

Reflective Journaling

Reflective journaling is typically what comes to people's mind when journaling is mentioned. Its purpose in to reflect into the past. Normally, this is just a review and analysis of the day past, but reflective journaling can also be used to process further back events or feelings. Reflective journaling is known to be a relieving and therapeutic self-care practice as it allows you to express your thoughts and declutter your mind.

End of day recap (Diary)

Starting a diary is the perfect way to introduce yourself into journaling. A diary is simply a daily record of the events and experiences in your day. Sit down in the evening, cast your mind back over the day and write about what comes to mind. How much you write, what you write, and how you write, is totally up to you!

Things you might like to mention could be:

- Emotions during the day
- People you met
- Conversations with people
- Experiences
- Adventures
- Events
- Things you would have done differently
- Things you did well
- Observations which caught your attention
- World news

To make this more manageable, you could split your day up into three paragraphs: morning, afternoon, and evening. Instead of writing each paragraph all at once at the end of the day you could write it throughout the day. For example, you could write about your morning during your lunch break.

One of the most popular ways to recap your day is by using bullet points. This is commonly known as **bullet journaling** and is a great way to keep your writing short and concise. Each bullet point would be a short statement about your day. This writing style is much less daunting and ideal for introducing you to diary writing. Here's a quick example of what a bullet journal entry could look like:

- *Today was overall really good but I felt super tired this morning*
- *Had a lovely walk along the river and saw some beautiful swans*
- *Cooked myself a new recipe today which tasted a bit too spicy*
- *Nervous for my work meeting tomorrow*
- *Ended the day relaxed and watching Netflix*

People keep a diary for many other reasons than to have a written record of their life. Diary journaling is expressive and relaxing. It allows you to celebrate successes and reflect on failures. It gives you a clearer understanding of how you really feel by offering a platform for you to question and understand yourself. By treating your diary as a close friend, you can vent, open up, release toxic thoughts, and let go of bottled up emotions.

Gratitude Journaling

Gratitude journaling is unique in the sense that you are focusing purely on the positives. As the name may suggest, it's all about reflecting on things in your life that you are grateful for. Daily gratitude is healthy in that it promotes a more positive mindset and outlook on life. It can also help you notice things that you otherwise would have taken for granted.

The most simple way to gratitude journal is to list a few things each day that you are grateful for. This could be anything from your best friend to your morning coffee. Maybe some days you could look out the window and list a few things you see that you are grateful or happy for. You could even reflect upon a certain area of your life, or a particular person with gratitude in mind. It's easiest to do this with prompts to guide you which we have provided in the help sheets.

Surrounding yourself with positive vibes not only brings you immediate joy, but also causes you to radiate that positivity and optimism throughout your day. Here are some less obvious examples which will inspire you to think of some of your own:

- *I am grateful for all the music I can listen to which makes me feel alive*
- *I am grateful for that little act of kindness from that stranger*

Brain Dump

This is a super effective form of journaling but is one that often requires some practice. It involves writing constantly for a set amount of time, with no particular topic in mind. Ideally your pen shouldn't leave the paper. It's designed to dump your thoughts onto the page, creating a sense of release and clarity.

Begin with a simple starter sentence, a general thought or feeling from the day perhaps. Let your mind run with that thought. It might take a few sentences to get into the flow. Try not to be critical of what you're writing or if it makes sense. Brain dumps never usually make sense! As you run out of things to write you will naturally be drawn to writing out the things which have been clinging to your mind in recent times and expression of these thoughts can be a healthy exercise.

Dream Journaling

Dream journaling is the practice of recording your dreams as soon as you wake up (if you remember them!). Dreams can give us incredible insights into our inner emotions and feelings. Having a dream journal allows us to interact with and analyse our subconscious thoughts. Over time you may find patterns which help you come to terms with concerns and past issues which may not obviously present themselves in daily life.

Dreams are often hard to capture. You might only recall a distorted or fragmented face or event. Always write down anything you can, even if it makes no sense to you at the time. You may experience some common dream sensation such as being chased or flying. These dreams are important as they often hold a meaningful underlying message. If your dreams are something that particularly interest you then you may want to think about including other factors into your dream journal like quality of sleep, sleep duration, wake time, stress levels the day before. Adding in these extra details can better help you find patterns in the way you dream.

MY SELF-LOVE SUPPLY

Reflective Journaling

Of "How to journal for self-care"

YOUR "REFLECTIVE JOURNALING" PROMPTS

Find some helpful prompts to copy into your journal to start the journaling methods explained in this chapter

Reflective Journaling

YOUR "REFLECTIVE JOURNALING" PROMPTS

END OF DAY RECAP

What else could I have done this morning to set me up for the rest of the day?

.....

What was the most interesting part of my day?

.....

What's something that made me smile today?

.....

What worked well today?

.....

What tasks took longer than I expected them to?

.....

Did I take time for my self-care and practicing my routines?

.....

How has my mental health been today?

.....

Reflective Journaling

YOUR "REFLECTIVE JOURNALING" PROMPTS

GRATITUDE

Three things I am grateful for today are:

- .....
- .....
- .....

Who did I receive help from today? Why am I grateful for their support?

.....

What did I learn today?

.....

What's one joyful moment I experienced today?

.....

What's one important lesson I have learnt throughout these recent tough times?

.....

Self Check-In Journaling

As a disclosure, we're not going to tell you that journaling is a magic pill that will solve all your problems. We're also not going to tell you that it will cure or alleviate anything. What we will tell you is that done correctly, journaling can be used as a tool to help manage, track, and lessen the symptoms of certain mental health conditions. Some therapists use journal therapy within their treatment plans. These are often specialist techniques that the therapist may use to better understand the client's situation. The techniques that will be outlined in this section are more basic and can easily be done on your own; they are not a substitute for professional help.

With that being said, self check-in journaling is a great way to relieve anxiety, manage stress, process emotions, and help you deal with the challenges you face in your life. What makes this journaling different from regular journaling is the way in which thoughts, feelings and experiences are captured.

The journaling methods discussed in this chapter are not the only approaches which may act as a self-therapy tool, many other form of journaling mentioned in this e-book could benefit you in similar ways, or allow you to express yourself more comfortably. So, don't feel that you're confined to just the ideas in this chapter.

Journaling your past Emotions

One of the best ways to process and understand our emotions is if we write about them. One practice you can try is to single out one emotion (or state) that you have encountered, and write about a time you experienced that. We recommend choosing from a big list of emotions which have a great diversity which we have provided in the help sheets.

The beautiful thing about this practice is that every time you talk about an emotion, the story behind it will be completely different. Some days may be harder, like when you discuss a negative time. Talking these things out with yourself is a good form of release. You may look back on the situation in a different light now that some time has passed.

Some days you may find yourself writing about the happiest moments in your life. These are also beneficial to look back on, not only for the nostalgia, but for finding patterns in your life. Like the things that made you feel this way and the people you were with.

Managing Anxiety

Expressing your concerns can be a helpful tool to combat anxiety. It's common when suffering from anxiety that the feelings experienced are non-specific and appear to follow no logical thought processes. Instead, you're cast with a general sense of apprehension. This form of journaling is good for getting an insight into anything that may be concerning or stressing you.

There are a few ways you can approach this method, you could:

- Note down worries, stresses, and concerns as they come to you. You can then review this list at the end of the day and reflect on how those problems played out or you could discuss a solution with yourself.

- When you feel yourself becoming anxious or growing in anxiety you could take a few minutes out to sit down with your journal to write out all your worries. There's no guarantee this will relieve the situation but taking a few minutes out to release some of the negative energy could certainly help!

- Take a minute to think about all the things that you know are going to peak your anxiety in the future. The purpose of this isn't to get you stressed about the future, but to be used as a tool to prepare you for the situation and ready yourself. Perhaps you could develop some calming techniques, or make plans to make the situation less stressful, like inviting a friend along to an event to make you more comfortable.

Inspiration journal

Negativity and self-doubt can overwhelm at any time for any reason. Practicing conscious positivity each day is a powerful tool for combating negative beliefs and self-talk. Words are extremely powerful. We use affirmations to utilize that power by surrounding our mind with positivity, leaving you feeling invigorated and optimistic. You might have seen some of the many examples of affirmations online. It's okay to use these but affirmations only truly work if you believe in what you are telling yourself. This is why we recommend that you create your own so that they are personal to you.

Before we get any further, we need to know exactly what an affirmation is and how we can use them. Affirmations are positive statements which we tell ourselves with the intention of encouraging a more positive mindset or promoting self-change. They are often used by people to create the reality they want, such as, making (or attracting) happiness, love, beauty, or wealth. The possibilities though are limitless and completely up to you.

To practice affirmations, you should either repetitively write them out or read them aloud. As a beginner's guide, we would recommend doing this at least once every day and repeating each affirmation at least 5 times. Everyone has their own preference though so experiment with what feels comfortable for you.

Now that we've established what affirmations are and why they're good, it's time to go through how you make your own. As was touched on before, you can just search online to find examples you resonate with, but to make it more personal and unique, you should consider building your own. Here's how:

Step 1: Identify what you desire – your affirmation will focus on this and offer a pathway to achieving it. It's wise to take your time on this step. Close your eyes, take a breath, and just think for a minute. An example of a desire may be stronger friendships or to become better at a certain hobby.

Step 2: Identify the attributes you will need – This step requires you to list a bunch of things you need to be in order to achieve your desires. Using the previous example about desiring to become better at a hobby, some of the attributes required to achieve that could be: determined, disciplined or optimistic.

Step 3: Build your affirmation – Now for the fun part! With the first two steps in mind, write 1-2 sentences which embody your desires and attributes in a way which empowers you to succeed. For example, my determination is what will drive me to become an accomplished artist.

Quotes are also a beautiful way to enhance your journal. Quotes can focus on many different mindsets, like motivation, positivity, or hope. Have a look around the internet for quotes that fill your heart with inspiration, then add them into your journal.

You could have a special page at the back of your journal just for your quotes. Maybe even multiple pages, each focusing on a different mindset or area in your life. For example, you might be trying to exercise more regularly. A page dedicated to motivating you into doing so would really help. Another example could be if you own a business and you often need that extra boost of hope and positivity. A quote page is perfect for that.

MY SELF-LOVE SUPPLY

Self Check-In Journaling

Of "How to journal for self-care"

YOUR "SELF CHECK-IN JOURNALING" PROMPTS

Find some helpful prompts to copy into your journal to get started with the journaling methods explained in this chapter

Self Check-In Journaling

YOUR "SELF CHECK-IN JOURNALING" PROMPTS

JOURNALING YOUR EMOTIONS AND MANAGING ANXIETIES

Pick any word and talk about a time in your life when you've experienced it.

happy	loved	annoyed
anxious	heartbroken	frustrated
relieved	enthusiastic	calm
content	disappointed	confident
amused	hopeless	bitter
joyful	grieved	altruistic
proud	unhappy	irritated
excited	lost	mad
peaceful	troubled	cheated
satisfied	optimistic	relieved
compassionate	euphoric	cheerful

What has been at the back of my mind today? What worries can I address?

.....

What can I do to prepare for these future situation so that I feel more calm in the moment?

.....

Self Check-In Journaling

YOUR "SELF CHECK-IN JOURNALING" PROMPTS

INSPIRATION JOURNALING

Build your own affirmations

What do I desire most?	What do I need to get there?	My affirmation
I want to become a better artist	I need to work hard and practice	My hard work and determination will make me the best artist I can be
I want to feel peaceful and calm	Sticking to my mindfulness meditation practice	My mindfulness meditation routine will make me feel calm and peaceful today

Organisation Journaling

This approach to journaling is a great habit to get into for anyone looking to bring their organisation game up a level! There are so many easy and effective tips and strategies which can make your life a whole lot easier. Expect benefits such as more clarity in your thoughts and problems, higher productivity in your daily life, and proactive planning which will help manage future plans or finances.

Mind mapping

Mind mapping is more of a visual tool that allows us to expand on problems (or situations) to make it more manageable. This technique Is also great for planning, like when you want to plan a holiday or a project and there are lots of areas that need thinking about.

Mind mapping helps pull all those thoughts together, so everything gets addressed and we're more aware of priority tasks. It looks a bit like a spider's web. You have your main focus point in the centre and branching out from that would represent your secondary thoughts, and so on. You could use this technique for boosting productivity, improving time management, developing strategies for coping with anxiety, or, as was mentioned before, planning for an event such as a holiday.

To-do lists

Possibly the number one way to **boost productivity** and really easy to add to your diary or planner at the start of every day. Firstly, it gives you **clarity** on how you plan on approaching the day and the tasks that need done. Secondly it **reminds** and **motivates** you to work through each of the tasks you've set.

It doesn't have to be super long and the tasks don't have to be big. 3-5 tasks a day is manageable and realistic. Once you start consistently completing them each day you can think about adding more. It's also more than okay to add things to your list that you must do every day anyway. Things like making dinner or walking the dog. The psychological boost when checking off a task is like a springboard onto the next task and it turns these chores into a challenge.

Here are a few more perks of to-do lists:

- **Remembering what you need to do** – It's far too easy to forget things during a busy day (especially if we don't really want to remember!). Having a physical note of each task keeps it at the forefront of your mind, just waiting to be checked off.

- **Holds you accountable** – We like to justify why we haven't finished a chore with some half-hearted excuse which helps ease the guilt. A to-do list cuts out a lot of the potential excuses and pushes you on to get things done!

- **It doesn't have to be perfect to be progress** – It's guaranteed that you won't complete your list every day, but that's fine! It's still likely that you've still had a more productive day than you otherwise would have, if you hadn't had a list at all.

- **It will save you time** – Maybe a bit of an ironic thing to say since you'll be spending more of your time working on chores, but it will cut out a lot of procrastination. And once your tasks are done, you'll end up with much more free time than you previously would have.

To-do lists are perfect for a morning routine to help add structure and goals to your day. Add this as the first part of your journal entry and feel your productivity grow.

Daily planner

If your life lacks structure, or you find it stressful navigating your daily routine in your head, then a daily planner could be just the thing you need.

Within a daily planner you will schedule out your plans within the day's timeline. This is helpful as it encourages you to think ahead in the day to methodically plan what time is best to do things. This is going to give you peace of mind that your day is going to be a success so long as you follow your planner. Your routine may be identical every day, in which case, you can print out small templates to paste into your journal, with space for adjustments if needed.

For more long-term planning it's best to use a calendar which will give you a good visualisation of the month ahead. Adding a calendar page into your journal each month will give you the chance to refresh from the previous month and reflect upon the month ahead and what you want to get out of it.

MY SELF-LOVE SUPPLY

Organisation Journaling

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YOUR "ORGANISATION JOURNALING" PROMPTS

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Organisation Journaling

YOUR "ORGANISATION JOURNALING" PROMPTS

TO-DO LISTS

My 5 top priorities for today are:

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

If I can only manage to get one of these things done today, what should I prioritise the most?

.....

Organisation Journaling

YOUR "ORGANISATION JOURNALING" PROMPTS

DAILY PLANNER

DATE:__/__/____

HIGH PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY

LOW PRIORITY

Creative Journaling

If writing isn't your thing, this might be just what you're looking for. For a lot of the more creative minded people out there, it is often easier to express one's self through drawing, colour, and artistic displays. Visual journals can portray just as much emotion, expression, and reflection as a written journal with the added fun of being creative!

A quick bonus-tip before we begin, using stickers is a brilliant way to assist your creativity. Add them in for a little more colour and vibrancy.

Scrapbooking (Photo journaling)

Scrapbooking is possibly the best way to relive memories and bring your journal to life. It's like a written journal but the main content here is photos. These photos can be accompanied by as much writing as you like to give further context and thought to each photo.

The type of photos you choose to use will have a big impact on the vibe of your journal. You could use photos from just the highlights in your life or the photos which spark positive emotion. If this is the case, your reflections on your scrapbook will be generally focus on the positives, leaving the negatives in the past. This could be a great approach for someone who tends to focus their attentions on the negatives. Having a 'positive bias' scrapbook is perfect to look back on if you want to relive happy memories. It's also nice to have a space where you consciously write positively about photos which make you happy.

Another journal approach you could take would be to take a photo each day. Something which sums up the day. A happy selfie, a gloomy storm cloud, a flower that made you stop and stare. This will hopefully give you a more accurate reflection on your life, allowing you to remember back in time with much more vivid feelings and emotions that a pure written journal couldn't offer. When writing your reflection for each photo, it can be helpful to use a consistent framework. Ask yourself the same questions about each photo, what made me take this photo? How does this photo make me feel? How does this photo reflect how I'm feeling?

One of the common problems faced with photo journaling is the effort it takes in printing and sticking photos in a book. This can put a lot of people off – it's certainly not for everyone. To make it easier, you could take your photos on your phone and print them all at the end of the week. You could even invest in a handheld printer which prints directly from your phone and gives you a small sized photo ready for use.

The most widely adopted way to journal (many people do this without even realising) is to start an Instagram or Tumblr account which you dedicate to your journaling. Making these private means that it can just be for your eyes only.

Art Journaling

An art journal is your place for raw and pure expression. It can also be a place for you to explore your creative side and to express your innermost feelings and emotions as colours and shapes on a page. You might at this point be thinking... *I'm not an artist - this isn't for me...* Luckily, this isn't an examination. Your ability to draw or paint goes totally unjudged. So long as it holds meaning to you, it's art. You might also be thinking that you're the least creative person in the world... creativity is a skill - some people are born with it and some people need to work on it.

If your creative side has always been suppressed, you won't yet have cultivated a creative mindset. Creativity needs to be practiced and nurtured - art journaling is the best way to do this! You can think of creativity like growing a flower: once you plant the seed, the flower will slowly grow until it blossoms. If you never plant the seed the flower will never grow.

What should you include in your art journal? Typically, art journals are purely drawings, paintings, sketches, etc, with very few words. If you like a bit of writing, then you should add in as much as you want. The art can resemble absolutely anything your mind gets attracted to. Perhaps it resembles an event that has happened that day, the way a person made you feel, or maybe the pink flower in your bedroom window. It might look like random messy chaos, but it will tell your beautiful story.

Vision Board

Vision boards are a fantastic way to connect with your dreams and goals in a creative and vibrant way. You can make one by drawing or printing a bunch of images which represent your 'ideal life'. This could include what you want to be, do, or have. The aim is help you find clarity and maintain focus on what matters most to you.

Typically, vision boards are made on big posters which would be pinned on your wall, but this isn't always necessary. You could make a miniature version on the front (or back) page of your journal so you can easily see it every day! Seeing it consistently is important as it keeps your goals and dreams at the front of your mind, so you can feel more motivated to make the choices every day that will get you closer to your end goal.

When making your vision board, it's best to just go crazy with the creativity! You don't need your images neatly spaced or in any order. Make it wild and exciting, throw things onto the page - make it fun and engaging to look at. The whole point is to motivate and exhilarate you every day. So grab your bright coloured pens, think of your greatest dreams (no matter how realistic) and create something that empowers both the mind and the heart!

MY SELF-LOVE SUPPLY

Creative Journaling

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Creative Journaling

YOUR "CREATIVE JOURNALING" PROMPTS

SCRAPBOOKING

Pick your first 3 photos of happy memories to start your journal!

.....

.....

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.....

.....

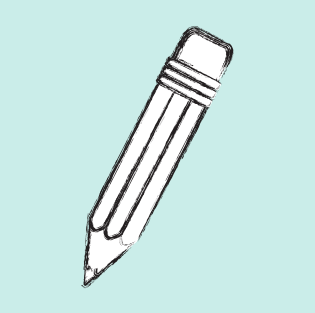
.....

Creative Journaling

YOUR "CREATIVE JOURNALING" PROMPTS

ART JOURNALING

Work on your first doodle!



Date: .....

Notes: .....

.....

VISION BOARD

Create a folder on your phone / laptop and start saving the best images that you can print out for your board. Pick some of these topics to start:

- **Learning/career goals**
- **Family goals**
- **Places you want to visit**
- **Health goals**
- **Best life vision**
- **Home decorating projects**

Self-Improvement Journaling

You could make an argument that all the previous topics can be thought of as 'self-improvement' in their own way. Self-improvement can mean different things for a lot of people but in this section, we've tried to focus on journaling methods which are solely intended to help improve you in some way or help you achieve a personal goal.

Goal Setting

Everyone has goals in their lives but how many people are actually pursuing them? Journaling your goals guides you through the process of wonder, to intention, to action. Once you identify what you want your goals to be, you can start to break them down into more attainable steps. To make it even more detailed and effective, you can break this first steps down even further.

The key to progression is that you want to be making noticeable progress as often as possible. It never needs to be huge progress, just enough that you can say that you are now one tiny bit closer to your goal.

As an example... you wanted to learn a language. Starting out, this can seem like a daunting task and a few weeks into the journey you might think it's impossible. When journaling this goal, you should write out the steps you need to take to help you succeed. Perhaps you choose to follow a course, enrolling in this is the big step and actively learning the lessons are the smaller steps. If you choose to learn on your own, you may want to break up your larger steps as: numbers, basic conversation, grammar, etc. The daily progress you could make in this example could be to do one lesson per day or learn one new word per day. You could write these new words in your journal to track consistency.

Once you have a step completed, you can confirm that progress in your journal by ticking it off or crossing it out! This form of journaling also works well in combination with mindmapping, which was detailed in the **Organisation journaling** chapter.

Another way in which people can track goals or dreams is using a bucket list. These are very simple and can be very empowering, but won't help you in terms of planning or managing your goals. They are a bit like a to-do list. You have a list of things that you wish to do in your life, and you tick them off as you complete them. Many of these things you may only have a few opportunities to ever be able to do, so the aura of your bucket list will hopefully give you that extra confidence and drive to take the opportunities.

Journaling what we learn

If self-improvement is your goal, then it is likely that you are consuming a lot of new information to improve, through books, practice, podcasts, videos, and mentors.

This is perfect and exactly what we'd recommend but it's common when surrounded by new information that we become overwhelmed and lost in the chaos. Journaling what we learn is a little bit like taking notes in class, except these notes are going to be much briefer and more valuable.

These reflections are reserved for key bits of knowledge and things that will definitely help your improvement. Once you've captured the knowledge and locked it in your journal, its much less likely it will be forgotten. And if it is forgotten - no problem! It's always there for you to look back on.

Self-Inquiry (Challenge your Thoughts)

Questioning and challenging your decisions and beliefs is a fantastic way for you to develop as a person. Within this type of journaling you could:

1. **Map out your entire thought process** for big decisions you've already made and pinpoint steps you may have gotten wrong. If you feel you got something wrong, identify how you could have done better or what you would have changed.

2. **Have a debate or rational discussion with yourself** about some of the big decisions you face in your life. For example, your conundrum could be, "should I start that business?" and your inquiry could be focused on the who, what, why, where, and how questions.

Who would be involved in this business? Who would be affected if I started this business? Who will I hire?
What will the business do? What is its purpose? What will I do if some something goes wrong?
Why do I want to start this business? Why do I think I can make this work?
Where will I set this business up? Where do I see this business in 5 years' time?

Alternatively to that set of questioning, you could weight up the pro's and con's so you can gather a strong understanding of your risk to reward.

3. **Challenge your long held believes** by writing down a few points which argue against your case. It can often be difficult and painful breaking down the mental barriers which blind us from different viewpoints, but successfully doing this will allow you to form more rational opinions. These self-inquiry techniques offer you the opportunity to explore your thoughts and the reasoning behind your decisions. Practicing awareness of these feelings can help you look at situations more objectively, giving you the mental clarity to make better decisions.

Health Diary

This type of journaling offers something a bit different from the mental and emotional related journaling previously discussed. A health diary would be classed as a physical self-care tool. 'Health' is a very broad word which covers many different areas of physical wellbeing. Depending on your situation, you might want to track multiple areas or very specific ones which cater to your personal health.

The main two categories that will be focused on in this chapter are nutrition and movement. If you have a unique circumstance like a medical condition or a food intolerance, you might find it helpful including this in your health diary. Things such as blood pressure tracking or gluten-free recipes.

Food journal

A food journal is for everyone that wants to have a record of everything they are eating and drinking. This could be for medical health reasons or the desire to document a shift to a more balanced lifestyle. You can have this all written in a physical journal but it's much easier to use an app such as 'Lifesum', which is tailor built for this purpose and allows you to scan the barcodes of the foods you have eaten and logs it in the meal you select. A food journal also helps hold you accountable it also helps motivate you do build better habits, such as choosing more nutritious options and drinking more water.

Your food journal can also be used to record your favourite recipes, your experiments in the kitchen and your favourite places to go for food! Let this become your creative outlet.

Movement Diary

A movement diary works in a similar way to a food journal. You're creating a plan and log of your exercise routines and sessions. It's common to separate this planner into days of the week where you will write down your exercise plan in each day.

After each fitness session, you can write a bit about it to give yourself a good reference point to look back on in future. A quick reminder that your exercise doesn't need to be more intense than a gentle walk or yoga session. Moving your body in a way that makes **you** feel good is what counts.

Using a fitness journal alongside a diet journal is the best way to monitor and control your overall physical wellbeing. When you care for both your diet and your physical health, you're sure to see some great positive changes!

MY SELF-LOVE SUPPLY

Self-Improvement Journaling

Of "How to journal for self-care"

YOUR "SELF-IMPROVEMENT JOURNALING" PROMPTS

Find some helpful prompts to copy into your journal to get started with the journaling methods explained in this chapter

Self-Improvement Journaling

YOUR "SELF-IMPROVEMENT JOURNALING" PROMPTS

GOAL SETTING

My most important goal is

.....

Why is this goal so important to me? How will I feel when I get there?

.....

What are three important baby steps I have to make to get there?

- .....
- .....
- .....

JOURNALING WHAT YOU LEARN

What topics am I most passionate about?

.....

What's the best way for me to learn about this passion?

.....

Self-Improvement Journaling

YOUR "SELF-IMPROVEMENT JOURNALING" PROMPTS

SELF-INQUIRY - CHALLENGE YOUR THOUGHTS

If I knew the answer, what would it be?

.....

If the ideal scenario were possible, what would happen?

.....

If I believed it was possible, what decisions would I take?

- .....
- .....
- .....

What would my future self tell me about the decision I am trying to make?

.....

What would I feel most proud of right now?

.....

Self-Improvement Journaling

YOUR "SELF-IMPROVEMENT JOURNALING" PROMPTS

Daily

DIET DIARY

DATE __/__/____

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

Snack	Water
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

Do I feel energised today?

.....

Have I been drinking enough water during the day?

.....

Self-Improvement Journaling

YOUR "SELF-IMPROVEMENT JOURNALING" PROMPTS

Daily

MOVEMENT DIARY

DATE __/__/____

How much effort did I put in (scale of 1-10)?

.....

Was it easier than last time?

.....

How long did I do it for?

.....

How enjoyable was it? (scale1-10)

.....

What things would I change for next time?

.....

What changes am I noticing in my mood?

.....

How do I feel 1 hour after the session?

.....

Final Thoughts

Bonus tips

1. Don't write on the first page – There can sometimes be a lot of unnecessary pressure to make the first page 'perfect'. Forget the perfection and turn to the next blank page in! Plus, it's always nice to reserve the first page for something special like your vision board or long-term goals.

2. Always keep your journal on you - This is so you can conveniently write in it whenever you get time, plus it will act as a reminder to fill in your daily entry. Even if you don't journal every day, it's helpful to keep it close to you in case you ever get a surge of inspiration!

3. Have a Special journal pen – Once your mind begins to associate this pen with journaling then it will create a sense of focus when you pick it up. It will help clear your mind of the clutter and begin to transition yourself into a state of mindful expression.

4. Write the date – In every entry you should ALWAYS add in the day's date at the top. It may not seem important at the time but in years to come when you look back at it you will thank yourself!

5. Don't worry about missed day – There will be periods of your life when you might not journal for big stretches of time. This is fine and you can acknowledge it your next entry and carry on as normal.

Bonus page ideas

These are some quick and easy one-page ideas that you mind find helpful or fun to add into your journal.

Welcome page – This goes on the very first page of your journal and acts as an introduction. It could include your name, why you started this journal, and maybe a bit about your life situation at the time of starting the journal.

Playlist page – Just a simple bullet point list of your all-time favourite songs or maybe your songs of the month. It's interesting how this will change over time.

Travel list – A page full of all the places you want to visit.

Book list - Just a bucket list with all the books you want to read!

Personalisation

Personalising your journal is not only important but necessary. You want your journal to be a reflection of yourself. A place that feels comfortable and safe. Journaling isn't a science and there is no exact way to do it, that's why there are so many journaling examples in this e-book (and many more we didn't mention). Be expressive and be unique, choose the colours you want, choose how often you write an entry - choose everything!

Another thing worth mentioning is that you shouldn't feel like you must limit yourself to a certain type of journal. You might have 3 or 4 notebooks, each for a different kind of journaling. Maybe you use a few apps as well as a physical notebook. If you journal everyday maybe you choose to try a different type of journaling every time. Flexibility is the beauty of journaling!

Keeping it Private

The main reason we suggest you keep your journal private is so that it allows you to freely write without fear judgment or scrutiny. Your journal should be your sacred place where you are comfortable expressing all your thoughts, feelings, and emotions as ink on a page. Taking them away from the hidden refuge of your mind and setting them free.

As well as this, when we intentionally share our thoughts and feelings with others, we instinctively tend to screen what we say for acceptability. This might not be a problem for some kinds of journaling, but when writing personal things for reflection or therapy, having to filter and pick out the thoughts in our head that we feel are socially acceptable isn't the best approach.

What is the best way to keep your journal private? Having a physical notebook may require some trust and boundaries with those you live with to respect that you don't want anyone looking at it. You could also buy a journal which comes with a lock and key! The best way to privatise a journal though is by going digital. An app or phone notes for example. This gives you the option of a security code, keeping your words safe and secure!

Consistency

One of the best things about journaling is that you're under no pressure to do it every day. You might only do it on an as-needed basis, like when you feel stressed or overwhelmed. It's always helpful to check back in on yourself on a regular basis so try and not leave in longer that a couple of weeks between entries!

If journaling is a habit you want to practise regularly then you're going to need to take some more disciplinary actions! As with forming any new habit, the beginning is always the most difficult and consistency is always the key. Some days you might forget about it or lack the energy but for the first month, it's important you try not to miss too many days. Even simply writing one sentence summarizing the day is enough.

Don't be a perfectionist

Our entire life we've probably been told to write a certain way. Stay between the lines, proper punctuation, and perfect spelling. This is your journal though so that means the rules are yours. Stay flexible and relaxed because it's not about how you write - it's about what you write. Free flowing and messy writing is often the most expressive way to write anyway, so don't stress the capital letters and full stops.

Always remember, the more you do something, the better you will get. As you journal you will slowly improve your writing, your creativity, your fluidity, and much more!
Always strive for progress, not perfection.

Loving Your Journal

It's true that there are countless benefits to journaling but perhaps the greatest benefit of all is developing a true passion and love for journaling. There are no guarantees that the practice of journaling is for you, but having a journal that you really feel a connection with is a powerful factor.

This is by no means a necessity, but you could treat yourself and buy a beautiful journal that speaks to you and means something to you. There are so many unique journals out there that one is going to be for you. Once you grow that connection with your journal then motivation and excitement to journal regularly will come along with it. Having said that, you don't need an expensive journal covered in sparkles for you to feel connected to a journal. There's nothing more powerful and intimate than the written words that transpire from your mind - if your plain notebook is filled with your words then it will have meaning to you.

Another thing to consider (if you write in a notebook) is to use a really nice pen. One that's comfortable to use and has a nice ink flow. To further enhance your journaling experience, you could have a journal pen which you only use for journaling. This gives you a sense of clarity. When you have your journal pen in hand, all your focus is on you and your journal. Having the perfect stationary is a very underappreciated aspect of journaling. If the quality of your notebook is poor, or the ink seeps through the pages, then your journaling experience isn't going to be as enjoyable and you wont get as excited about opening up your journal.

Reflection

Every now and again it's always beneficial to look over your old journal entries. They give you a chance to reflect on potential patterns in your life, past worries and how they developed, and offer you a way to track your long-term progress to remind yourself how far you've come.

Sometimes looking back on harder times (as painful as this may be) will allow you to gain a different perspective on what was going on. The more you review these situations and try to understand how you felt and why you felt this way, the better a position you will be in not to become overwhelmed and swept away by the strong emotions next time you think back on these trying times. Above all else, it's always nice to be nostalgic about the past, to read back on proud successes, remember those hilarious moments, or to think back on those wonderful people who shared a slice of your life. Time has slowly escaped, but the memories are safe forever.

Conclusion

And that's a wrap!

If you learn anything from this guide, let it be this:

- Stay **flexible** and **open-minded** when it comes to new journaling methods
- Treat your journal as if it were a **close friend**
- Don't be discouraged at the start. Expression and creativity get **easier over time**
- The only rules of journaling are the ones you create **for yourself**

Thank you so much for engaging in this journaling guide! I hope you've picked up some valuable info and tips and can now start putting into practice what you've learnt! I encourage you to engage with the chapter help sheets as I believe these will help you so much by giving you inspiration and guidance!

If you would like to review the guide, we'd love to hear from you! Just message the Instagram page @myselflovesupply. I would also love to share some of the journal pages you've created on the page, so please feel welcome to send those in too!

I'm always so thankful and grateful for your continued support here at My Self-Love Supply. I'll continue trying to do my best to provide you with the resources to make your days a little kinder, calmer and more joyful.

Yours truly,
Sofia