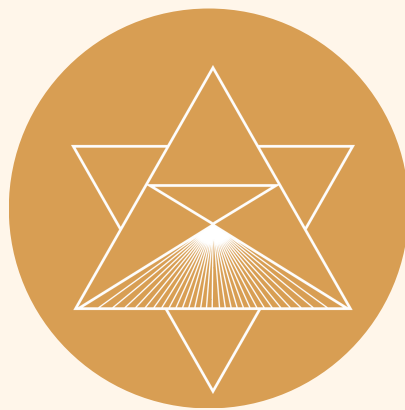




SELF-CARE SERIES





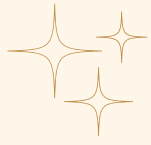
MEETING YOURSELF AGAIN

Journal prompts to help you
connect with your inner bliss

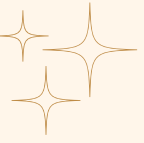




THE POWER OF JOURNALLING AS A TOOL FOR PERSONAL GROWTH



This is a 10 day journal to help you understand yourself, recognize behavioural patterns and learn to create space for emotions and reactions in your daily life



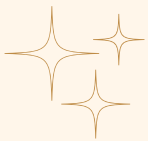
- The daily practice of journalling aims to help us leave the auto-pilot state that we sometimes find ourselves in. It is a way to inspire us to notice habits that keep us stuck and repeating patterns.
- Journalling is an expressive tool that helps people process unhelpful thoughts and experience emotions more healthily.



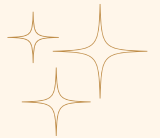
Benefits of journalling for mental health



- People living with anxiety disorders often have to manage excessive worry and intrusive anxious thoughts, and journalling helps them cope with rumination. Putting thoughts into words, and then putting them aside rather than letting them become an obsession is incredibly beneficial.
- People living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or trauma-related symptoms usually benefit from processing the traumatic event in writing. This might require supervision from a therapist or trusted friend as writing might trigger memories and painful emotions.



How can I start?



Journalling can be done at any time, but you can start by separating 10 minutes of your day to sit in a quiet place where you can focus. Make this a daily self-care ritual. Start at day 1 and try to keep it a routine of writing every day.

Once you are done with the 10 days, you can start over or continue free writing as you already know how. This is a starting point in your journalling journey.



Day 1: Core Values



Date:

Travelers rarely get lost when guided by a compass or GPS. Our values have the same purpose, guiding us in different directions in our lives. When we align with our core values they help us make hard decisions. They also work as key indicators of when we are acting outside of our truth and integrity. When we notice frustrations, experience discomfort, and feel out of balance in our lives, our values show us why. Today we are exploring our core values. These are values that guide our behaviours and actions.

Take a look at the list in the next page. Choose five values that resonate with you. Why are they important to you?

From my five core values, which is one the most important and why?

I know I am aligned with my values when

I know I am not aligned with my values when

Today I will practice being in alignment with my values by

Today I am grateful for

List of Core Values

Accountability	Fun	Personal fulfillment
Achievement	Future	Power
Adaptability	generations	Pride
Adventure	Generosity	Recognition
Altruism	Giving back	Reliability
Ambition	Grace	Resourcefulness
Authenticity	Gratitude	Respect
Balance	Growth	Responsibility
Beauty	Harmony	Risk-taking
Being the best	Health	Safety
Belonging	Home	Security
Career	Honesty	Self-discipline
Caring	Hope	Self-expression
Collaboration	Humility	Self-respect
Commitment	Humor	Serenity
Community	Inclusion	Service
Compassion	Independence	Simplicity
Competence	Initiative	Spirituality
Confidence	Integrity	Sportsmanship
Connection	Intuition	Stewardship
Contentment	Job security	Success
Contribution	Joy	Teamwork
Cooperation	Justice	Thrift
Courage	Kindness	Time
Creativity	Knowledge	Tradition
Curiosity	Leadership	Travel
Dignity	Learning	Trust
Diversity	Legacy	Truth
Environment	Leisure	Understanding
Efficiency	Love	Uniqueness
Equality	Loyalty	Usefulness
Ethics	Making a	Vision
Excellence	difference	Vulnerability
Fairness	Nature	Wealth
Faith	Openness	Well-being
Family	Optimism	Wholeheartedness
Financial stability	Order	Wisdom
Forgiveness	Parenting	
Freedom	Patience	
Friendship	Patriotism	
	Peace	
	Perseverance	

Day 2: Mindfulness



Date:

Practicing mindfulness helps us pause and witness our thoughts and behaviours for what they are: transitory states that can be transformed. Cultivating mindfulness helps us become more aware and learn with our thoughts. It also helps us to stay in the discomfort building resilience and empowerment.

To start, take 2 minutes of your day to be in the present moment, focusing your attention on whatever you are doing. It can be washing the dishes, taking a shower, folding the laundry, or just being. You are consciously deciding to witness your experience at that moment. Repeat to yourself: "I am here now, I am folding this t-shirt." Thoughts and judgements will come and go. They are all welcome and natural, just witness them. For today's journal, describe below how the experience of witnessing the present moment was for you. Was it challenging? Or was it surprisingly easy?

Today I practiced mindfulness and I felt

Placing my attention in the present moment in small daily doses will help me

A promise I make to myself today is

Today I am grateful for

Day 3: Observing my thoughts



Date: _____

Yesterday, we learned to observe and witness the present moment. Today, we will observe our thoughts and how we react to them. Thoughts are interpretations of a situation that happened in our lives. Thoughts are not necessarily real facts. As a result of thoughts, we feel emotions and feelings that can be followed by behaviours or reactions to that first situation. It is the famous cognitive triangle, where thoughts, emotions and behaviours are affected by each other. If we start observing and changing our thoughts, we can change how we feel and react to them.

When _____ my thoughts are _____

When I believe my thoughts I react by _____

The feelings and emotions I have after the thoughts are _____

Next time I _____ I will _____

A promise I make to myself today is _____

Today I am grateful for _____

Day 4: Core beliefs



Date:

Everyone sees the world differently. Two people may experience the same situation and interpret it differently. Our core beliefs are rooted in our psyche and influence how we interpret new experiences. We can think of core beliefs as a pair of sunglasses; every person wears the glasses using different lenses. Each lens results in people seeing the same things but interpreting them differently. Many of us have core beliefs that limit our lives and may have impactful consequences for us. Before we can challenge them, we must identify them. It's important to note that our core beliefs are learned and not born with us.

Some examples of limiting beliefs are: "Nobody loves me"; "nobody sees or listens to me"; "I am stupid"; "I am ugly"; "I am not enough"; "I am not deserving."

In the lines below, spend some time reflecting on your deepest beliefs. Remember, a belief is just a thought that you have practiced your whole life. Start noticing the themes and narratives that you tell yourself during the day. This might be hard to reflect upon, but be kind to yourself and give it some time.

When I witness my thoughts during the day I noticed themes:

About myself: _____

About others and my relationships: _____

About my past: _____

About my present: _____

About my future: _____

Day 5: Replacing old beliefs



Date: _____

Now you know your beliefs are just thoughts you believed your whole life. To transform those old and limiting beliefs, you need to start practicing new ones.

From yesterday's inventory, choose one limiting belief you want to change.

Once you identify the belief you want to change, think about how you would like to replace it. For example, if you choose to change the belief "I am not good enough", you can change it to "I am good enough".

Old belief _____

Now choose a new belief. It will be your daily affirmation.

Now, it's time to practice the new belief. Write it on a post-it and stick it to a place where you will see it multiple times a day. Don't worry if you don't believe it yet. For some time, you will just repeat it. Until one day, your amazing brain will start believing that the statement might be a possibility. It might take time at first, but repeating the affirmation becomes natural, and with a little bit of patience and self-compassion, your whole body will start believing it, and your actions will show it to you. Spend some time journaling about the experience of finding your limiting beliefs.

A promise I make to myself today is _____

Today I am grateful for _____

Day 6: Body-Mind connection



Date: _____

For today's journal, we will explore the body-mind connection. Healing happens when we recognize our body's needs and reconnect with our inner knowing. We can start by witnessing how our body reacts in different situations and ask ourselves questions such as: "How is my body reacting now?"; "What is my body needing now?"; "Does it hurt somewhere?"; "Do I have a gut feeling about this?"

Asking those questions helps us move our attention to the body, and that's when we start listening to it. This connection will help us make decisions, find our true purpose in life, and avoid danger if needed. Below, we will explore that connection deeply.

When I am in an uncomfortable situation, how does my body behave? Describe the sensations, feelings, pain and areas of the body.

When something pleasant happens, how does my body behave? Describe the sensations, feelings, pain and areas of the body.

An interesting exercise to help us connect to the body is to sit in silence and put one hand in the heart and the other in the stomach. With much compassion and kindness, start by feeling the breath and talking to your body (even if it feels weird). Place your attention on your breath; you can even say to yourself, "I am breathing in, and breathing out". Do this for two minutes and notice how you feel. Describe below the feelings, and do not rush. This takes time.

A promise I make to myself today is _____

Today I am grateful for _____

Day 7: Befriending your emotions - Part 1



Date:

In a simple way, emotions result from an event that happened to us. They cause reactions in our body that include changes in breathing, heartbeat and sweat. These responses are activated by an external trigger such as danger, affection, or distressing news or by internal stimuli such as thoughts and memories. Feelings are the experience and interpretation of the emotions. An emotion activates a feeling usually. For today's journal, we will explore emotions and witness how we feel throughout the day.

Let's begin by thinking of a situation that brought up emotions in you. Take a moment to connect to the feeling that came up as a result. When faced with that feeling, connect with your breath and sit with the emotion, whatever it is: anger, shame, guilt, anxiety, frustration, fear, joy. Try not to inhibit or avoid it. Stay with it, accepting and being curious. Describe how you feel below:

Identify the emotion, and acknowledge that it is here to stay for a while, not forever. In your mind tell yourself:

"I recognize _____ in me". Stay curious, what messages does that emotion bring? Describe below:

Accept what is. There is no need to deny the emotion. Accept that it is present in your body. It is through acceptance that you bring the emotion into awareness, and that awareness helps and calms the mind. Try to open yourself to feel whatever you feel. Witness the feeling. Think of hugging the emotion as a mother hugs their crying toddler. Describe below how you feel:

Day 8: Befriending your emotions - Part 2



Date: _____

Emotions are impermanent. They will flood us, stay with us for a while and then dissipate. They come and go as tidal waves in the ocean. Your job is to allow the waves to come and go, witnessing their movement with patience and compassion.

We usually take emotions very personally, especially the most difficult ones. But as we witness them, we realize that they are mental events temporarily flooding our internal ocean.

From the situation and emotions felt yesterday, let's experience and write about them. Think to yourself, "While the emotion is temporary, it is here with me at this moment, how can I take care of it and what do I need?"

It is through observing our emotions that we are in a calmer state of mind, and we can investigate the cause of that emotion. The causes can be thoughts, worries, unmet needs, or boundaries crossed. With time, you will be able to choose the best way to respond to what happened to you. In the lines below, describe situations that trigger difficult emotions in you and try to understand how you react to them.

If you open yourself to befriend your emotions, you will see the impact in your everyday life, it is transformative. Express below any changes you notice.

Today I am grateful for _____

Day 9: Meeting your inner child



Date:

We all have a young and childlike part of us. This part is playful and free, full of joy and excitement for life. They are very connected to our most wise inner knowing. We can assess this part of us when we are feeling safe within ourselves, spontaneous and open. This is our inner child, and they are very playful and not shy. They live in the present moment and have no notion of time. When not acknowledged, this childlike part of us might be the one holding the steering wheel of our adult lives, reacting impulsively and selfishly.

The way we react to life events sometimes comes from our wounded inner child. And that wounded child needs to be nurtured and cared for. Our deepest wounds result from unmet emotional, physical and spiritual needs from childhood, and they continue affecting our lives even though we are not kids anymore. The inner child is a part of our psyche that was created when we had limited capacity to deal with emotions and challenges. The reality is that many of us are stuck in this childlike state. We are emotionally immature because we are small children in adult bodies.

Day nine is a special one, and the intention today is for you to start rebuilding the connection with the sweet inner child that lives inside you. The first step is to acknowledge that we have this part in us. They are only one part of us and don't need to control our lives, but they need to be heard, seen and validated.

I warmly invite you to witness your inner child and write a letter to them. It might feel weird at first, but spend some time witnessing yourself. Does your inner child show up during specific situations? Notice how different situations cause reactions and activate different behaviours. As you start feeling more comfortable, choose a quiet place and write a letter. You may find yours very wounded and sad. This might be a tender exercise, so take your time and be patient and compassionate towards yourself. There is no rush.

Day 10: Cultivating connections



Date: _____

We are social beings who regulate ourselves when in a social context. It is through connection with other humans that we self and co-regulate. It is revolutionary when we learn to feel safe around other people.

If you feel better amongst people and do not feel your best alone, please know that living in a community and cultivating relationships is part of human nature. There is nothing wrong with enjoying being surrounded by people.

Brené Brown reminds us that not everyone we know deserves to hear our stories. We must find safe people who hold space for us and earn the right to hear our stories.

Stop for a moment and think: who in your life allows you to feel safe and relaxed? Picture these people in detail: how they treat you, how your body feels around them, how you feel around them.

Is your support system interested and authentically willing to accept and listen to you? Spend some time reflecting on this sentence. There is no right or wrong; do not judge yourself or anyone. Write how you feel about it:

A promise I make to myself today is _____

Today I am grateful for _____

Dear friend,

This journal was lovingly created to help you in your healing journey.

It was inspired by readings and books on personal development, positive psychology, mindfulness and much of my own experiences. I hope that writing brings comfort and supports your growth.

One day, I promised myself I would write a journal to help people understand themselves a little bit better, and this day has come. I feel honoured to share these pages with you.

From my heart to yours,
Ana Atem



Ana Atem is a Registered Therapeutic Counsellor (RTC-c, RPC-C) in Canada and sees clients virtually at Ilumina Mental Health and Spirituality clinic.

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