

Keeping a Personal Journal

One of the most useful means for long-term self-development is the use of an ongoing journal. Such a journal, thoughtfully done, can assist us in paying closer attention to our lives and in developing our understanding of ourselves and others. It acts as a reflection of the inner course we are charting day by day, and can give us support, which we may seek from the outside world.

- **Purpose:** To afford you the opportunity to reflect upon the meaning and significance of events in your life as they apply to your inner self.
- **Focus:** Unfolding your awareness of the new meanings, values, and inter-relationships you are discovering in yourself and the world.
- **Values:** Presenting your ideas on paper enables you to formulate and clarify your thoughts and their accompanying feelings, thus enhancing the power and precision of your thinking.

When you make the move from simply thinking about something to actually writing it down, you are increasing your commitment to your own unfolding consciousness.

Writing enables you to distinguish and choose which of your thoughts are important enough to be documented, thus getting you in better touch with your sense of values.

Once you record your ideas on paper, you do not have to be preoccupied with the thought of losing them. The writing makes “room” for new avenues of thinking that you may not have had time to previously consider.

Writing is an effective, yet harmless way of “letting off steam” by providing you with a “fully accepting friend” that allows you to discharge your tensions and to vent all of your powerful and disruptive emotions.

- **Themes & Categories:** In addition to the free-flowing written material of your thoughts, feelings, and observations, you may also choose to include:
 - Drawings or other visual materials (e.g., dreams, fantasies, symbols, or diagrams) that are useful in clarifying or expressing your idea.
 - Illustrations from magazines or newspapers which capture the thought or image you are writing about.
 - Personally meaningful quotations you may have read or heard.
 - A section entitled “Bright Ideas” may help you to brainstorm about all the possible alternatives to your thoughts.

