



LEARNING JOURNAL

Purpose/Value: A safe place and useful process to record, examine and reflect upon our experiences in order to learn from them. Journaling enables us to:

- See the choices we make and gain insight into their impact
- Organize, creatively think about, and critically evaluate what we learn
- Know ourselves better

“Experience is not what happens to a man. It is what a man does with what happens to him.” Aldous Huxley

Journal Entries: There are many possible ways to use a journal. The best approach is the one that helps us understand ourselves better. Some possible approaches are listed below:

When something happens that is troubling &/or you are not getting the results you want, briefly describe 3 things:

1. **Event:** What happened i.e. what you saw, heard, felt. The observable facts vs. your reaction to it.
2. **Reactions:** Your reaction to the event i.e. what you thought, felt, wanted, did. This is a rich potential source of learning since we differ in the way we each react to events. There is no need to focus on all 4 aspects (thoughts, feelings, wants and actions) for each event. However, the learning from each may be different.
3. **Learning:** Insights you gain as you reflect on your reactions to the observable facts. This may not be clear at the time you record the event and your reactions, so leave some space and go back to it a few hours or days later.

OR Focus on questions such as:

- What is causing me to feel uncertain or anxious? Why?
- How am I addressing the situation?
- What did I expect would happen? What actually happened?
- What am I really trying to do in this situation?
- Is this like any other situation I've approached and if so, how?
- What are other possible approaches and what would happen if I approached it that way?

Other possible things to record and reflect upon:

- Feedback you receive – ‘Admire it’ i.e. hold it out and consider it before taking it in and ask yourself, “could this be true of me?”
- Goals for learning and change
- Reactions to and insights on things you've read
- Thoughts that may not yet be fully formed so you can review and refine them before you “go public” with them

“Each of us experience life in a unique way and that is worth writing about!” Margaret James-Neill

Establishing a Discipline of Journaling:

- Set time to periodically write in your journal (e.g. daily) and periodic time (e.g. weekly) to review your journal and think about what you're learning.
- Write parts of the journal that come naturally first (e.g. events, reactions). Then add to it as you consider things more.
- Adopt techniques for deepening your learning such as reading your journal entries out loud to yourself or into a tape recorder and replaying the tape. Considering the thoughts and feelings it stimulates. Consider reading parts of it out loud to a friend and ask for their insights.

“Freedom is what you do with what's been done to you” Jean-Paul Sartre

“Our life is what our thoughts make it” Marcus Aurelius