



## MOLLY JO'S JOURNALS: TIPS FOR JOURNALING

Journaling purposes vary for everyone, and one person can have various reasons to journal. The most important things to know are

- There is no wrong way to journal.
- What works for someone else may not work for you.
- What works for you with one journal, may not work with a different journal.

A journal is a fancy word for notebook. Broken down, it's exactly that: a note-book. A place to store notes. And notes come in many forms. Once you pair a pen and journal, you enjoy:

- creativity • organization • list making • mental relief • memory keeping • working things out • goal setting • challenges • successes • trust • a deeper understanding of self and others
- and much, much more •

### GETTING STARTED:

**First, what do you want to track?** Finding your reason will help you find your journal.

You don't need a recipe keeper if your desire is to sketch. Themed journals and guided journals offer questions, quotes, and open-ended thoughts to prompt your writing.

**Next, think about how you want to journal:**

- A lined-page notebook and pen work well for linear thinkers
- Free-flow thinkers benefit from blank pages and colored pencils or ink
- Creative people make use of bullet journals, washi tape, and stickers

If it's hard for you to just put thought to paper, give your journal a name. Create a persona and let your journal know they are important to you. Share your world with them. Make a mental note to spend a few minutes with Journal. Use Journal as an excuse to forgo that blind date. Take Journal to the park and let Journal capture your thoughts, feelings, ideas, fears, and a few coffee stains.

Draw. Scribble. Cross out sentences. Circle. Use colored pencils. Highlighters. Stickers. But don't get so caught up in the decorating that you forget to journal.

### DEVELOP THE HABIT:

Cultivate the habit of writing **every day**, and if possible, the same time each day. You'll soon look forward to your "me" time, and your pages will begin to fill with your thoughts.

Start each day by writing for fifteen minutes:

- Three to five items for your daily to-do list
- Something you're looking forward to
- Something you're dreading
- Scribble or sketch random images for five minutes
- Make a list of people you want to talk to this week, and why

In the evening, write the day in review. Did you accomplish your lists? What were your successes or near misses? Do you need to vent about something/someone?

Bring your journal with you to make notes throughout your day. Let it hold the feather you found. Do a pencil rubbing of tree bark or stone. Jot a quick note to expand on at a later time.

Allow a few pages at the front or the back of your journal to keep a list of things to journal about:

- If you're keeping a prayer journal, who are the people you regularly pray for?
- Are you tracking your budget or health? Have a monthly checklist to report on
- Blogger or public speaker? Topics are endless
- Ask yourself questions you want to answer
- Ask yourself questions you don't know the answer to, but want to find out
- Keep a Favorites List: movies, books, foods, music, moments; and when you need something to write about, you'll have an endless selection to choose from

As you continue to exercise the muscle of journaling, you'll learn what works for you, and what doesn't. You'll find your own ways of utilizing the paper to your benefit.

### BOTTOM LINE:

**Your journal is a safe place.** Don't be afraid to explore thoughts and ideas, and write out your secrets. After a few pages, you can look back and see the progress you've made by focusing on getting to know yourself better through the power of paper and pen.

**Your journal wants to be your best friend.**



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