



Complements Integrative Medicine Quarterly News



Journaling for Health

Greetings!

How can such a simple strategy such as writing in a journal be so effective in helping us lead healthier and even happier lives? In this issue of *Complements* we will explore the answers to that question.

In Diana Boehnert's article on Journaling for Health, she lays the foundation for how this process works, and some simple ways to get started. Antoinette Ledzian (aka The Journal Lady®) shares her experiences of working with children and how they use journaling as an expressive outlet.

Fall can be a busy season, but if you can, join us for several special Journaling for Health educational events. Look for more details in this newsletter.

I look forward to the fall and winter to start new creative projects. This might be a good time for you too, and after reading this issue, you may decide that it's the right time to get started on your own journaling project.

Kelly

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Journaling for Health

by Diana Boehnert, BFA, MFA



"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters, compared to what lies within us."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is from personal experience that I have come to the realization that self-exploration is indeed a challenge. It is part and parcel of what lies behind us. This is why there seems to be a renaissance of the written word. Journaling to tell our story, to deal with issues, to clear the air, to gain insight, has become a rich tool for personal growth. While it can be a venue for venting, the journal can also be a place to reflect and potentially create change in our lives. But the most intriguing aspect of journaling is that studies have shown that revealing one's innermost thoughts and feelings can be beneficial for our health. It is actually hard work for the body to hang on to and store what needs to be released.

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Upcoming Issues in 2005

- Energy Medicine
- Art for Healing



Nutrition—December, 2004



Coming up in the next issue of *Complements*, look for an interesting article on Food and Mood. Michelle Fuhrman, our contributor on this article, will also be the

guest speaker at the December Lunch and Learn program at Hartford Hospital. Details can be found in our Fall Programs flyer.

Also in the December issue, Jennifer Bell writes about Functional Foods— are they hype or not and Ann Zogbaum gives us some tips on organic foods.

Along with these articles, you will find recipes and some ideas for de-stressing around the holidays.

Journaling for Health

Putting pen to paper to write about our experiences along with our feelings connected to those experiences, has a two-fold result; one-definite physiological changes in the body occur, and two-we gain insight. Studies conducted in the 1990s by James Pennebaker demonstrated that electrodermal activity (measured by skin conductance on hands and feet) dropped when someone shared their experience of a traumatic event. These studies also showed that blood pressure and heart rate increased during disclosure, but fell to levels *below* what they were when the talking or writing started. Pennebaker also found that “people who wrote about their deepest thoughts and feelings surrounding traumatic experiences evidenced heightened immune function compared to those who wrote about superficial topics”.¹ Additional findings documented that benefits were still evident in 6 weeks following the disclosure and that health center visits for illness dropped for the people who wrote about traumas compared to those who wrote on the trivial topics.² Brain-wave activity results showed that the letting-go experience of confronting trauma brought about congruence between the left and right hemispheres. In short, research shows that journaling aids in healing physical and emotional trauma. Some examples include: rheumatoid arthritis patients who had reduced pain; asthma patients who experienced improved breathing;³ patients whose wounds were found to heal faster;⁴ and laid-off engineers who were able to find jobs quicker.⁵ Many of the health advantages of journaling are related to the mind-body connection as determined by John Sarno, MD of the NYU School of Medicine. Dr. Sarno found that “once patients develop the insight into how the stress in their lives can



influence pain, their symptoms improve because the body no longer needs to sympathize.”⁶

Pennebaker’s most recent work in analyzing people’s stories examines the words they use in the telling of that story. Even the language we use to describe our lives can indicate if someone is on the road to better health. Keeping the words positive and keeping the focus on oneself helps to create a new perspective. Once we have gained insight into a situation our perceptions open and the possibility of acceptance and change comes through the door. Writing just 15 minutes, 3 times a week, can change our lives in a matter of weeks. But making a commitment to finding our inner voice and maintaining that voice does take time and effort, and finding the time is no easy matter.

The phrase “*time is a healer*” comes to mind, and time is what our spirit needs as it waits to be fulfilled. I can give a myriad of suggestions on ‘how to’ journal but only you can feel its effects enough to be motivated to continue the journey – and that journey need not be another chore. It can be an opportunity to free your creative spirit.

I have found it helpful to read published journals and diaries to inspire me to create my own version of how I want to experience life. You may start to find inspiration through others by reading Hugh Prather’s insightful *Notes to Myself* or the uncompromising *Diaries of Anais Nin*. For those of you who would like to create journals that incorporate visual images as well as writing, you might look up Peter Beard’s documentation of the nature and culture of Africa or seek out the delightful journal of Sarah Midda’s

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How Do I Get Started?

Here are some suggestions on how you can get started on journaling:

- Find a private spot to write
- Write at least 15 minutes, 3 times per week
- If you run into a blank, repeat yourself until something else comes forward
- Keep it private—don’t share—it’s YOUR process
- Vent if you must—then read it over and write it again—reflect on how you FEEL
- Write from the voice of “I” - when you have achieved some level of perspective, your voice may change to “we” as you begin to integrate into the community.



Journaling for Health

take on France. Adding the element of visuals to a journal can enrich the experience. The accumulation of the bits, pieces, and ephemera of your life can add character and personality to a journal, but drawing and painting what comes up when you finally take the time to check-in with your feelings adds even more authentic results. In the book *Visual Journaling*, Barbara Ganim and Susan Fox “found that the act of drawing or painting enables one to energetically move an emotion outside the body where it can no longer activate the internal stress response.”⁷ Your journal can be an outlet for any stress or anxiety in your life, whether it is the result of a traumatic incident or joyful event.

As you investigate some of the resources mentioned at the end of this article and the next page, be aware that there are some books that can give you wonderful ideas on how to create journals, but your individuality is unique. The appearance and content of your journal are an expression of who YOU are, but remember, your primary goal is not how it looks, not how it reads, but how it expresses the deepest pain and the greatest joy of your experience. With that said, let me say that – *what is written is not etched in stone and it is only the fleeting expression of one moment in time and does not comprise the whole of one’s life*. Be compassionate with yourself – allow yourself the time to search for the answers your heart can reveal to you. Move on the faith that others have worked for you to reap the benefits of taking advantage of such a simple process and accrue health benefits to maintain a sense of wellness. What lies within us is definitely not a tiny matter – it is the sum and substance of all that we are – a mind, a body, and a spirit!

REFERENCES:

1. Pennebaker, J.W. *Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions*. New York: The Guilford Press; 1997, p37
2. Ibid.
3. Smyth, JM, et al. Effects of writing about stressful experiences on symptom reduction in patients with asthma or rheumatoid arthritis. *JAMA* 1999;281: 1304-1309
4. Banburey, CL. Wounds heal more quickly if patients are relieved of stress: A review of research by Susanne Scott and colleagues from King’s College, London. Presented at the Annual Conference of the British Psychological Society. *BMJ* 2003; 327:522
5. Spera SP, et al. Expressive writing and coping with job loss. *Acad Management J* 1994; 37:722-733
6. Sarno JE. *Healing Back Pain: The Mind-Body Connection*. New York: Warner Books; 1991
7. Ganim, Barbara, Fox, Susan. *Visual Journaling: Going Deeper than Words*. Illinois: Quest Books; 1999, p53

Diana Boehnert is the Artist-in-Residence at Hartford Hospital and Coordinator of Integrative Medicine’s ART for Healing Program. Diana can be reached by email at: dboehne@harthosp.org.

3 Opportunities to Learn More—Call Health Referral Service at 860-545-1888 to Register!

Thursday, Sept. 30, 2004
HH—ERC 217, 12 noon to 1pm
Introduction to Journaling for Health

Join us for this introductory session on the process of exploring our experiences through journaling. We will explore the idea of creating one’s own personal journal and how the creative process along with journaling has been proven to benefit one’s health and enhance our lives.
Fee: FREE

Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2004
Wethersfield Healthcare Center
6:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Journaling for Health—Part 1

Learn a variety of journaling techniques proven to benefit your health. Join us in this creative process of intuition and imagination for self-discovery and deeper understanding of our inner world including how to manifest change. This workshop is facilitated by Hartford Hospital Artist-in-Residence Diana Boehnert, BFA, MFA, Expressive Arts Certified.
Fee: \$28.*

Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2004
Wethersfield Healthcare Center
6:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Journaling for Health—Part 2

In **Part 2** we will create a journal that will be as unique as we are individual. Using a variety of colorful papers, inks, fibers and findings, we will allow ourselves to have some playtime. Come prepared to get a little messy! This workshop is facilitated by Artist, Kelly Taylor.
Fee: \$28.* (*Fee includes all materials. Register for both for \$50.)

Recommended Reading List

1. Beard, Peter. *Beyond the End of the World*. NY, NY: Universe Publishing; 1998
2. Cameron, Julia. *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. NY, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam; 1992
3. Capacchione, Lucia. *The Power of Your Other hand: A Course in Channeling the Inner Wisdom of the Right Brain*. North Hollywood, CA: Newcastle Publishing Co., Inc.; 1988
4. Capacchione, Lucia. *The Creative Journal: The Art of Finding Yourself*. North Hollywood, CA: Newcastle Publishing Co., Inc.; 1989
5. Capacchione, Lucia. *The Creative Journal for Teens: Making Friends with Yourself*. North Hollywood, CA: Newcastle Publishing Co., Inc.; 1992
6. Eldon, Kathleen M., ed. *The Journey is the Destination: The Journals of Dan Eldon*. NY, NY: Chronicle Books; 1997
7. Ganim, Barbara, Fox, Susan. *Visual Journaling: Going Deeper than Words*. Illinois: Quest Books; 1999
8. Kahlo, Frida. *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-portrait*. NY, NY: Harry N. Abams; 1995
9. Myers, Linda Joy, Phd. *Becoming Whole: Writing Your Healing Story*. San Diego, CA: Silver Threads; 2003
10. Nin, Anais. *The Diaries of Anais Nin*; Harvest Books; 1969
11. Pennebaker, J.W. *Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions*. New York: The Guilford Press; 1997
12. Prather, Hugh. *Notes to Myself*. Moab, Utah: Real People Press; 1970
13. Prather, Hugh and Gayle. *Notes to Each Other*. NY, NY: Bantam Books; 1990
14. Price, Daniel. *How to Make a Journal of Your Life*. Berkeley, CA; Ten Speed Press; 1999
15. Progoff, Ira. *A Journal Workshop: The Basic Text and Guide for Using the Intensive Journal Process*. NY, NY: Dialogue House Library; 1975
16. Slonim Aronie, Nancy. *Writing from the Heart: Tapping the Power of Your Inner Voice*. NY, NY: Hyperion; 1998
17. Truitt, Anne. *Prospect: The Journal of an Artist*. NY, NY: Scribner; 1996

Visit The Prosperity Garden



Looking for a special gift?
Come to the ERD-2nd Floor to
find a variety of handcrafted
goods, unique jewelry, one-of-a-
kind greeting cards and seasonal
items.

There's always something new at
the Garden!

Open Monday through Friday
9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Journaling for Health



Sensible Journaling with Children

By Antoinette Ledzian

In a world bombarded with noise and impatience, the importance of learning how to be still, relax and focus on the moment is becoming a lost art and critical necessity. We must return to our senses! A journal can become a child's best friend

and invaluable outlet for channeling all the stimuli which often overwhelms the most mature adult!

Children are naturally lighthearted, truthful, imaginative, curious, enthusiastic and passionate. These perfect ingredients are a healthy mix for expressive journaling which uses art, words, collage, and doodles to capture thoughts and feelings.

Here at *A Writer's Garden*, the main goal of our summer camp is to encourage young people to use their journal pages as a playground for ideas. There are no mistakes or competition. Emphasis is on the process, not the product. The week's artistic exercises encourage relaxation and creative spontaneity. Inevitably *rough* drafts become *final* pieces as the children work mostly on the right side of their brain where judgment and criticism are non-existent.

One 9-year old girl who had lost her father when she was 7, was finally able to think positively of him again as she painted a beautiful, effervescent grasshopper during a journal exercise which was dedicated to someone special in the life of the young person.

A jubilant mother exclaimed journaling camp had helped her son through the 8th grade with possibilities which made him feel like he could do anything. "He filled his journal all year long," Kate beamed!

Some children have returned four years in a row to continue this invaluable practice of journal keeping . . . a free, fun, stimulating way to record one's growth, health issues, feelings, diet, activities, likes, dislikes, fears etc. The patterns which evolve from simple journaling accentuate the child's experiences which, in turn, become an invaluable source of health and wisdom in later years.

Organizing one's life in a playful way, using blank journals in any size or shape, should be an integral part of every child's early training. Experimenting with a variety of writing tools and art supplies, and paying no attention to misspellings are a few tips for effective journaling.

Slow down! Listen to the various songbird serenades. Taste honey from a waxed comb. Feel the pen touching the paper as you write from your senses. Have FUN, at any age!

In Joy, Antoinette

Antoinette Ledzian (aka The Journal Lady®) is an Expressive Arts Facilitator who believes inspiration is the key to helping students *learn* and *grow* through art, writing and journaling. Antoinette is owner of *A Writer's Garden* and *Art Bound Camp*, and has been involved with the arts for over 50 years. Her first daughter was born in Hartford Hospital 30 years ago! Antoinette can be reached by email at: journalady@earthlink.net.

Recipe for Fun

An easy and fun way to get your children started on journaling is to have them create a journal about vacation time. Have them explore and express their own ideas as you provide encouragement through the process.

1. Draw pictures of some favorite vacation memories.
2. Cut the pictures out and glue them onto heavy cardstock that will be used for your pages. You can also use photographs and findings from your trip. Findings might include ticket stubs, pieces of shell, bark from a tree, dried flowers, etc.
3. When gluing items and pictures onto the page, leave a one-inch border along the left-hand edge and enough space for writing around the pictures and findings.
4. Create a front and back cover using heavy cardboard. Cut cardboard slightly larger than the pages so you have a small overlap.
5. Measure, mark, and then punch three evenly spaced holes along the left-hand edge of the covers. Holes should be punched between ¼-inch and ½-inch from the edge.
6. Covers can be decorated with colorful papers, paint, lettering. Let your imagination guide you.
7. Using the covers as a guide, mark pages for holes, and then punch. You may wish to use hole reinforcements to protect holes from ripping.
8. String covers and pages together using ribbon, twine, or any variety of interesting fibers.



From a personal perspective

The reasons for journaling are as unique as we are individual. For some, the focus may be on a particular health issue, such as receiving a life-threatening diagnosis. For others, journaling may provide an outlet for fear or anger or an avenue to express joy and enlightenment. No matter what the reason, journaling is a tool that we all have available to us. In a clinical setting, journaling may be recommended to patients, but it is also a useful tool from caregivers, medical professionals and support staff.

Hartford Hospital's Pastoral Services Department included journaling in their curriculum for the Summer Unit of the Clinical Pastoral Education program. A journal-making workshop was included in the orientation of the summer chaplain interns, and each was asked to write in their journals throughout the internship. The reactions to completing this assignment varied. While a few embraced the journaling project, others were unsure of what the outcome or benefits might be. As they near the end of this project, two chaplains share their experience and thoughts about journaling during their internship in the CPE program:

Maintaining a diary or journal is something I have often thought about doing over the past 50 plus years. However, I never felt really motivated to follow-up on these inclinations. Isn't that "for girls" anyway? So, when I learned that I was required to maintain a weekly journal of my experiences as a chaplain in the Summer Unit of the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program at Hartford Hospital, well, let's just say that I was not completely thrilled.

As each week approached, I could sense my resistance to this task building within me. Then, suddenly, after only a couple of weeks, I found myself eager to find the time to be alone in order to reflect my thoughts, feelings and actions of the day in my journal. Those became very sacred times for me and I felt deprived if I couldn't find the time to make the latest journal entry as quickly as I wanted.

In the end, I realized that my instinct over the years to engage in journal writing had been accurate and that it is not "just for girls." Going forward, I am committed to maintaining a journal especially during those periods of my life that are filled with change, challenge and conflict...which is almost all of the time. The opportunity to engage in journal writing is an experience I will always cherish and for which I am indebted to Hartford Hospital and its CPE program.

Will
W.H. Mebane, Jr.



Until the day I made this very journal that was used during this summer, I had been keeping journals, though not as faithfully as I did these past ten plus weeks. One of the greatest joys I have had about the keeping of this journal is that I created it myself. Of all the journals I have kept in my life, this one is so special to me. My own creativity and my own handiwork.

Coming to the use of the journal, I can't count how many times I would have broken down with sickness and exhaustion if I did not have a re-fueling source—My Sacred Text. This may sound blasphemy to some, but the truth is that in book, I put down even in a nut shell my daily consultations and end of day checking-it-out, with the One who has sent me into this mission, Christ Jesus who is also God.

At first I did not know I was going to be presenting this to my supervisor, I was as truthful and honest with my spiritual, emotional and even social life as well as other aspects of my life in that book. From then, I had nothing to hide because of the trust and confidence I did place on my supervisor from that first beginning. Again, because I know I was required to show it to my supervisor, I was more faithful to the writing in there than I would have been if the requirement was not made.

Finally, though not necessarily the reason, my openness in my journal and the consequent sharing of some deep and personal issues in my life brought a more intimate and close relationship with my supervisor. She became therefore not only my supervisor, but also my mentor, my sounding and bouncing board as well as a friend in these intense, anxiety-packed weeks. I bounced through it all with amazing energy, joy and peace. The enthusiasm with which I started this program never went down even as we draw very close to the end. Thanks to MY FRIEND AND COMPANION, CHANGE which is the title of my journal. Thanks also to Kelly Taylor (journal-making workshop facilitator).

Ngozi Udoye

Journaling for Health

Quotes That Inspire!



Listed here are quotes that may provide some needed inspiration to get you over that first “getting started” hurdle—

It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result. ~Mahatma Gandhi

Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now.
~Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see that, in truth, you are weeping for that which has been your delight. ~Kahlil Gibran

For every minute you are angry you lose sixty seconds of happiness. ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice. ~Cherokee Expression

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.
~Mark Twain

Often people attempt to live their lives backwards; they try to have more things, or more money, in order to do more of what they want, so they will be happier. The way it actually works is the reverse. You must first be who you really are, then do what you need to do, in order to have what you want. ~Margaret Young

In addition to quotes, favorite topics may be another source of inspiration: travel , gardening, family or music may be topics that will help get you started. Once you begin, tackling health issues and other concerns will come more easily.

Journaling Information on the Web

Check out these journaling websites for more information:

- The Creative Journal; The Art of Finding Yourself with Lucia Capacchione
www.healthy.net/creativejournal/
- Journaling or Writing for Health: Wellness and Preventive Medicine
www.sharedpaths.com/wellness/writing.htm
- James W. Pennebaker Home Page
<http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/HomePage/Faculty/Pennebaker/home2000/JWPhome.htm>
- Inspired to Journal
www.inspiredtojournal.com/
- Writing the Journey
www.WritingTheJourney.com
- The Center for Journal Therapy
www.journaltherapy.com



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Staff Profile



Bringing a unique combination of skills to the job, it is often said that **Kelly Taylor** “wears many hats”. As a 24-year member of the Hospital’s Health Science Libraries, Kelly provides Library support and information for the growing needs of the IM department. As an original member of the Integrative Medicine Committee, she supported the development of the department with literature search services, as well as helped to develop the Integrative Medicine collection that is housed in the Medical Library in Conklin Building, 3rd floor.

Her “other” hats define her role as adjunct staff in Integrative Medicine. As a certified instructor of Tai Chi for Arthritis, she coordinates Tai Chi education and provides instruction for special programs, such as New Beginnings, a breast cancer support group which meets in the Gray Cancer Center. As an

artist, Kelly has assisted in the facilitation of expressive arts workshops sponsored by Integrative Medicine, and the FACES Project, a mask-making workshop for survivors of domestic violence.

Outside of work, you can find Kelly busy creating in her home studio. If you visit the Integrative Medicine Prosperity Garden Boutique, you will find a variety of unique handcrafted cards and journals under the name of *Little Dog Art*. When not in her studio, working in the garden, or exploring Cape Cod, you will find her on the road helping to transport rescued animals to new adoption and foster homes, or volunteering with Yankee Chihuahua Rescue And Adoption. Kelly lives in Glastonbury, Connecticut with her husband Norm, kitty Winnie and of course, a little dog named Tobey.

All Natural—Recipes and Natural Food Tips



WHITE PEACH SORBET

2 cups spring water
1 cup sugar
grated zest of one lemon
3 cups peeled and sliced white peaches
3-4 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
1/2 tsp. almond extract

DIRECTIONS:

- Put the water and sugar in a non-reactive pot and heat gently, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is completely dissolved. Wash down any sugar crystals from the sides with a brush, or by swirling the liquid. Add the grated lemon zest, and simmer the syrup for five minutes, then remove it from the heat and allow it to cool completely.

- Combine the syrup with the sliced peaches and puree it all in a blender until perfectly smooth. Add three tablespoons lemon juice, blend well, and taste. Add more lemon juice, a drop at a time, until the sweetness of the peaches and syrup is balanced, and the flavor is lively.
- Chill the mixture, then freeze it in an ice cream freezer, according to manufacturer's instructions.

This makes about a quart of sorbet.



Overheard !

We write
to taste
life twice,
in the moment
and in
retrospection.

Anais Nin