



7 Tips for Starting a Journal—and Sticking To It

By Hanin Najjar

I have always loved journaling but I never felt that I had the time. With the pandemic and quarantine I've been trying to journal more and encourage my friends to as well. One of my friends recently surprised me and my other friend by buying and mailing us matching journals. Since then we've been sharing journal prompts and meeting on facetime to discuss our writing.

[Journaling](#) is such a rewarding practice. It can help you sort your thoughts, vent about something that's bothering you and set goals for where you want to take your life. The human subconscious is so intricate and complex, writing helps you figure it out and learn about yourself. Here are some ways to get started.

Write about something that is going on in your life

2020 is a year that saw many insane, historic moments. We can't possibly remember all of them. When something incredible or insane happens, write about it. What were you doing at that moment? How did you feel? You may want to be able to relive that moment years from now.

A lot of times we have a lot of things going on in our head and there are too many thoughts to sort through. Writing can help you navigate those thoughts and emotions and see how you feel about a certain situation or person.

Reflect on your past

An experience you had in your past or something someone said to you might be the reason you act a certain way or do certain things. By reflecting on your past you'll learn a lot about who you are. Don't be afraid to confront your shortcomings or faults. Identifying what's wrong can help you change for the better.

Make goals for the future

What do you want to accomplish in the next month? Next year? Next 5 years?

[Make goals](#) and lists of all your dreams. If you write them down, it's one step closer to them becoming a reality.

Go with the flow

Have nothing to write about? Sit with a paper and pen and write the first thing that comes to your head, a word, an image, a sound and go from there. Just keep writing and see what comes out. You don't have to write a lot or about just one topic.

Be creative

You don't have to write in just one language. Being bilingual, sometimes I express things better in Arabic than I do in English, so I'll start a sentence in one language and finish it in another.

Journaling doesn't just have to look one way. You can write paragraphs or make lists. Try writing a poem or drawing a picture.

Find inspiration

Take your journal to a park or a coffee shop. Start writing about what you see, hear, feel **and** smell. If you're sitting at home you can play a song or album and let your mind wander. What images do you see as you're listening? What colors? What are you thinking or feeling? Does this song remind you of a certain place or experience?

I often play songs that get me in my feels and in the mood to write. Create a playlist of songs you would like to write to.

Use prompts

Getting writer's block? There are so many [journal prompts](#) out there on different topics that you can use to get the juices flowing. Find a prompt you like and start writing.

You don't have to stick to one prompt. You make the rules. You can combine prompts or start writing about something that has nothing to do with the prompt.

Journaling is a very rewarding experience. Whether you are consistently writing every day or just when you need to clear your mind, journaling is a great tool for anxiety relief, to reflect on something that happened or to plan for the future.