

Why It's Good To Keep A Mood Journal

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Write Down Your Thoughts

Often, we mull over and worry about many things without conscious awareness of its pattern and purpose. When these concerns are left unattended, they can take a pathological form and contribute to emotional difficulties.

Keeping a track of your thoughts, feelings and the emotions that go along with them, in written format, can be helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of its association with events. It allows identification of the pattern of your reactions and behaviour. Additionally, it helps you to focus and gain clarity about your desires, fears and be open to yourself.

Therapeutic Benefits Of Writing

Notably, writing offers you a very personal space without the fear of being exposed or judged. It can also help develop transparency and a sense of honesty with yourself. Writing is also a form of self-help or self-psychotherapy. It has enormous therapeutic benefits. It is an investment in oneself, perhaps more so, than talking or psychotherapy for some.

It can strengthen your ties with yourself, as the visual feedback from the 'written thoughts' can enable timeless reflective opportunity that is essential for growth and personal transformation. When you verbalise and hear your thoughts, then you experience a sense of relief from

quiet suffering and a respite from inner chatter. Writing has similar effects, except that you 'pen your thoughts' and it's yours to keep. It is after this catharsis that the process of self-awareness and change takes root.

Stress has become an undeniable reality of our modern fast-paced lives, yet we live in denial of becoming overwhelmed, or that life issues have become overbearing. While major stressors like life events or significant life changes are apparent, minor day-to-day stressors, which pile up can be difficult to pinpoint. For many, identification of the stress sources isn't easy, as it is pretty normal to overlook the feelings, thoughts, behaviours and emotions that induce stress. Hence, jotting these down is important to reap the benefits of hindsight.

How To Get Started

A mood journal can be written on paper, or in digital format. You can write in sentences, words or even symbols, whatever works best for you. For some, imagery and drawing might say more than words. Here are some examples to consider for how you might want to write.

- ◆ Write a mood journal every time you feel stressed or experience different feelings. Work it backwards in your mind to link it to the event and significance of that event and your associated emotion. Ask yourself 'why did you feel the way you felt.'
- ◆ Another way is to write at regular intervals through the day. You may

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see an emotional pattern at different times of the day and the week. For example, feeling upset every time you talk about or mention a particular issue, or feel anxious and irritable at the end of the week, when you have an impending presentation at work on a Monday morning.

- ◆ Finally, question yourself as to what elicits your feelings. Start writing it all down and take note. Question yourself as to what caused the stress and how you felt at both, an emotional and physical level. What



response did that stressful scenario bring forth from you? The important factor to know is, what eventually restored the calm and brought you peace. What made you feel better and improved your spirits?

Unburden Yourself

Journaling on an everyday basis leads to a sizable collection of material for personal reflection. It is similar to talk therapy or psychotherapy, where it allows you to unburden yourself and commence a healing process.

Journaling is similar to talk therapy or psychotherapy

Therefore, why keep it in (your mind) where it is less apparent, than penning it down in a journal where it's visible and available for review.

Look Within

Journaling is the way to look inwards, to make coherent sense of the world

outside. When there is a conflict, self-reflection in the form of a mood journal or a collaborative approach with a therapist, can be of great help to assess and deal with errant emotions as talking or writing helps you to express yourself and see the connections between your thoughts and feelings. Thus, it is a powerful tool for self-transformation. In the words of author, Christina Baldwin, 'journal writing is a voyage to the interior.' So, set sail on the course of self-discovery and growth.