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TEN REASONS WHY JOURNAL WRITING IS A POWERFUL ALLY IN HEALING

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In addition to specific research findings, mental health therapists have documented extensively regarding enhanced treatment outcomes with their clients and/or patients who do journaling between sessions.

1. **Immediacy and availability**: A journal's immediacy lessens the need to rely on others (including health care professionals) during times of emotional distress.
2. **Observe health-enhancing cycles and patterns**: Our habitual behaviors either promote wellness or contribute to discomfort and disease. Observing behaviors through charts, logs or reflections offers valuable data that can be used to maximize wellness.
3. **Self-empowerment and self-esteem**: Journal writing encourages self-reliance and self-responsibility. The healing journey is literally mapped out, one page at a time, and the accumulation of life experience and wisdom adds up to the recognition that we are, in fact, the predominant creative forces in our own lives.
4. **Witness to healing**: The journal provides an ongoing record of the healing journey. Months and years down the road, you can look at past volumes to assure yourself that you *are* making progress, you *do* master wellness principles, you *can* heal.
5. **Strengthen intuition and inner guidance**: It is simply amazing how much wisdom we hold within us, and how reliably we can access it just by turning inward, asking sincere questions, listening, and writing down what we hear.



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6. **Catharsis and insight:** The important work of healing often brings with it a host of perfectly normal, but difficult, feelings—anger, fear, despair, frustration. When a person uses expressive writing, feelings are absorbed without judgment, censure, or reprisal, and the insight gained from catharsis is an important step in healing.
7. **Unconditional acceptance and silent friend:** One journalkeeper explained this premise very clearly, “My journal has become the *archetypal friend*. I have used and abused it more than any person would have tolerated. But it was always there waiting for me, totally accepting, totally present. I could ignore it, discount its value, and it never took offense. I never had to start over. I never had to apologize. What a blessed gift!”
8. **Get to know different parts of yourself:** Learning to listen to and communicate with your bodymind, Inner Healer, Healthy Self and other energetic aspects of the Self is one of the great gifts of journalkeeping.
9. **Expand creativity:** Once initial discomfort and resistance to writing (if present) is overcome, nearly every journalkeeper finds that writing can be a reassuring, nurturing, safe creative outlet for thoughts and feelings. This increased flexibility with the creative process often leads to spontaneous brainstorming of options and choices for wellness.
10. **Release past hurts and judgments:** Holding on to the past is a surefire energy drain. Resentment, guilt, blame and bottled-up grief block access to the Healer Within. The safe container of your journal receives it all, filling up and becoming more in the process, and prepares you to release old wounds and extend forgiveness to yourself and others.