

## Developing the rhythm of journaling ...

### Why Journal?

There are three keys to moving my life forward in a positive and productive direction ... ATTITUDE ... FOCUS ... PLANNING. A bad attitude causes me to lose focus which takes me off course of any plan I may have. A rhythm of journaling can result in attitude adjustment, refocusing, and reconnection to my plan.

The number one problem I face in coaching situations is that the journey to success is interrupted and derailed by the distractions that exist in our lives. We lose our way, because we have given in to the distracting noises in our head, the detachments in our soul, and the disrupting din of noise all around us. Journaling is the key to quieting the noise and designing my life.

### Keys to Success in Journaling

1. **Establish a regular rhythm** ... find a time in the day that best works for you and commit to journaling in that time. If you miss a day or two or more, don't beat yourself up, just start again.
2. **Pick a place** ... Mine is "the chair by the window" or "the chair on the balcony" ... it is the place you go to shut out the interruptions and be still. It is your place. It is a sacred space.
3. **Be Free**. This is for no one to read but you. You're just thinking on paper. Go beyond sequential thinking. One thought can trigger another ... just follow the path ... let the freedom of your mind govern your pen.
4. **Don't rely on mood** ... journaling is not about being in the mood to write, but rather disciplining yourself to do it.
5. **There are no rules**. It is your experience to make. It is your inner dialogue. It is your personal, private opportunity.
6. **Don't quit**. The key is to stay with it. If you miss a day or two, get back to it. If you struggle one day, go right back at it the next. Commit.

### Some Journaling Triggers

- **Write down a quote** from something you're reading, a scripture & reflect on it on paper.
- **Assess your day** ... identify the maximized part of the day ... write down an alarm point ... identify a question arising from the day ... etc. These can be valuable kicking off points.
- **Plan your day** ... write down the key activities or objectives of the day ahead and write through your thoughts and feelings.
- **Write out a reflection, a prayer, a meditation** ... express yourself on paper to God ... listen for his direction ... write down thoughts that come to your mind.
- **Write a poem** ... a song ... a story ... remember this is for you, no one else.

- **Write about a news event** ... something you read in the newspaper, viewed on the news.
- **Identify your feelings about a situation** or a person and describe, the what and why of it all. It is a great way to deal with your fears, your anger, your frustration, etc.
- **Work on a problem** ... define it, describe your feelings, identify possible solutions ... etc.
- **Write through a decision** ... pros ... cons ... feelings ... etc.
- **Write through your goals** ... action items ... barriers ... potential rewards ... feelings when the goal will be reached

### Journaling can ...

- ✓ **Shut out the noise** ... reduce the chatter and scatter in your life ...
- ✓ **Increase focus** ... bring balance to your thinking ... stimulate new thought ...
- ✓ **Clarify emotions** ... disentangle thoughts and ideas ...
- ✓ **Clarify the moment** ... Detach the past ... set your compass for the future ...
- ✓ **Bridge from thinking to action initiatives** ... order thoughts and identify action steps...
- ✓ **Establish a new stream of consciousness** ... be a catalyst for new thought...
- ✓ **Stimulate creativity** ... stimulate that creative, inventive, discovery, free-wheeling part of your brain where new opportunity emerges...
- ✓ **Get you past “stinking thinking”** ... deal with negative emotion and bad attitudes...
- ✓ **Challenges the status quo** ... forces it to stand aside while you explore...
- ✓ **Get you to the other side of a problem, issue, barrier etc** ... initiate movement...
- ✓ **It is an opportunity to approach life from the inside-out** ... connect to your soul...
- ✓ **It connects to dormant sources of wisdom and discovery** ... cause you to remember what is of true value...
- ✓ **It is an opportunity to connect with and commune with God!**

*H. Byne - 2007*