

Journal writing

Caroline Shola Arewa

Words are a form of Action capable of influencing Change.
(Ingrid Bengis)

Purpose

This strategy uses words and creativity to support clients as they learn and change as a result of coaching. Most change occurs between sessions and it's good to have ways of processing insights as they arise.

Description

Journaling works with the unconscious mind as it processes data from the conscious mind. This journaling technique offers a series of questions that can be used as they are, or adapted by clients to record their inner journey of change.

Early in the coaching relationship the client can be invited to keep a journal. It acts as a companion throughout the coaching journey, detailing achievements, progress, obstacles, weaknesses, insights and successes. Clients can then see at a glance how they are developing. It can be done any way the client chooses. This exercise is offered as a starting place.

Process

A journal is an excellent tool for enhancing performance and success levels. It allows you to express creativity and also

keep a record of your achievements and plans. Most of us keep notes and diaries but journaling is *writing on purpose*. Keeping a journal helps put words into action and change dreams into reality. It can help clarify, organize and reveal hidden parts of yourself and propel you towards greater achievement on all levels. Remember, your journal is personal; only share it if you wish to.

When writing, let the words flow; don't be concerned about grammar or prose. Try not to stand in judgement of yourself; there is no right or wrong way to keep a personal journal. Let the free spontaneous process of writing be a tool to work through conflicts. Witness your ideas becoming organized. It's wonderful to write after meditation as it allows you to capture any Aha moments, where all of a sudden everything makes sense. As you reflect on your journal it will reveal what you most need to know about yourself. Everything is a valuable part of your journey.

You will require a large A4, lined or unlined journal/notebook, pens and willingness to write freely and uncensored. Use the exercise below as a guide.

Daily journal suggested questions

Answer the following questions or others daily to enhance success:

- How did I spend my alone time today?
- How well did I communicate with people today?
- What can I improve?
- What was my biggest lesson today?
- What am I most grateful for today?
- How have I moved towards greater success?
- How much have I invested in my health today?
- What did I do really well today?
- What are my priorities for tomorrow?

Pitfalls

There are no associated problems with journaling when used in a coaching context. The client remains in control; however, this exercise sometimes uncovers difficult emotions.

Bibliography

Arewa, C. S. (2003) *Embracing Purpose, Passion and Peace*, London: Inner Vision Books.