

JOURNAL METHODS

TO PURPOSEFULLY WORK WITH THOUGHTS

Self-reflection is a tool to work with thoughts and emotions. By getting thoughts out of the mind and on paper, it can be easier to address them. There are many techniques for self-reflection. The four methods below may all be beneficial for different purposes. Read them and choose one to start with that resonates with you the most.

1. Write with Purpose



Using journaling to answer questions with a purpose can help access the thoughts that allow us to determine our perspectives, desires, and values. This style of journaling may best be done when there is time to think through responses and possibly revisit them too. Questions might not be able to be answered easily which could require jotting down thoughts and feelings until a resolution is resolved with satisfaction.

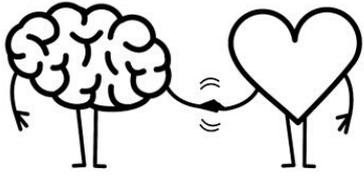
PROMPT: Make a list of your top 25 goals; determine from the list what 5 are the most important to you; circle those. Eliminate the other 20. Maybe not forever but for now. Use the top 5 things that are most important to you to help guide what you spend your time on and what you allow your attention to shift to. Warren Buffet popularized this writing activity in his strategy 'prioritize your time like a billionaire.' The more attention is allowed to spread the harder it can be to see anything through to fruition. Focusing attention is more likely to result in goals being realized.

2. Braindump



Humans have on average 60,000 thoughts a day, most being repetitive. Sometimes thoughts are nagging such that the brain repeats them over and over again as if it is worried about forgetting. Or the brain ruminates building stories of what might happen in the future or what could have been done differently in the past.

PROMPT: Set a timer for 10 minutes. Jot down everything that is on your mind, make lists, expand on the ideas. When the 10 minutes is up go back and prioritize anything you need to take action on. Cross out items that are not important.



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3. Continuous Stream of Thought



With this method start with a prompt but allow the mind to drift to any thoughts it desires. The objective is to just keep writing for a pre-determined amount of time. Be honest with yourself without worrying about grammar, spelling, or what anyone else would think if they read it. This technique can help dig deep on what is really inside that needs to get out.

PROMPT: Set a timer for 3-5 minutes and write down one of the following prompts below. Keep pen to paper and write whatever comes to mind inspired by the chosen topic. Your thoughts may change and answer other questions and that is okay. If you can't think of anything to write, write 'I'm not having any thoughts' over and over until a new thought pops in.

- 1) What I need the most is...
- 2) If I could do anything with my life I would....
- 3) I am most thankful for the following people...
- 4) What prevents me from living my passions is....
- 5) I feel stressed out when....

4. Pivoting Thoughts



During times of dis-ease, feeling down, or anxious make a list of everything that is bothering you or that you are having a difficult time letting go of. Once you feel more clear, perhaps after a better nights sleep or a few days later look at the list again; try to pivot every negative thought to a positive one. Perhaps by shifting the perspective of the experience or examining the gratitude in the situation.

PROMPT: I can flip the script and turn these negative thoughts into positive ones. What I think, I believe.