



of Greater Indianapolis

SEVEN DAY JOURNAL CHALLENGE

Ages: 12-18

Activity Description:

The Seven Day Journal Challenge allows participants to explore different forms of journaling with a different writing challenge every day!

Activity Purpose:

Develop new positive habits during our time at home through writing, self-reflection, creativity and self-appreciation.

Time:

20 minutes each day for seven days

Materials Needed:

- A journal (new or used, it doesn't matter!). I want to encourage you to NOT use technology (Microsoft Word, notes, ect) to journal. Putting pen to paper helps slow your thoughts and makes writing more relaxing.
- If you don't have a journal, grab some loose-leaf paper. We'll staple it together at the end of the week!
- A timer (the one on your phone works!)
- Your favorite writing utensil (pens, pencils, sharpies, markers)
- Art Supplies: Anything you enjoy getting creative with such as painting supplies (watercolor, paint brushes), colored pencils, crayons.

Activity Description:

During the Seven Day Journal Challenge, we're going to challenge ourselves to write every single day for seven days! Our main goal is to experiment with writing and explore different ways to journal.

I have always been a person who wanted to journal. I admired people who took the time to write for themselves. It's a great way to reflect and explore your own mind and allows you to look back on your thoughts. My problem is, whenever I start to journal, I'll begin optimistic and determined to write every day, then I'll forget a day (or a few days), feel discouraged, and ultimately abandon my journal. That's why the Seven Day Journal Challenge was created!

Our goal is to make the act of journaling a habit! Over the next week, we will try different journaling techniques. Trying out journaling techniques will help us break down barriers for what journaling "should" look like. We'll be able to discover something new and try out different journaling styles! Remember- this journal is for you and only you. Let's talk about why journaling is so beneficial.

Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold

What are the benefits?

- It can have positive, long-term effects on your emotional health. Read [here](#) to learn more.
- Help get your creative juices flowing!
- Help ease anxiety.
- Assist in goal setting.
- Help you recognize patterns of behavior.
- Help you understand how resilient you are! Proof you survived the bad days and seasons.
- Check out this article to learn more about the benefits of journaling [here](#)!

All those benefits sound great! But what do people write about in their journals?

What should I write about?

The real question is, what do you *want* to write about? **This may vary day by day. That's okay!** We don't need boundaries or limits. Writing about how a certain situation makes you feel is important. Writing a list of your worries or what you need to accomplish is important. Writing without rules and restrictions is important. We're not going to worry about writing what we "should" write about. We're simply going to write. We are going to focus on taking time for ourselves and writing.

Each day I'm going to provide you with a Challenge! These challenges will vary. Either print this document or save it digitally so you can come back and see your new daily challenge!

Day One: Create your writing space and set your journal intention!

You have two mini challenges today. We're going to open our journals and begin!

Challenge # 1:

- Create a comfortable space you're able to focus in. This should be a quiet, peaceful place for you to connect with yourself. For example, I've decided my writing space will be my desk or my bed.
- Make this space your own. Clear off anything that could distract you (that includes cell phones)!
- Things you may want to prepare before we journal:
 - Put on some music. You can play it from a speaker or put your headphones on. If it becomes a distraction, turn it off.
 - Bring a beverage. Some people feel more creative with a hot beverage.
 - Bring a timer.

Challenge #2:

Now we begin to write. Today, we're going to write about why we want to journal.

- Question: Why do I want to journal? What do I want to see happen as I begin this personal journal challenge? Am I nervous about any part of this? Write these questions at the top of your journal, set a timer for 5-minutes and don't stop writing until the timer goes off.

Okay! The timer went off. Write down these two questions and answer them in your journal:

- How did it feel to write?
- What did you expect? Was it what you expected?

Remember! Write honestly. This journal is only for you. You will not have to share with anyone. Today's goal is to dip our toes in, to see how it feels to write in a journal and talk about what we want to get out of journaling! Personally, I talked about how being vulnerable and quiet with my thoughts can be scary. Sometimes it's stressful, but I didn't feel as stressed after those first 5-minutes were over. I felt accomplished and happy with myself!

Give yourself a pat on the back for making it through Day #1! You accomplished your challenge for the day. Tomorrow's challenge is a morning journal, so sleep with yours by your bed.

Day Two: Morning Journal

For today's challenge, we're going to be journaling first thing in the morning! Once you wake up, grab your journal. Don't grab your phone! We're going to *free write*. Free write means you forget about spelling, grammar and having a specific topic. You start writing, and don't allow yourself to stop. Your challenge is to write three pages before stopping. You can write about what you want to do today, anything you're nervous or excited about, seriously anything at all! Write about whatever is on your mind. If your mind wanders to new places, let it and write about the mental journey! Three pages is your goal, it doesn't matter what it looks like or how long it takes!

Day Three: All About "Me" Lists

Today we're making lists all about you! For many people, making lists helps them organize their thoughts, to-dos, and ideas. Today, you're welcome to make a list like that, but I want to challenge you to make three different lists about yourself. Sometimes, talking or writing about ourselves is hard, but recognizing and giving credit to the wonderful things about yourself helps build self-confidence! Even if it feels funny, try your best.

First, make a list of all the things you like about yourself! Try *not* to focus on your outward appearance (ex: I like my hair). Focus on what you like about yourself on the *inside*.

Here's an example:

Things I like about me

- My sense of humor
- My patience
- My love for animals
- I'm respectful
- I try my best in school and at home
- I help my family
- My creativity

Another idea is to make a list of all your accomplishments! These can be big or small. Maybe your art was put in the art show at school, maybe your teacher gave you a nice compliment, maybe your sports team won an important game, maybe you helped your family with yard work.

Here's an example:

All My Accomplishments

- I got a third-place medal for beam in gymnastics
- I help my parents cook dinner sometimes
- I almost have all A's and B's
- I can speak Spanish
- I joined the robotics team even though I was scared
- I made a new friend at school this year
- I asked the new kid to sit next to me at lunch

Make a list of all the things you love to do, such as: What makes you happy? What makes you laugh? Dump it all into this list.

Here's an example:

Things I love

Myself!

My dog

My family

Flowers

Music

Anime

Robots

Once you've made your lists, write down these questions and answer them in your journal: How did it feel to make these lists? Was it hard or easy? Why do you think we made these lists?

Good job making through day #3! You're amazing!

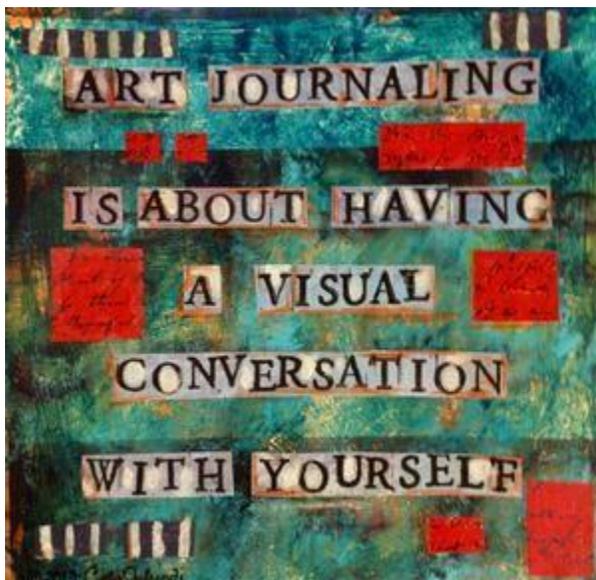
Day Four: Art Journal

Are you a doodler? Let's channel that creative energy into our journal today! Art journaling can be a combination of art (drawing, painting, doodling) and writing. Today in our journal we're going to pick a journal prompt off [this](#) website! Use these as examples, but don't compare yours!

The goal for today is to let go, get creative and have fun in our journals. There is no time limit. Try not to judge your art on how "good" it is. This is simply a way to express ourselves! Focus more on the process of art journaling than the finished project. For me in my journal, I chose to practice drawing animals. I had not done this in awhile so it was fun to be creative and see some cute animals in my journal!

Resource: Watch a Youtube video on Art Journaling [here](#).

Example below:



Day Five: Unsent Letter

I want to share a quote with you for today: *"If your journal writing is truly personal and kept from the prying eyes of even your closest family member or friend, then writing an unsent letter can be both cathartic and even revealing through the process of deep writing."*

Often times when we write in our journal, the audience is ourselves. We indeed should be writing for us, and no one else. But with the unsent letter, the audience is someone else who may or may not ever read the letter we write.

Human relationships can be challenging, unpredictable, and filled with both joy and pain. Sometimes there's so much that needs to be said in a relationship, but the verbal

communication can be so difficult and so misunderstood. The unsent letter is a tool for use to speak our mind, and express what we really think without the complicated mess of someone talking back to us.” ([Chavanu](#)).

For today’s challenge, you’re going to write a letter to someone you know. This letter will not be sent or given to them. Instead, you’re going to write to them about something that’s been on your mind. Maybe you want to tell them how a certain situation affected you or express how you feel when they do a certain thing. Remember, this is just for you. Be honest and let yourself write what you’re thinking.

Options: Set a time for 5-10 minutes.

Day Six: Prompts

If you don’t know what exactly you want to write about, journal prompts are a great way to get you writing about something you may have never thought about!

A journal prompt is just a question or idea that gets you thinking so you can write creatively! Here’s some websites that feature some prompts for you to choose from: [self-love prompts](#), [fun prompts](#), [middle school prompts](#). You can look through those and see if you are interested in any of them!

I wrote journal prompts for you to choose from if you do not feel like exploring the web.

- What does your ideal life look like? (you can make a list or free write)
- If you could give your young self some advice, what would it be? What about your older self? Think about how you could have helped your younger self if you had known something. For your older self, talk about something you never want to forget whatever age you are now! Maybe an experience you’ve had, or lesson you’ve learned.
- What’s something new you want to try?
 - This could be something small like trying a new food, or something big like traveling to a new country!

Day Seven: Gratitude Journal

For our final challenge, we’re going to begin to make a list of all the things, people, and even privileges we’re grateful for. I want you to let this be an ongoing list, and a list you can continue to revisit. The purpose of journaling about what we’re grateful for is to help us keep in mind all the good and positive moments we’ve lived through and enjoyed when those hard, almost impossible moments pop up.

Here’s an [article](#) on why gratitude journaling can help your mental health.

- Idea: You can make subcategories to help you organize the things you're grateful for. This might help you think of more things! You can set a timer for 10 minutes or write until you've filled a page.
- Examples include:
 - People
 - Things

- Friends
- Memories
- Places
- School

ACTIVITY RECAP

Discovery Questions:

- Did you journal every day? If you did or didn't, how did it feel?
- What form of journaling was your favorite? Why?
- What form of journaling was your least favorite? Why?
- What did you learn about yourself while journaling throughout the week?
- Now that the week is over, are you going to continue journaling?
- Why do you think journaling and writing is important in YOUR life?
- Are you going to continue journaling?

If you did this journal activity, please follow and tag [@GirlsInIndy](#) on Instagram! We'd love to see some of your lists, journal entries and art!