

# Journaling 102

Journaling modalities, habit theory, and tools to support student growth,  
creativity, and goal setting through journaling

Kay Kamienski



What are you hoping to get out of today's journaling session?

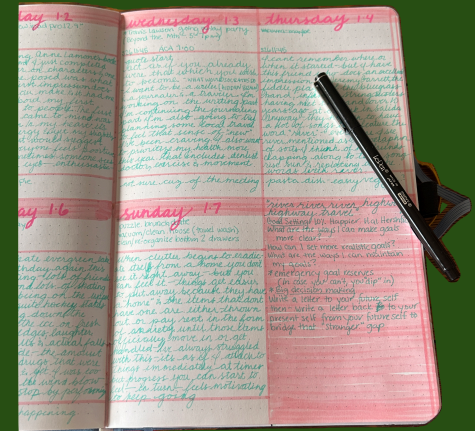


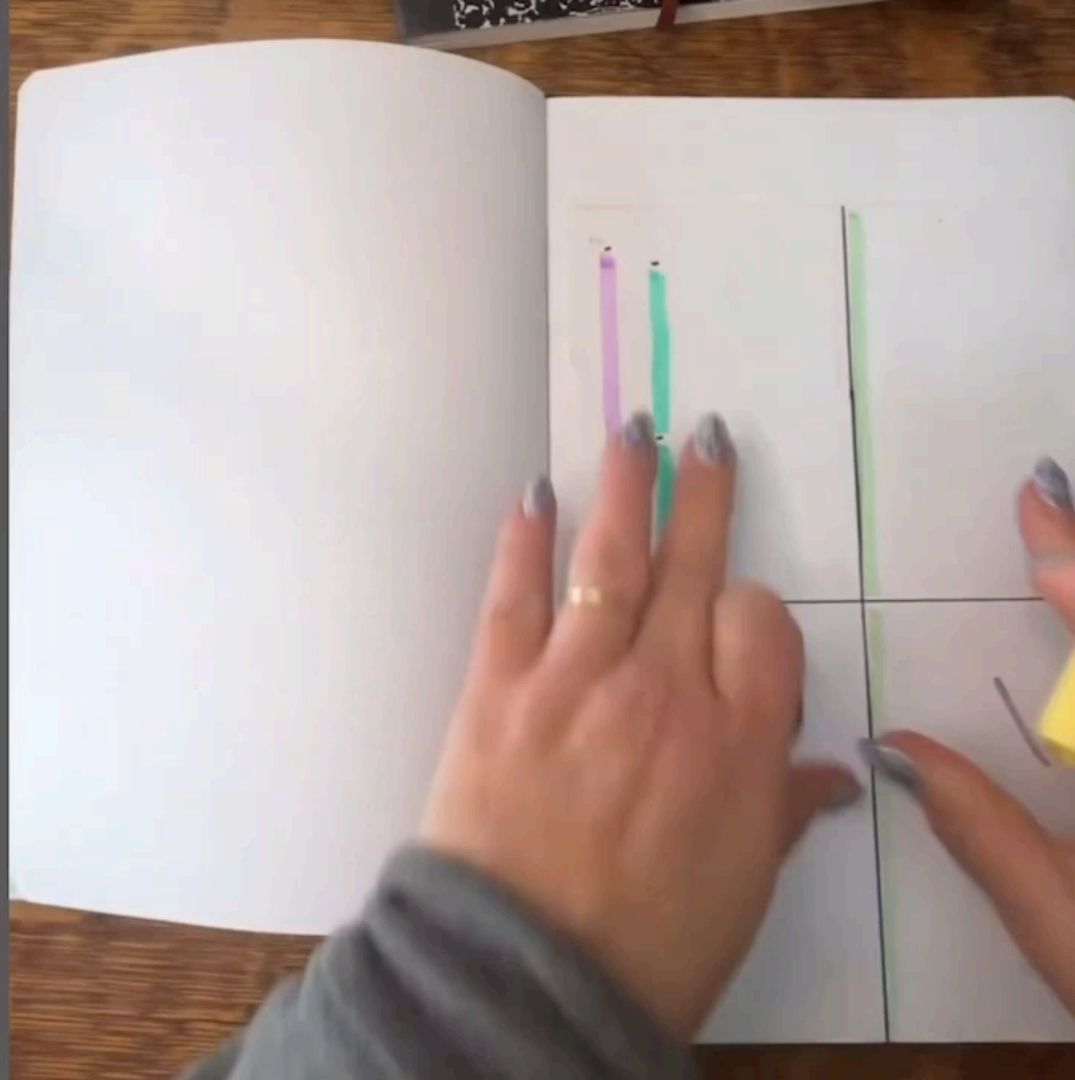
# Introduction

Who am I?



Every Learner Thrives





# Introduction

Essential Agreements for our session:

We will be curious with our writing.

We will be open-minded to new ideas.

We will record questions and thoughts without judgement.

We will take care of our needs as they come up throughout this session.

# Agenda

For this session we will:

- Review Neuroscience concepts related to journaling
- Discuss Habit theory and Habit formation
- Discover and discuss Journaling Styles & their benefits
- Examine Journaling prompts for different needs
- Address journaling tips and techniques for all learners

Session 3: Reflective journaling

# Session Objectives

At the end of this session you will be able to:

- \*Utilize habit theory and brain functions to support student journaling
- \*Understand the use of multiple forms of journaling
- \*Identify benefits of different journal styles
- \*Create supportive journaling prompts
- \*Learn to collaborate with students to create journaling goals



# Helpful Supplies

For this session you will need:

- some paper or notebook
- a writing utensil
- markers/crayons for coloring
- pencil for sketching
- ruler/straight edge

# Your brain on journaling

# Science and Journaling

## Resource Highlight:



drtaraswart 

Follow

Message




1,637 posts

340K followers


617 following

Doctor Tara

 drtaraswart

Science & Tech

REINVENT YOURSELF WITH DR TARA 

Podcaster & song writer 

Author of bestseller 'The Source' 

Prof @mit\_execed 

Trustee @ladygardenfoundation 

 [linktr.ee/drtaraswart](https://linktr.ee/drtaraswart)

# Science and Journaling



3 main brain processes that support journaling:

**Selective Filtering**

**Selective Attention**

**Value Tagging**

# Science and Journaling



3 main brain processes that support journaling:

## **Selective Filtering**

\*reading a newspaper today vs. 100 years ago

Brain adept on filtering out info irrelevant to your survival

Journal support - keeping ideas, goals, thoughts and positive affirmations in the forefront of our minds

# Science and Journaling



3 main brain processes that support journaling:

## **Selective Attention**

Cognitive process in which the brain attends to a small number of sensory inputs while filtering out what it deems unnecessary distractions

Journal Support: keep goals and thoughts in the forefront of the mind

# Science and Journaling



3 main brain processes that support journaling:

## **Value Tagging**

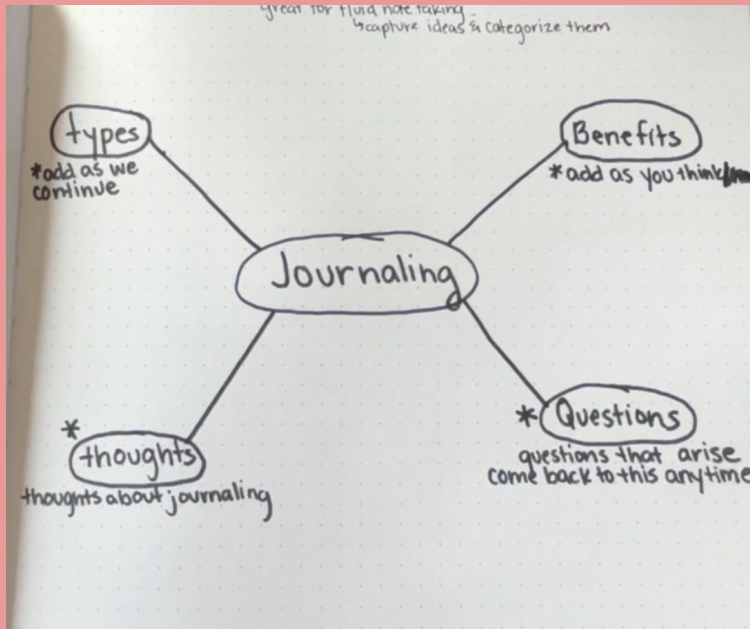
The importance your brain assigns to every piece of information it is exposed to i.e. people, memories, places, smells...

Journal support: recategorizing your priorities - placing goals and dreams over things like food/shelter/water (basic human needs)

**Once something becomes a real possibility in someone's mind, they're able to achieve it - can have strong ripple effects for students**

What can you make visible to your students through journaling?

How can value tagging, selective attention and selective filtering support your student's journaling practice?

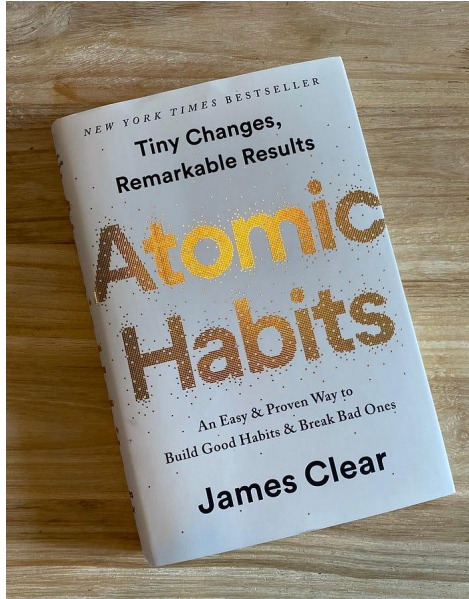




# Habit Theory

# Science and Journaling

Resource Highlight:



<https://jamesclear.com/quotes>

Instagram

Log



jamesclear 

Follow

Message



1,429 posts

1.3M followers

176 following

James Clear

 jamesclear

Author of Atomic Habits (atomichabits.com). I write about building better habits. people read my free email newsletter (see link)

 [jamesclear.com/3-2-1](https://jamesclear.com/3-2-1)

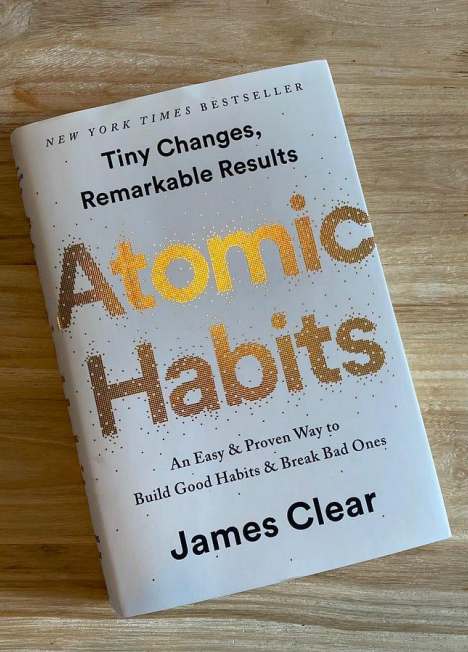
**SET**

**SYSTEMS**

**NOT GOALS**



# Science and Journaling



Habit theory can drastically support students when attempting to incorporate a life long journaling habit.

Habit theory highlights worth considering:

Starting small

Consistency over perfection

Developing journaling cues

Creating routines (environmental support)

Tracking and Monitoring

# Science and Journaling

One sentence a day builds a habit better than writing to the perfect prompt.

Habit theory highlights worth considering:

## **Starting small**

Consistency over perfection

Developing journaling cues

Creating routines (environmental support)

Tracking and Monitoring



# Science and Journaling

Opening your journal is consistency.  
Writing in it is perfection.

Habit theory highlights worth considering:

Starting small

## Consistency over perfection

Developing journaling cues

Creating routines (environmental support)

Tracking and Monitoring

2021 vs. 2023

	AM H <sub>2</sub> O	Journal/Gratitude	Stretch	Breakfast	Meditation	Push-ups	Plank	Uke Practice	Read	Lettering	E-mail	Job search (hrs)
1	✓	✓	×	×	•	×	×	•	•	•	•	•
2	×	×	×	•	•	×	×	•	•	•	•	•
3	×	•	×	×	•	×	×	•	•	×	×	•
4	×	×	×	×	•	×	×	×	×	•	×	×
5	×	×	×									
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
11												
12												
13												
14												
15												

Birthday

GREEN/BILLY

\*habit tracker\*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. sky before screen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. first 60 screen free	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•	✓	✓
3. read ♥*♥*♥	✓	•	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	•	✓	✓
4. check off tracker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. write one glimmer	✓	✓	✓	•	•	✓	✓	✓	•	✓	✓
6. do 1 Mwith class	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. read affirmations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. 10 push ups	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9. stretch session	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•	✓	✓
10. go easy on yourself	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
*no alcohol day	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
♥open Biz journal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

What motivation does Kay need to support her...

# Science and Journaling

Time of day. Location of journal. Items to collect for habit.

Habit theory highlights worth considering:

Starting small

Consistency over perfection

**Developing journaling cues**

Creating routines (environmental support)

Tracking and Monitoring



# Science and Journaling

Time of day. Location of journal. Items to collect for habit.

Habit theory highlights worth considering:

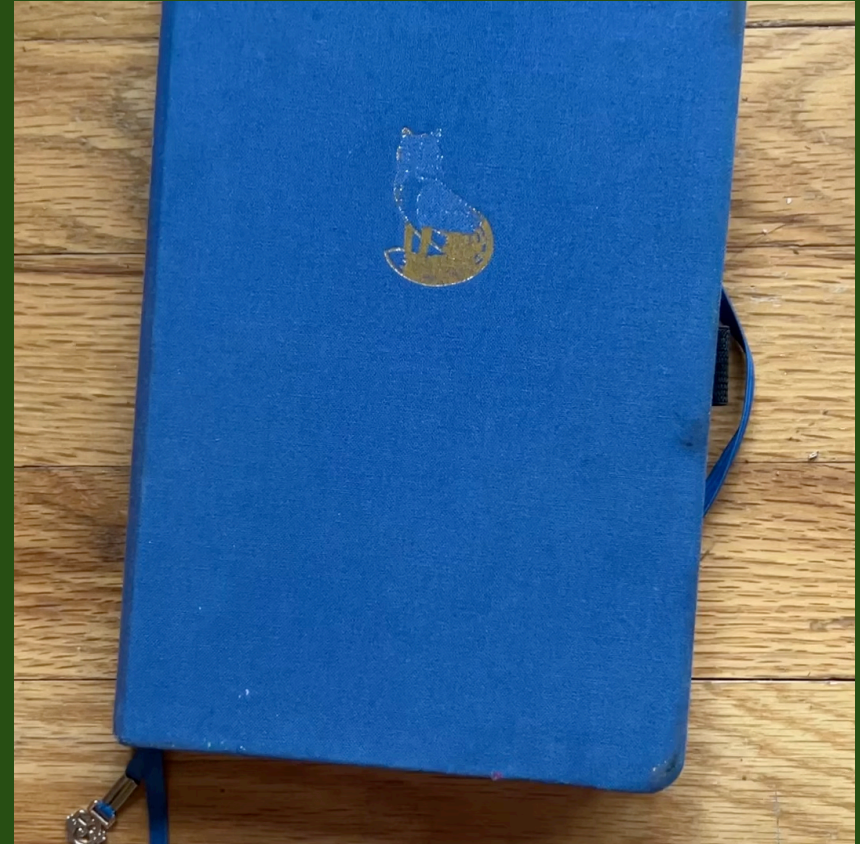
Starting small

Consistency over perfection

**Developing journaling cues**

Creating routines (environmental support)

Tracking and Monitoring





# Science and Journaling

Establishing rituals around journaling to create routines.

Habit theory highlights worth considering:

Starting small

Consistency over perfection

Developing journaling cues

**Creating routines (environmental support)**

Tracking and Monitoring



# Science and Journaling

Habit theory highlights worth considering:

Starting small

Consistency over perfection

Developing journaling cues

Creating routines (environmental support)

**Tracking and Monitoring**

Providing feedback and time to reflect each week is essential for continued growth.

What's important for the student's progress?

How can students identify successes?

How can students learn from mistakes?

# Let's Write!

How can you support journaling habits with students?

Which type of habit support will best help you as a journaling facilitator?

Starting small

Consistency over perfection

Developing journaling cues

Creating routines (environmental support)

Tracking and Monitoring



# Journaling Styles

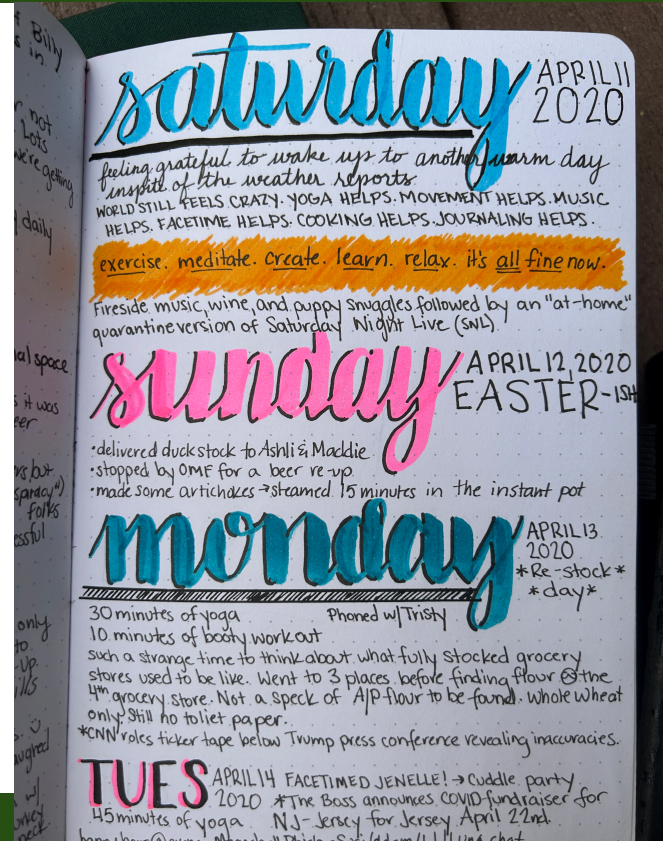
# Journal Types and Benefits

## Daily Log Journal:

What: write about day/what happened

Why: builds consistency, supports memory

How: write everyday - you decide how much.

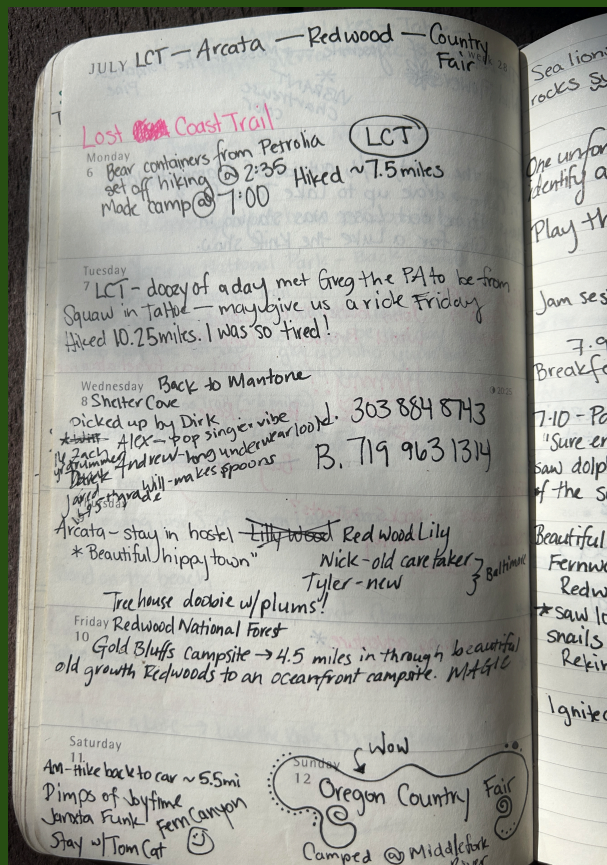


# Journal Types and Benefits

## Daily Log Journal:

Important tip: start simple.

Record one thing each day.

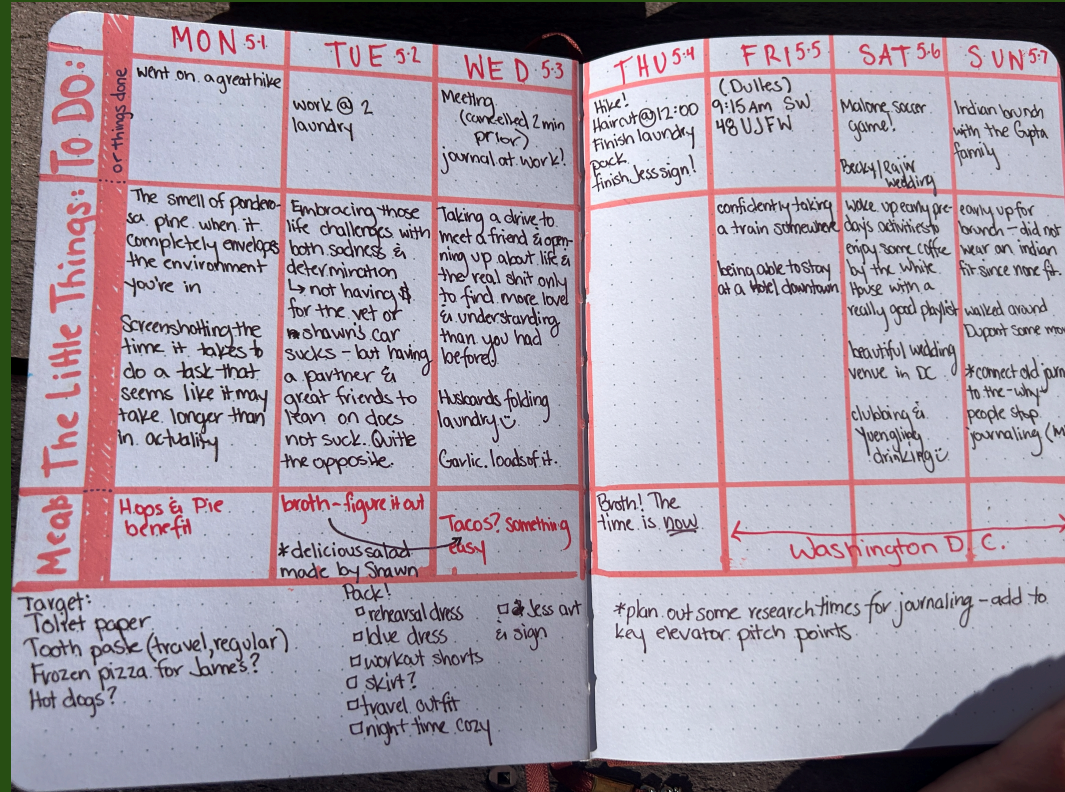


# Journal Types and Benefits

## Daily Log Journal:

Important tip: Establish rules or agreements around what students can/should log daily

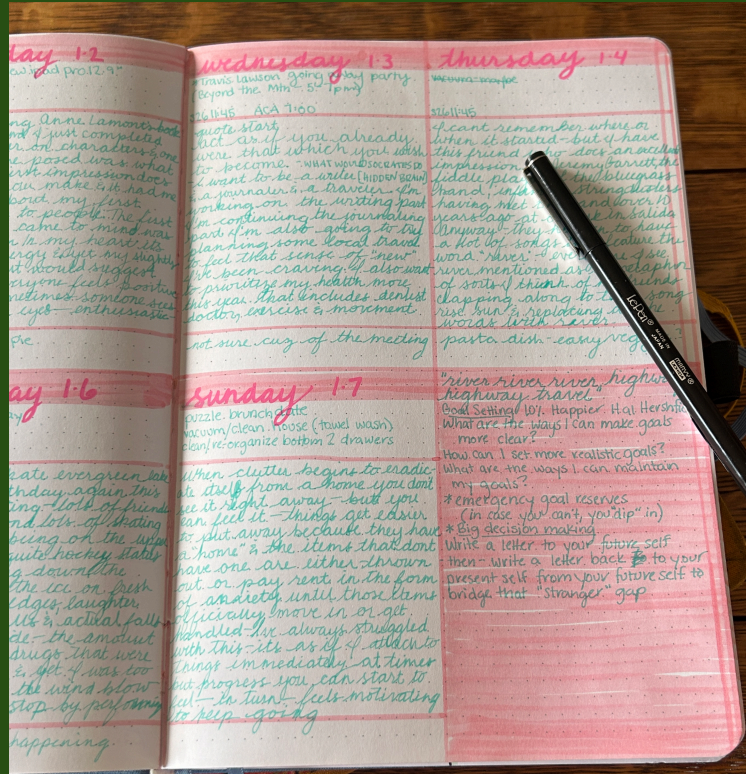
Opportunity to shift focus away from negative to positive thinking and problem solving.



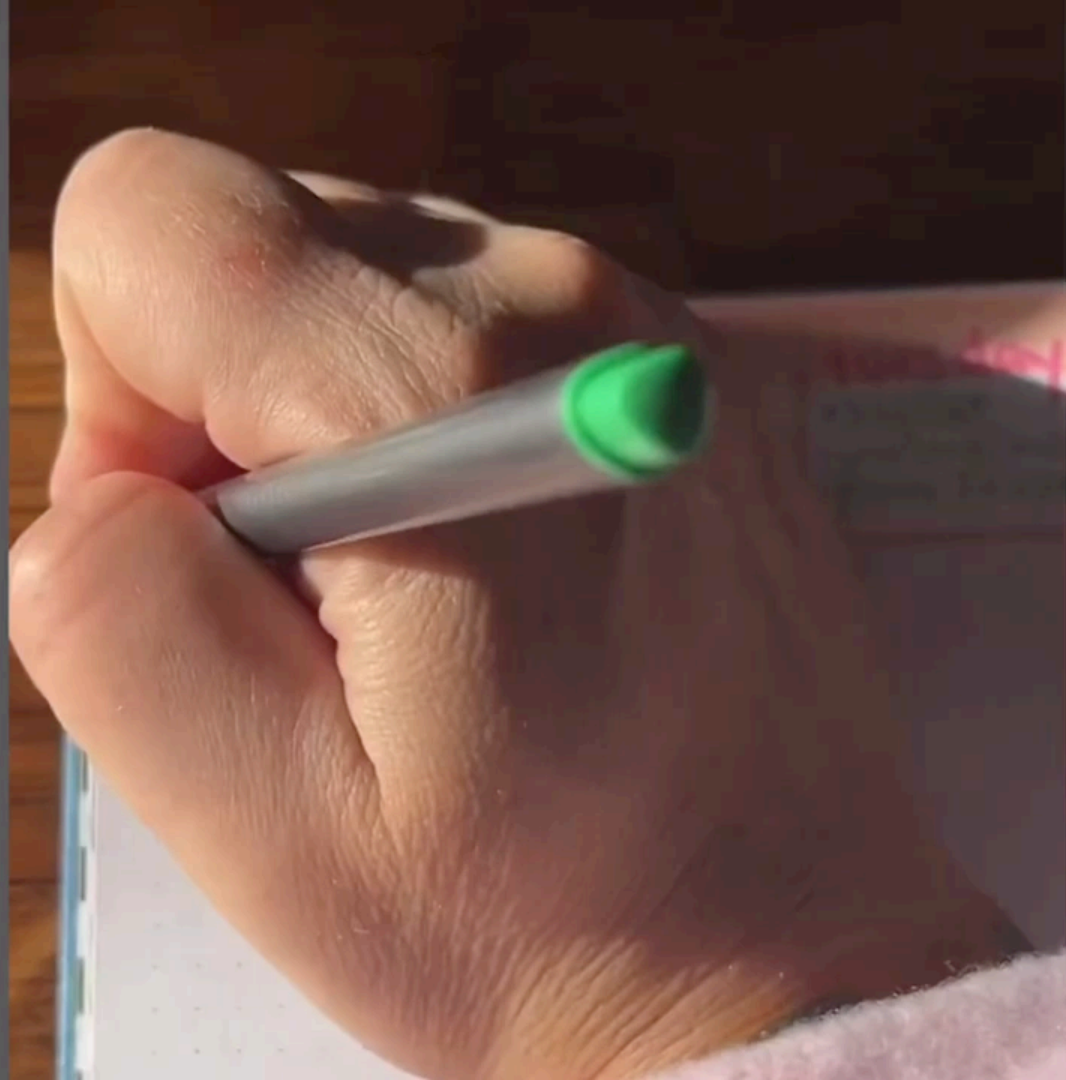
# Journal Types and Benefits

## Daily Log Journal:

Important tip: as daily log exercise becomes a habit, you can increase complexity of the daily log.







# Journal Types and Benefits

## Gratitude Journal

What: write out who/what you're grateful for

Why: positive brain training and attention

How: daily, sporadic in sections

FR I CM-4-10  
7-12  
Grateful: friends who can help me move,  
walks with dogs, time - so I can move,  
my health, my job  
↳ Aubrey & Russ & impromptu hangs.  
↳ moving support & emotional support  
↳ Silas/Kenny vs. Mid Summer  
"More & more surprised by  
Billy & less & less by...."  
↳ Becking about Billy

Success comes with consistency.

MON JULY 15 Rapids vs Arsenal Game  
Grateful: friends - inner strength - ability to still kick ass at  
hockey - being musical enough to play the ukulele  
"Worthwhile & important things in life - wisdom & happiness in particular - are simply  
not the sorts of things one can Chase after & grab. They are instead the sorts of things  
that come to us where we are, if we let them." - Te of Piglet  
Tim Howard - Mini Cooper Cruising - Hot Tea - Cozy beds

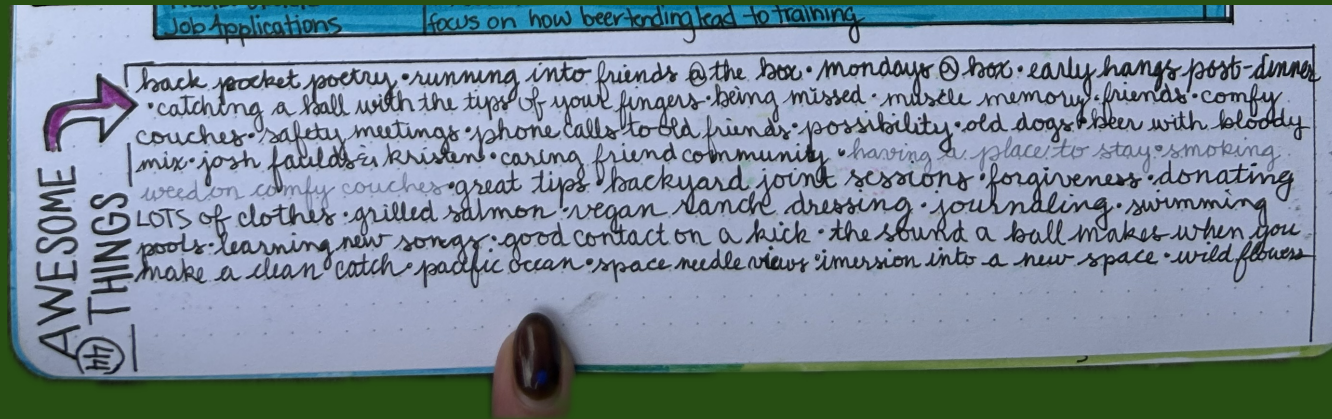
TUES JULY 16  
Grateful: New experiences, fans, friends who text me - helps a lot.  
Brandon! Called me about Seattle! 95% sure I'm working there.  
\*also big \$ maker at work!  
OluKai → wet sand fit → arch, heel cup, played toes  
built w/ a last  
Olu-comfort Kai-ocean  
Makau - fish hook - symbol for safe passage

WEDS JULY 17  
Grateful: flexibility, opportunities, king crabs & the memories  
that food brings  
"What I know for sure" - Oprah

# Journal Types and Benefits

## Gratitude Journal

Important tip: change the language to support gratitude



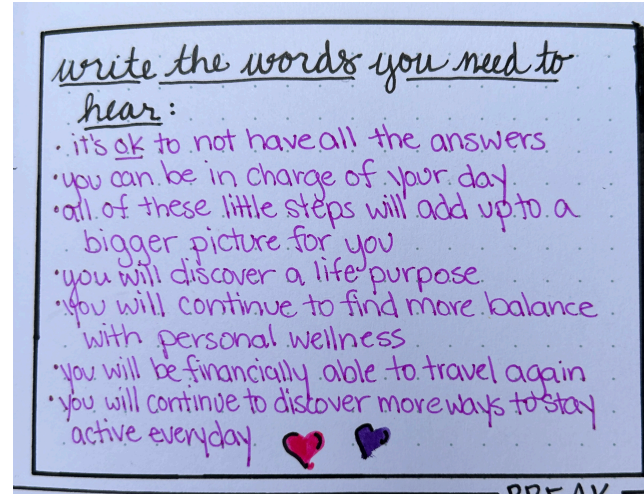
# Journal Types and Benefits

## Stream of Consciousness Journal

What: write whatever is on your mind (or words you need to hear)

Why: sort out mental clutter - triage through writing

How: just keep writing

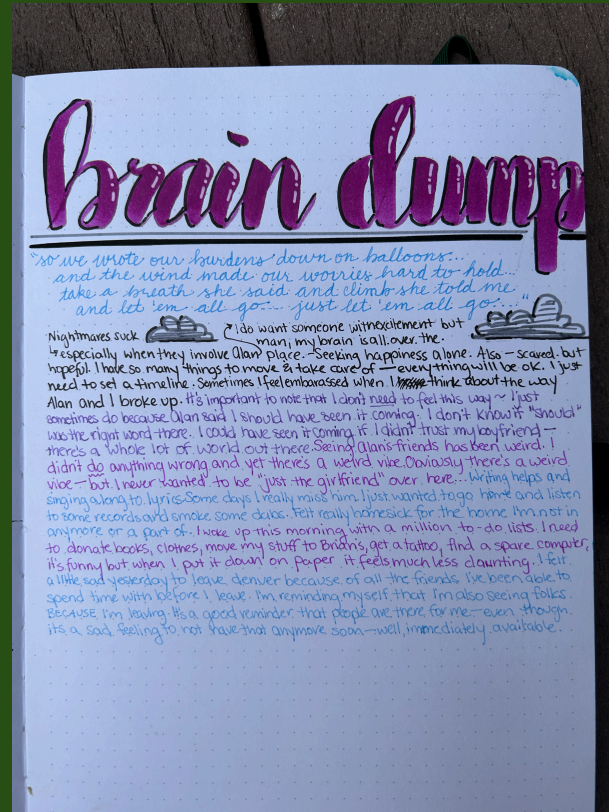


# Journal Types and Benefits

## S.O. Consciousness Journal

Important tip: establish either time or length as your indicator to finish. Have your student decide but offer choice.

- \*Would you like to write for 3 or 5 minutes?
- \*Would you like to write 3 or 5 sentences?
- \*Would you like to fill one or two pages?



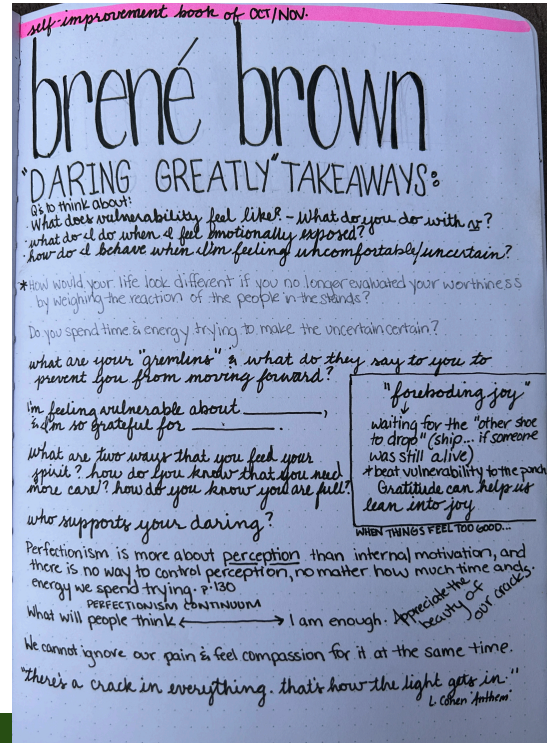
# Journal Types and Benefits

## Research/Passion Project Journal

What: keep a journal related to a passion project

Why: remember information, write about interests

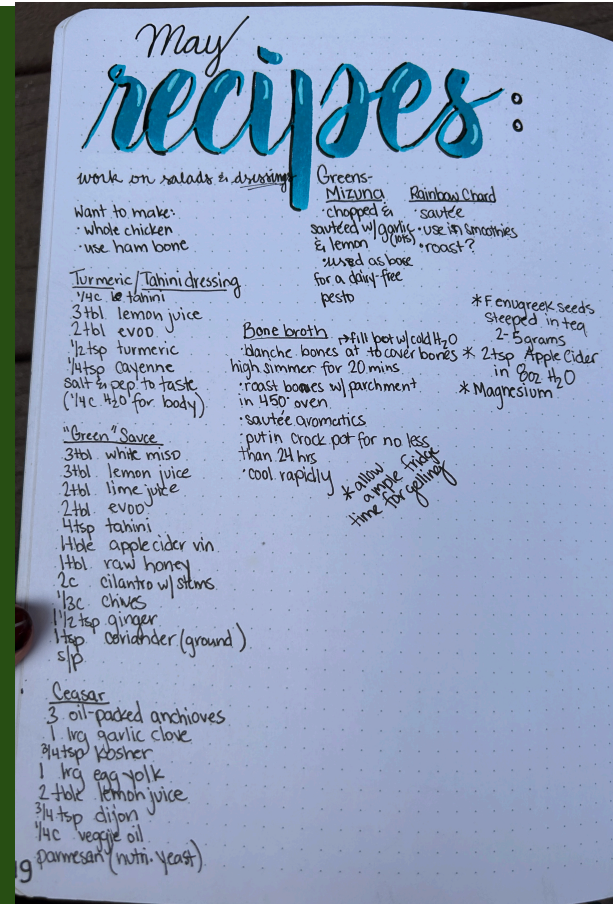
How: get excited!



# Journal Types and Benefits

## Research/Passion Project Journal

Important tip: Know your student! Help encourage research and passion projects based on what you know the student likes to do.



# Journal Types and Benefits

## Research/Passion Project Journal

Important tip: Scaffold projects for students. Help organize information and provide visual examples

LF

Mindset Therapy Work → Joy Shetty

<u>Scarcity Mindset</u>	vs	<u>Growth Mindset</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can't do this</li><li>• I can't find a new job</li><li>• people don't want to hire me</li><li>• I don't have enough skills</li><li>• I don't have the clothes</li><li>• I need health insurance</li><li>• I have a hard time staying focused</li><li>• I will lose it</li><li>• people don't believe in me</li><li>• I'm a failure!</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can do this when I give myself the time to do this</li><li>• I can find a new job when I don't let a denial <del>set</del> set me back</li><li>• People will hire me when I show them how I can support them</li><li>• I can learn more skills by accepting opportunities to learn</li><li>• I can find clothes to help me look professional</li><li>• I can focus on building myself when I think about it everyday - little steps are still steps!</li><li>• I can nurture my relationship by talking care of myself &amp; by remembering to set aside time for doing things for him</li><li>• I only fail when I don't continue to grow - I can grow from a "failure"</li><li>• People may not believe in me... but if I believe in myself, that's the biggest believer I need</li></ul>
<p>What did I learn?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a lot about how to manage my money</li><li>• ways to prep for camping</li><li>• how to dab daily</li><li>• how to trust someone again</li><li>• cooking skills</li><li>• time management</li><li>• need to work on more open communication</li><li>• clean the house before you go on vacay/camping</li></ul>		<p>At any time you can go see: Ivy &amp; Jeff, MK, Tristy, Jenelle, Bobbie, Amy, Luna, LL, Josh Faulds, Brian &amp; Jeff, Oliver, Nigel, Susi &amp; Adam, Stang, Kristen.</p> <p>At any time you can: go for a walk, go sit in the park, call a friend, read at Crema, practice lettering, play ukulele, listen to a show.</p>



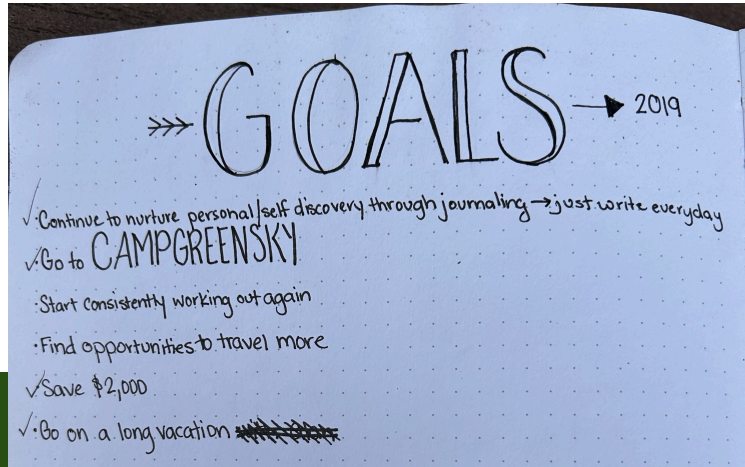
# Journal Types and Benefits

## Goal Setting Journal

What: setting yearly/monthly/weekly goals

Why: training our brains to focus on what we consider to be important

How: Student lead, teacher/parent supported

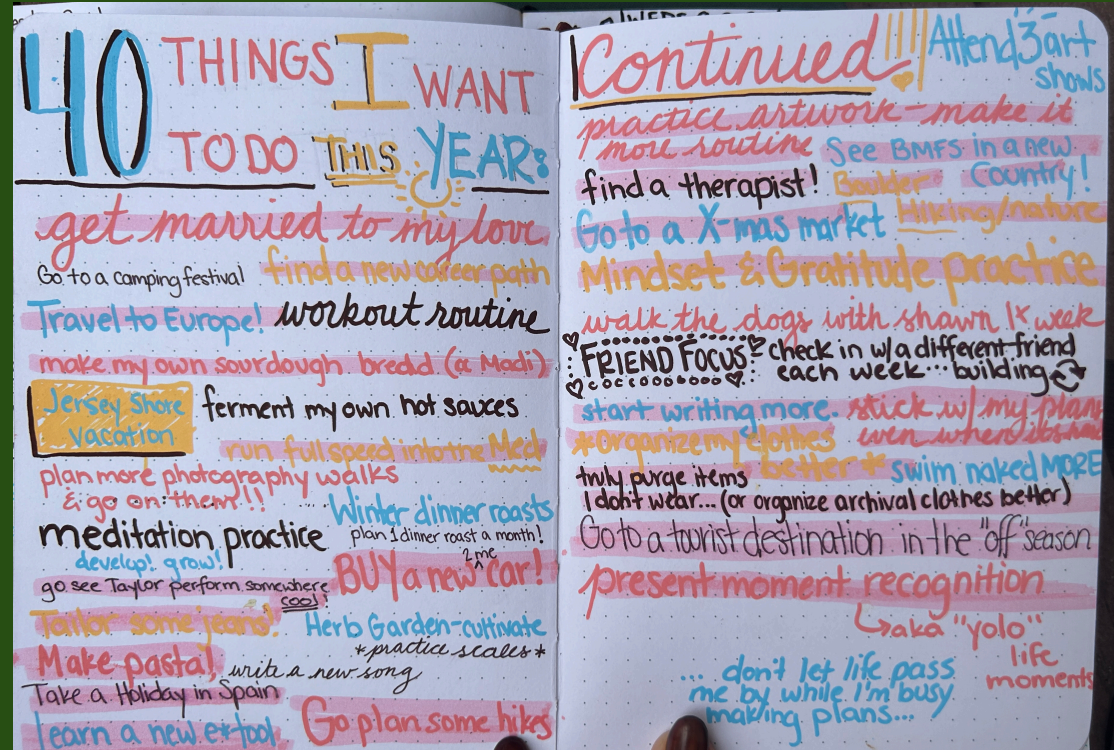


# Journal Types and Benefits

## Goal Setting Journal

Important tip:

Goals can be fun! Help encourage goal setting with students by creating goals that support them as students, friends, family members, and personal advocates



# Journal Types and Benefits

## Goal Setting Journal

Important tip:

Some goals should be easy! Help encourage goal tracking with students by creating goals that support habits they already do with near consistency.

*It's the combination of small moments that achieve big things.*

### habit tracker

		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
							T	Th	S		T	Th	S		T	Th	S		T	Th	S		
AM	Drink Water																						
	Journal																						
	Read																						
	Eat Breakfast																						
	Morning Movement																						
AM	Gratitude																						
PM	Journal																						
	Reflections																						
PM	Gratitude																						
	Stretch																						
	Meditate																						
	1min Plank																						
Try this!	Podcast (growth)	X	X	X																			
	Cook a meal@home	X	X	X	X																		
	Listen to a record	X	X	X	X	X																	
	copy the alphabet	X	X	X	X																		

*first journal days*

*\*Remember to Mantra\**

# Journal Types and Benefits

## Art Journal

What: free form journalistic expression

Why: available for non-writers, artists, rebel tendencies

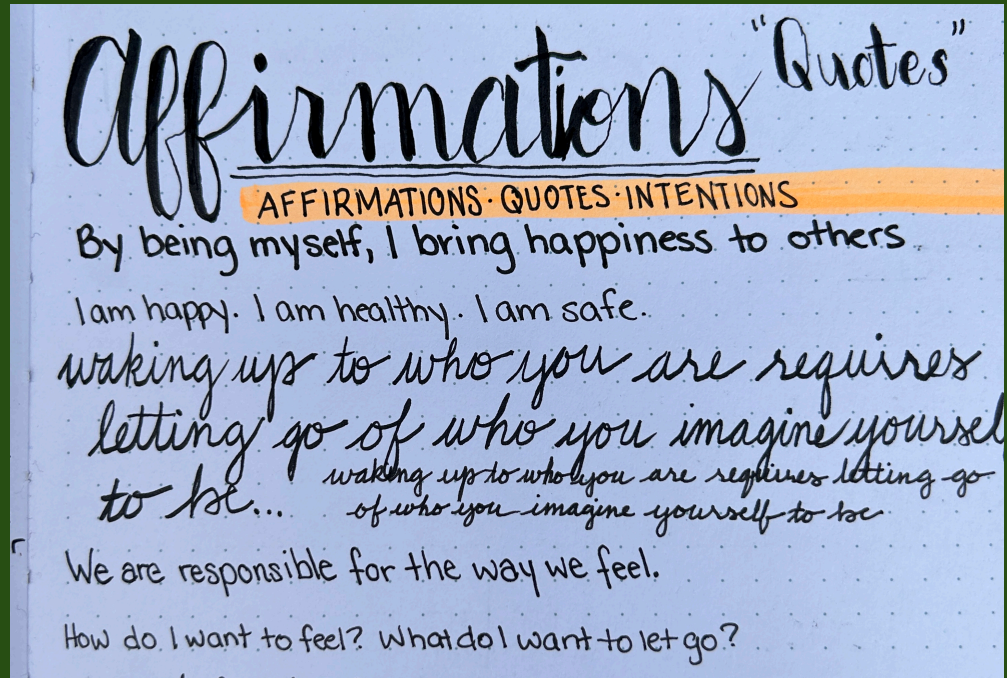
How: blank page. Writing utensil.



# Journal Types and Benefits

## Art Journal

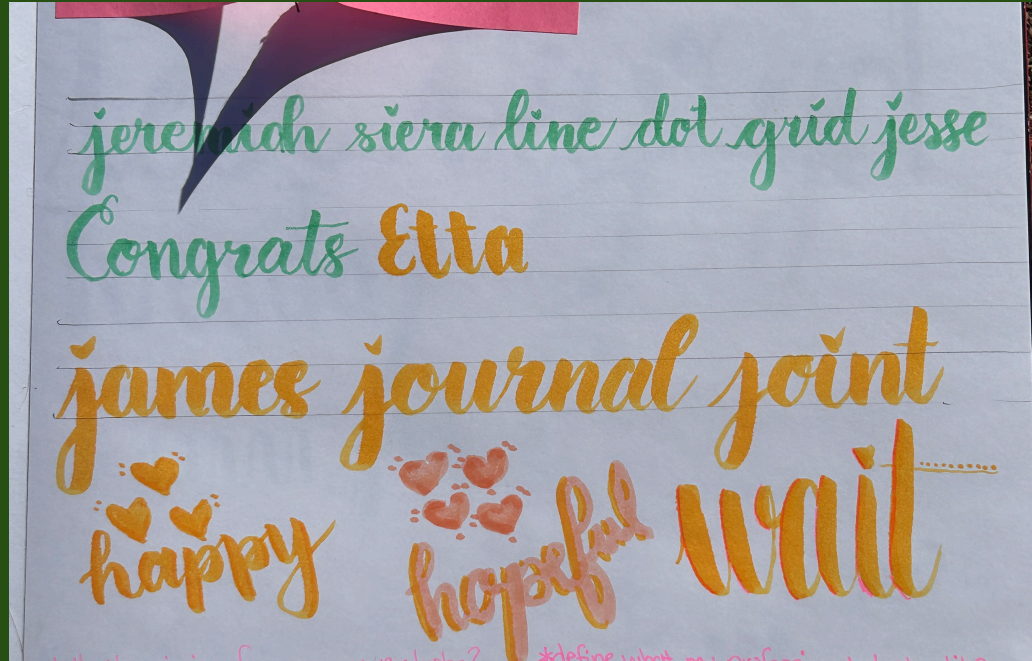
Important tip: Utilize affirmations (positive statement of positive beliefs) to support art pages.



# Journal Types and Benefits

## Art Journal

Important tip: When in doubt, color it out.



# Journal Types and Benefits

## **Reflection Journal**

What: Metacognition at it's finest with journaling. Reflect on your journal through daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly questions. What went well? What was challenging? What changes can I make?

Why: Teaches control, organization and agency

How: Ask questions and write. Reread your writing.

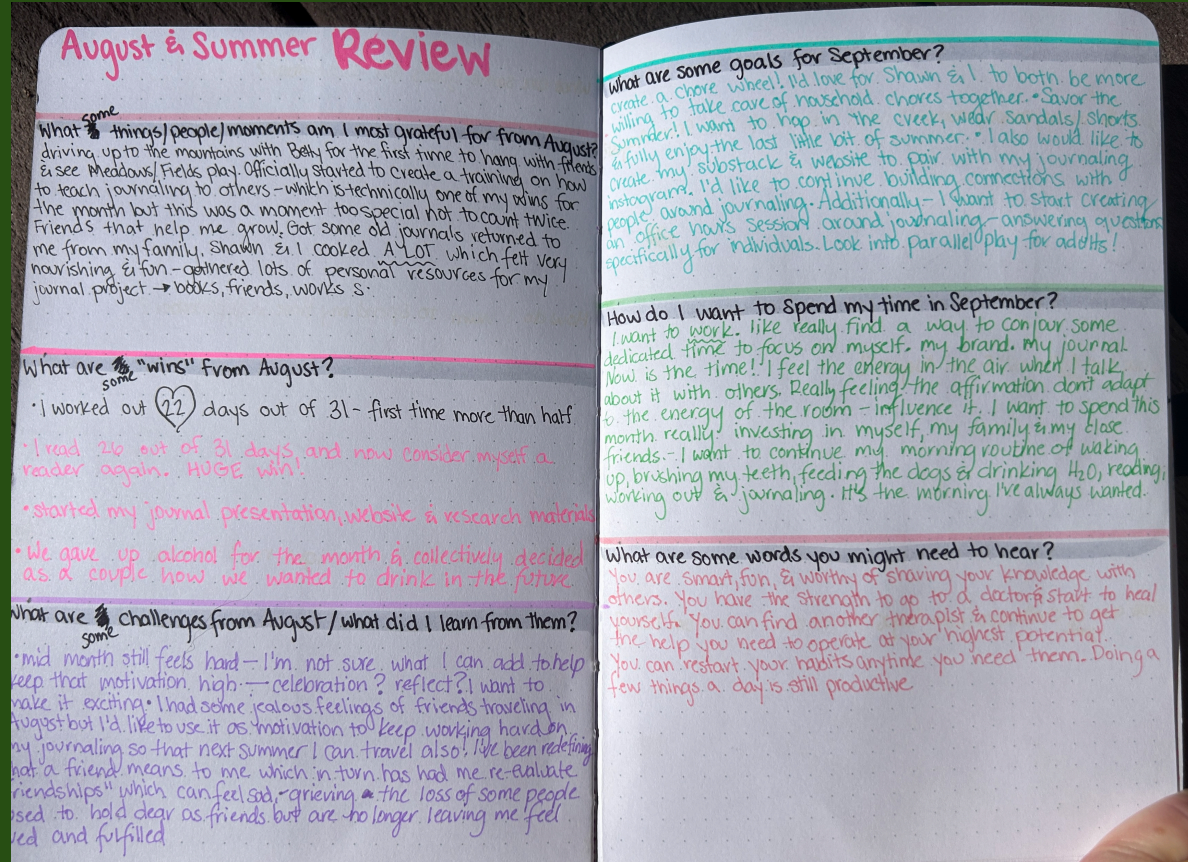
\*we will dive deeper with this in Session 3.

# Journal Types and Benefits

## Reflection Journal

Important tip: Help students focus on wins/gratitude **first** when reflecting.

\*Priming the pump for thinking about challenges.

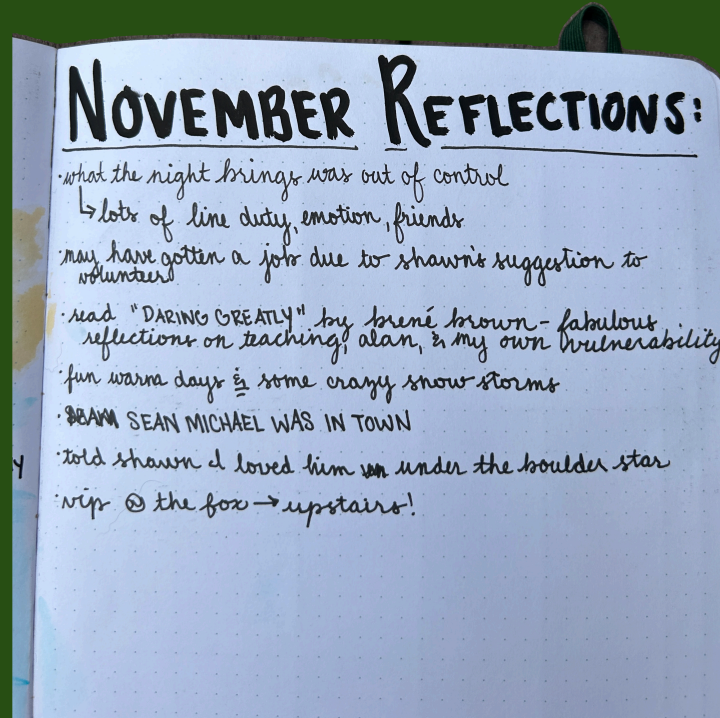




# Journal Types and Benefits

## Reflection Journal

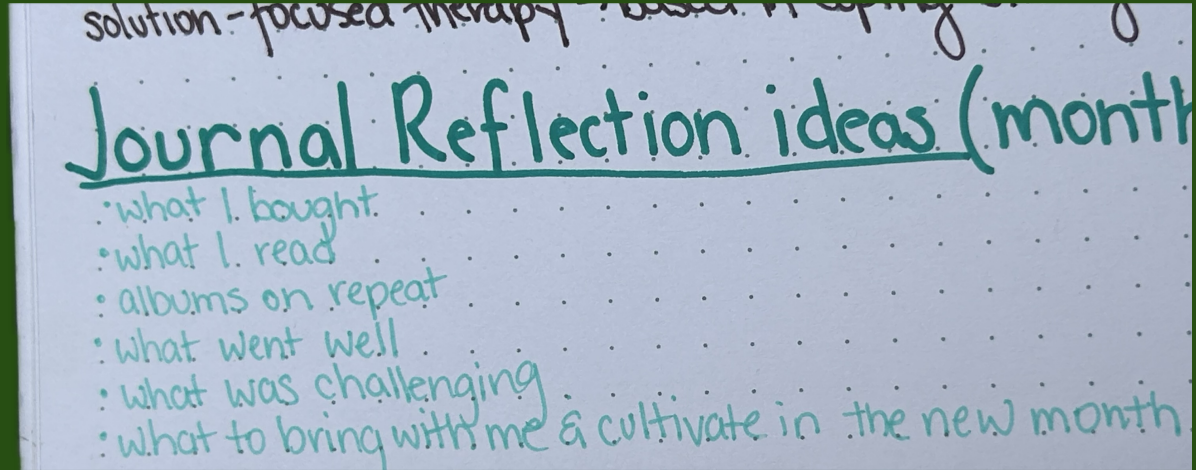
Important tip: Reflection begins with understanding our thoughts, actions and feelings. This can be VERY challenging for students. Modeling is extremely important.



# Journal Types and Benefits

## Reflection Journal

Important tip: Encourage students to reflect on habits they'd like to create by tracking books, music, art, writing, homework





# Journaling Prompts

# Journal Prompts

## Prompts for **Beginning**:

- remember that 90 second timer? Write for 90 seconds.
- Pick a sense that's sticking out to you right now. Describe it in as much detail as you can.
- 5 minute sprint - great for writers.
- What's on my mind?
- How do I feel right now?
- Stream of Consciousness/Brain Dump writing: set a 1-3 page goal of writing and just write whatever comes to mind - even if that's just not wanting to write.
- Three feelings: at the top of the page, record three feelings you're experiencing before writing. Write for a determined amount of time. Then write three feelings you're experiencing at the end of the writing time.

# Journal Prompts

## Prompts for **Reflection**:

- What are you grateful for? How does it make you feel?
- What I didn't say out loud today...
- The crabbiest part of today was...
- What am I feeling right now? I am feeling...
- What do I need right now? I need...
- What would I love? I would love...
- Peaks and Valleys - Write about a day/week/month's highs and lows - what made them peaks? What made them valleys?
- “There's a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.” - Leonard Cohen. Have you had moments of darkness? Did a crack appear to let the light in?
- three good things - close out a tumultuous session by writing three good things that happened today
- write out a worry you have for yourself or someone else.

# Journal Prompts

Prompts for **Writing**: Get Creative!

- Write about your favorite book/song.
- Would you prefer to be a giraffe or a 3-toed sloth or a...? Why?
- Camera Capture: think of a moment when you were proud, happy, joyful. Write everything you can remember about that moment using 5 senses and emotional details.
- Day Dream: what if.... Dreams. Jobs. Play Dates. Travel.
- Start with a picture. What's happening on the other side of the lens?
- Who's the most interesting person you've ever met? Describe them in detail.
- Write a letter to your future self.
- Write a letter to your past self.

# Journal Prompts

## Prompts for **Conflict Resolution**:

### -Personal Q&A:

- What's a question I have about myself? A friend? A teacher? A family member?
- How would I (or someone I trust) answer the question?
- How am I feeling now? How do I want to feel?

### -Self compassion:

- What's something that's hard for me right now?
- What can I thank myself for right now?
- Think of someone who's helped you before. How might that person help you solve this?  
Write down their advice.

### -Different & Better:

- If I woke up tomorrow and things were resolved, what would be different and better? Be specific.

### -Let it Go list

- Think of things out of your control. Write them down. Let them go.



**Collaborate with Students**

Student Habit Tracker	Week 1					Week 2				
Habit:	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Student Notes:										
Teacher Reflection:										

## Student Habit Tracker (example)

### Week 1

### Week 2

Habit:	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Came to school!	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Completed math practice work			X	X			X			
Said something kind to a friend	X	X		X						
Wrote one sentence in my journal	X	X		X		X				X
Practiced counting to 5 when frustrated with reading										X

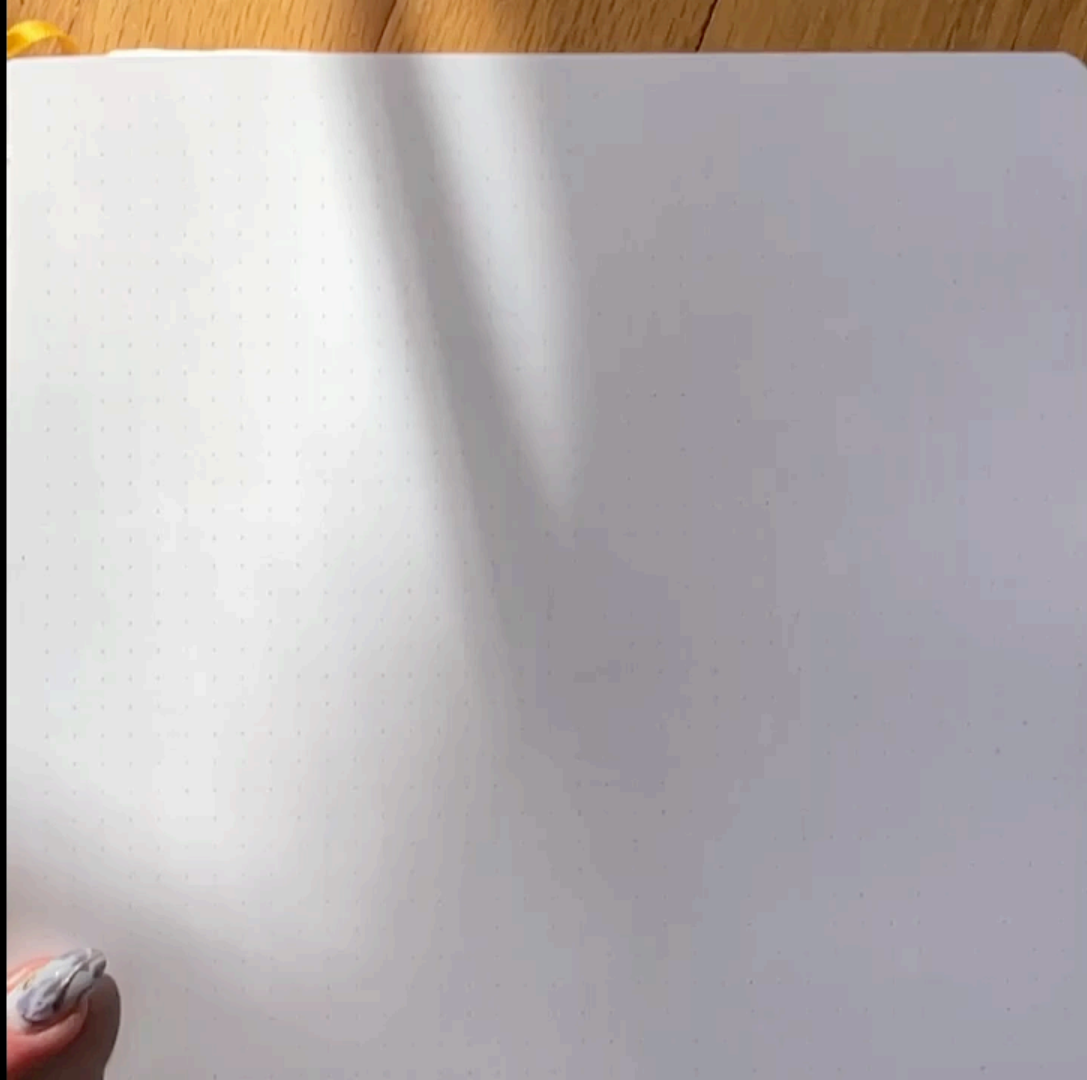
#### Student Notes:

-have students record anything that comes up when they check off their tracker. If they don't have any notes when first starting that's ok! Help them reflect with your own questions below.

#### Teacher Reflection:

\*Identify gaps. Notice successes. Provide support for missing items. Encourage students to add/subtract habits for the following week.

What a great week! Looks like you made some excellent progress here. Where were you last Friday? I'm curious how you spent your day. I noticed you were able to use your counting strategy with reading today. That's great! How did you remember to use your strategy? Looks like this week was a little tough for friends. What did you say to friends last week that you might be able to say next week? I'm wondering if we should add or take away a habit next week. Is there something you'd like to focus on? I have suggestions if you're stuck. Let's track it together!



## Let's Reflect and Review:

In this session we discussed:

- \*Brain processes that support journaling: selective attention, selective filtering, and value tagging
- \*Habit theory and how it relates to starting a journaling habit
- \*Different styles of journaling and how they can support different students
- \*Reviewed Journaling Prompts
- \*How to start journaling with students



## QUESTIONS?

Kay Kamienski

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