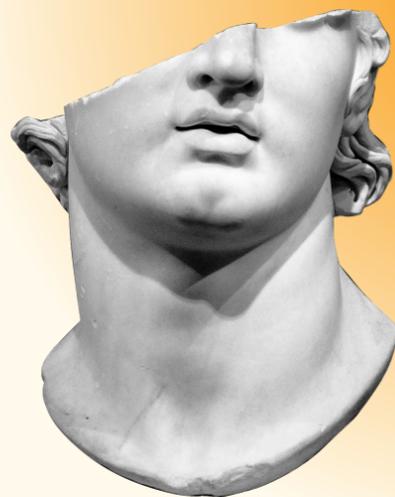




# Creative Journaling for Mental Health



HOW TO USE AN UNTRADITIONAL JOURNALING TECHNIQUE TO LIVE AND CREATE AUTHENTICALLY



#1

## Creative Journaling for Creative Flow

So your creative flow is low. The truth is, that creative energy naturally ebbs and flows with life's stressors. Having tools and options to help us revitalize and stabilize our creativity is crucial to the longevity of our creative practice and overall sense of well-being.

#2

## Regular Journaling vs Creative Journaling

This is not "Dear Diary, today I..." journaling. This is a daily emotional download- a freestyle writing/drawing/expressing session of what is on your mind, what you are feeling, and what you need to "dump" somewhere to free up some space in your brain. Freeing up space in your executive functioning center, you feel more present and less overwhelmed by life.



#3

## Some Guidelines and Words of Caution:

Creative Journaling is a powerful tool, so things like emotional containment are important and responsible tools for you to utilize with it. Specifics, as always, will be particular to you and your journey- but it basically means, strong emotions may be present, expect that, and prepare yourself in advance to pump the brakes at intervals.

#4

## Emotional Containment

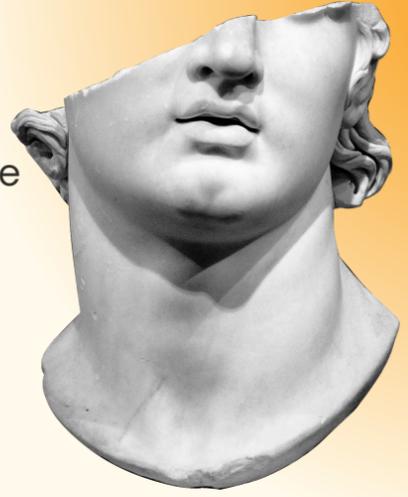
In the beginning, try one page, freestyle, then stop. Put your journal away (have a place for it like a drawer or a shelf) and follow with another activity that is completely different to "close" the journaling activity. Do not continue to write, do not sit and ruminate, do not call someone and rehash what you wrote, etc. Separate the time and space from the activity with something else. Limit the amount of time spent. This is a simple, but important journaling guideline.



## #4

### Why Creative Journaling is Powerful

You are making connections in your brain. Have you ever heard the studying recommendation: see it, say it, write it down? Your brain processes information in different ways, and by creating things you are helping your brain make powerful connections about your experiences, both past and present, and how they impact and represent you. You are generating creative energy through regular creative output and downloading thought clutter from your brain which will aid you in being more mindful and decrease symptoms fed by thinking problems like depression and anxiety.



## #5

### Getting Started, You Will Need:



- a. A blank journal
- b. It starts with the purchase (or if you have the skill set) creation of a book that I recommend be unlined and that is aesthetically appealing to you. Otherwise, size, paper, color, textures, all of these are personal choices to intentionally make to invite you to engage with your book.
- c. Creative materials
- d. Next, you need your writing/drawing/creative materials. Similarly, choose materials that inspire you to use them while taking pressure off of you of perfection. For writers, for example, I might recommend pencils that match the color of your paper exactly so you purposely cannot see and edit what you write at first if this removes an initial barrier between you and writing. You may choose to have a variety of writing materials in a case or box that excites you about engaging in the creative journaling project. Other materials you might collect (and I recommend collecting a variety!) might include collage supplies, paint, and watercolor supplies, a variety of writing implements, scrapbook items, and more.
- e. Finally, and probably most importantly, you need a time and place of dedication- perhaps 15 minutes, to be alone with your CSJ every day. You will want to be undisturbed and dedicated to your thoughts, yourself, and your processing of experiences for this amount of time each day. Consider a place that is “vibe-y” to you, and place items there (along with your journal and materials) that help the atmosphere, like music, a cup of tea, a candle, or whatever you need. I recommend using “5 senses self-soothing” (there is a blog post on that at <https://www.creativelyllc.com/blog/therapy-skills-safe-place-and-self-soothing> )

## #5

### What to put in your Creative Journal:

Engage in the process of free response process work. In other words, we are going to have no particular goal or outcome in mind and are interested in tapping into the current of what is flowing freely through our brains. The process can include flowing freely back and forth between visual expression and written expression, or be focused on one or the other. It should have either a time or page limit- not to exceed 2 pages or 15 minutes- whichever is shorter, more or less.



### One Month of Creative Journaling Prompts:

1. Open a book to any page and point to a phrase. Start creating based upon this phrase.
2. Create using only one color/hue/shade as inspiration.
3. Create using free association writing.
4. Create based upon one word as inspiration.
5. Choose a musical playlist and play it as inspiration while you work today.
6. Pull a label off of something from your day today and create around it.
7. Think of a person you interacted with, saw, or in some way experienced today and create based using that person as inspiration.
8. Select an emotion and use it as the inspiration today.
9. Focus on a part of the body and respond to it with your CSJ today.
10. Your inspiration for today is "fingerprint."
11. Choose something ordinary from your day and explore it in your CSJ.
12. Elaborate on a random thought extensively in your CSJ.
13. Give yourself permission to go down a rabbit hole for one page.
14. Spend time with the concept of "ugliness."
15. Spend time with the concept of "beauty."
16. Explore the past- your past, the greater past, connections you can make between them.
17. Explore the future- your future, the greater future, connections between them.
18. Spend today calling yourself an artist- owning this identity fully.
19. I dare you to brag about yourself in your CSJ. Go over the top and be elaborate.
20. Make a container or a place where your emotions live. Develop a landscape for them, how they come and go, interact, build, etc.
21. Explore the idea that your emotions hold intellectual value as messengers from your body to your brain.
22. Vent about something.
23. Answer: "When do you feel most alive?"
24. Answer: "What would happen if you faced your fears?"
25. Explore- what does the most authentic version of you, look like?
26. Answer- what was the most meaningful thing you did: today, this month, and this year?
27. Answer- what is something you can release, that is no longer serving you?
28. Develop: how do you experience love?
29. What does it mean to you to be creative?
30. What do you contribute? What must you contribute? How will you accomplish this?

---

### Creative Journal Daily for these Benefits:

- clarity in your personal search for meaning
- strengthened authenticity in your life
- a release in built-up emotions
- a decrease in emotional overwhelm
- an increase in self-esteem
- an increase in self-knowledge
- a development of creative identity
- a more regular creative practice
- ability to practice your art form with more ease
- clarity and ease when setting goals, both personally and creatively