

# Journaling: Why & How

Thank you for purchasing a journal from me! If you're new to keeping a journal, here are some "whys."

- Journaling forces you to put pen to paper, which helps you learn, aids in memory and is often therapeutic. Use colored pens and try different handwriting styles.
- Journaling helps you sort through your thoughts and feelings, like how just talking things through with a friend or loved one gives you clarity. Think of it as having a relationship with your brain.
- Journaling helps you see themes and commonalities. You might not realize that the breakthrough you had when talking to your boss also applies to the situation you were trying to sort out with your in-law *until*/you write it in your journal.

Here are some specific ideas for what type of journal you need.

**IDEA JOURNAL.** Keep one in your purse or next to your bed for when inspiration strikes. Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by too many ideas. Writing them down for future reference frees up valuable brain space as well as the emotional space of knowing we don't have to "do all the things" now because we can always revisit it later.

**GRATITUDE JOURNAL.** Jot things down as you notice them throughout your day or write in it at night before bed to focus on all the good that happened or the beauty you encountered. Big or small, it's fun to look back on. I've also known people to combine gratitude with their to-do list.

**ART JOURNAL.** This is where you can sketch, paint, draw pictures of your day, paste in mementos or quotes or whatever you want.

**PROJECT JOURNAL.** To-do lists, shopping lists, meeting notes--write down whatever you need to keep your projects on track. When I have a big event coming up, I list categories of "buy," "find," "make," etc.

**PRAYER JOURNAL.** If you're like me, you need to see your prayers and answers to keep track--and celebrate! I also love to write out prayers for other people, to write inside a card or for my own requests.

**SPIRITUAL JOURNAL.** This one can have notes about the books you're reading, the Scripture you're studying or any themes that keep coming up when you're studying or praying. These are critical to refer back to as God weaves together our story and speaks to us through the Bible, other people, experiences and daily "God-incidences." Take it to church, to your Bible study or on a retreat so it's all in one place.

Other ideas:

- **GARDEN:** tracking what and when you plant in your yard or garden and how they perform
- **TRAVEL:** plans, adventures or dreams
- **KIDS:** antics, sayings, milestones or stories
- **HEALTH & WELLNESS:** what you eat, how you feel, doctor's appointments, fitness routines, etc.

*The best journals combine one or two of the above.*

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