Gratitude Journaling

for Coaches and Clients

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JOURNAL WRITING
Enrich Your Life Through Journaling

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Gratitude Journaling

for Coaches and Clients

"Gratitude expands us all."

~ LYNDA MONK

Gratitude is something so many people take for granted. Many people don't realize that gratitude is one key to living their best life. Taking time to express gratitude is a powerful tool for boosting one's mood, nourishing mental health, increasing joy and cultivating resiliency.

> "Gratitude is one of the sweet shortcuts to finding peace of mind and happiness inside. No matter what is going on outside of us, there is always something we could be grateful for." ~ BARRY NEIL KAUFMAN

As coaches, part of our work involves shining a light on tools and ways of being and thinking that can help people reach their goals and live the life of their dreams.

This **Gratitude Journaling** tool shows you the joy that gratitude can bring into your life and your clients' lives with just a few minutes a day. Just thinking about what you are grateful for can offer positive benefits but when you add writing your gratitude down, you take this life enhancing tool to an even higher level.

In this Gratitide Journaling tool you will find:

Why is Gratitude so Important?
Different Ways to Express Gratitude
How to Keep a Gratitude Journal
Tips for Writing Gratitude
How Often to Write in a Gratitude Journal
Tips for Writing Daily Gratitude
Gratitude with the Law of Attraction
Bringing Gratitude into Your Coaching
50 Gratitude Journaling Prompts
Turn Your Gratitude List into a Life Enriching Practice
Your Gratitude List

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Why is Gratitude so Important?

"Thank you is the best prayer that anyone could say. I say that one a lot. Thank you expresses extreme gratitude, humility, understanding." ~ ALICE WALKER

You may have heard about the importance of expressing gratitude or starting a daily practice, but do you know why people recommend it so often? Aside from the fact that it is always a good idea to be more grateful and appreciative of the good things in your life, there are some other ways it can benefit you and your clients.

Helps Reduce Toxic Mindset Patterns

This probably sounds familiar to you. One bad thing happens to you, then suddenly 20 more bad things happen to you. It seems to create this avalanche effect that you can't seem to help. But what if that happened, in part, simply because of your own toxic mindset? You assume bad things will happen, then they do. This isn't an accident or a coincidence. We can all fall prey to negative or toxic thinking patterns.

Having ways to be self-aware about our mindset helps us make sure our thinking is aligned with how we want to feel in life. For example, if you *think* negatively, you are more likely to *feel* negative. But if you regularly expressing gratitude, then no matter what is going on in your life, you find a way to be grateful. The more you focus on the good things, the better your life seems to get.

The more we help our coaching clients to focus on the good things, the better their lives will get.

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Can Reduce Your Stress Levels

There is this amazing effect that occurs when you start expressing more gratitude. The stress you have in your life begins to diminish. It isn't going to magically disappear, but suddenly what you were worried about doesn't seem as important. The big things you thought were "the worst" no longer ruin your days, because you understand and focus on how many good things happen to you. Expressing and thinking about your gratitude often, and helping your coaching clients to do the same, is an effective stress management strategy!

Makes You a More Forgiving and Empathetic Person

As you start focusing on your gratitude, you get some other behavioral benefits as well. It starts becoming easier to forgive people for something they might have done or said that hurt your feelings, and you become a much more empathetic person. You understand people's struggles a little better as you see the joy in your own life. You become a more well-rounded person who is grateful for everything, the good and the bad. Gratitude generates greater compassion for yourself and others!

Allows You to Appreciate Your Life, Even Through Hard Times

Lastly, you start to appreciate your life more, regardless of the day you are having. You become so accustomed to showing gratitude for every little thing, that when you get a flat tire or you have a hard day at work, you can still focus on the good things and these stressful situations aren't so bad after all.

The beauty of gratitude is that your mind opens up to your life as a whole, and how balanced it is, not just dwelling on what you believe is a flaw or negative in your life. It is especially important to express our gratitude during challenging times as it helps to build hopefulness and feelings of appreciation, both of which can increase our resiliency.

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Different Ways to Express Gratitude

Do you want to start a gratitude practice, but you're not too sure about where to start? Not to worry – there are a few different options that will make it a simple routine you add to your day. Before too long, you will do it automatically without even having to think about it.

Keep a Gratitude Journal

Naturally, as a journaling and writing for wellness coach, my first tip is going to be to have a journal you write your gratitude in. Pick up an inexpensive journal (or a fancy one if that won't stop you from writing in it!) that you would enjoy using, and just start writing down a list of what you are grateful for each day. This also happens to be a great time and way to start journaling if it is not something you do already.

You might find that in the beginning, you only write a short list of a few things you are grateful for, but then over time you start elaborating and explaining why you are grateful for these things.

Write Gratitude in Your Main Journal

Are you already an avid journal writer? Great! Use that journal for your gratitude. In fact, it can help you get into a positive mindset if you start every journal entry with 3 things you are grateful for, before you start writing your other thoughts.

You can keep it simple, so you don't feel like your journaling routine is suddenly an hour long. It should only take a few extra minutes to add gratitude to your journal, and this provides so many amazing benefits.

Be Grateful Throughout the Day

Find moments in your life when you feel the most grateful, not just when you are sitting down to write in your gratitude journal. Say it out loud or just silently to yourself. When you get into your car in the morning, be grateful it started without any issues. If you managed to avoid traffic on the way to work, be grateful for that! There are so many amazing moments in the day that bring you blessings, especially the simple ones people often take for granted.

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Start a Gratitude Jar

Another fun way to start a gratitude practice is to use a gratitude jar. Instead of using a journal, you would get post-its or small pieces of paper, write something you are grateful for, and fold it up before placing it in a big jar. This is also an easy way to involve everyone in the family. Make a nightly or weekly routine where everyone writes down one thing that they are grateful for, then puts it in the jar.

> **Journal Coaching Tip:** I have also used this with teams and working groups. During a team building workshop, I actually had a team make gratitude and joy jars that each team member then kept and used in their respective workspace. My clients still talk about that activity and they did it three years ago now!

How to Keep a Gratitude Journal

One of the best ways to have a daily gratitude practice is to write your gratitude in a journal. This can be a journal used only for gratitude, or in another journal or planner you use every day. If you're a beginner, here are some super easy tips that will help you get started with your gratitude journal.

Designate a Journal to Gratitude Only

While you can use a journal you have for other things, your intentions can sometimes get a little jumbled. This is why I recommend getting a journal or notebook used only for your gratitude, at least in the beginning. Your focus is only on thinking about what made you happy or brought you a sense of calm, and writing it down. Over time, you might find that you can add this to your daily journal.

> **Journal Coaching Tip:** You can suggest your clients do this too. You might even get them to share some their gratitude journal with you, if they would like to, as it allows you to be a witness to their gratitude and it also shows you what your clients value and find meaningful in their daily lives.

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Always Keep it Positive and Uplifting

Remember that you are not journaling your feelings or writing down what happened to you during the day. This is only for gratitude, so you want to keep it positive, optimistic, and uplifting. Any time a negative thought pops into your head during this process, push it out of the way with something good that happened to you.

Maybe you are bummed because your invoice is being paid late, but instead of focusing on that, you think about how this morning your kids helped make breakfast. That is a wonderful thing to think about and show gratitude for.

> **Journal Coaching Tip**: This doesn't mean you can't use your journal as a place to vent, solve problems, express your wide range of thoughts and feelings day-to-day, I am simply suggesting these things are ideally not part of your gratitude journaling practice.

Write 5-10 Things You Are Grateful for Each Day

The simplest way to start is just to make a list of what you are grateful for. Think of any moment during the day that made you happy, gave you a sense of relief, or that was a positive surprise. This can be something small or something big, a nice gesture from a stranger, or kind words from a co-worker, a simple pleasure you enjoy every day, or a big surprise you weren't expecting.

Set no Limits or Rules

As with other forms of journaling, there shouldn't be any rules, limits, or guidelines for writing gratitude. You don't need to worry about how long you write for, using proper spelling and grammar, or how you structure your gratitude. Your journal is a private and safe place for expressing your gratitude. Make it your own and have fun with it!

> **Journal Coaching Tip**: It can be fun to be playful in your journal. You might like to be creative and use colored markers, images, stickers and inspiring quotes in your gratitude journal. One of my friends and coaching colleagues, sets up a sticker bar in the creative self-care journaling workshops she offers. She has hundreds of different stickers and spreads them out on a table and invites her workshop participants to come up and pick stickers to add to their journal entries. I still remember all the stickers I used during that workshop.

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Tips for Writing Gratitude

Deciding to add a gratitude practice to your life is the most important step. But once you have set your intention, you then need to actually start writing it. Where to start? How often should you write? What do you write in your journal? That is what we are going to consider next.

> "We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude." ~ CYNTHIA OZICK

Start Small and Simple

Don't put too much pressure on yourself from the very first day. It is great to want to write 5 pages or 15 items about what you are grateful for every day, but that is not a realistic place to start. As with anything new you/your clients add to your/their routine, you/they want to take it slow.

Perhaps you will write down 3 things you are grateful for, and it is just a brief list, not explaining anything or emphasizing why they brought you joy. That's okay! That's all you really need to do in the beginning.

Don't Be Afraid to Repeat Your Gratitude

You do not have to come up with something brand new to be grateful for every day! In fact, most days, you will repeat at least a few things on your list. Every single day, you might find a lot of joy and gratitude in your morning routine, or maybe you got a new car recently, so your daily commute to work brings you some peace. Or maybe your first cup of coffee or green smoothie is something you give thanks for each morning. It's okay to write these things down every day.

Add New Things as They Come Up

When you feel gratitude for something new, add it to your list, and explore it a little bit. Maybe you just discovered how grateful you are for a particular friend, and hadn't thought much about it before. This is a great time to be detailed in WHY you are so grateful for them.

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How Often to Write in a Gratitude Journal

Once you have figured out how to keep a gratitude journal and what to write about, you will then want to decide how much time to dedicate to it. While I strongly recommend doing this every day (or as often as possible), there are some other things to consider as well.

What is Your Purpose for Starting a Gratitude Practice?

Before you can figure out how often you want to write gratitude for your practice, you need to really think about why you want to do this in the first place. Your personal inspiration and motivation for gratitude might determine how often you want to write down what you are grateful for.

If you want all the benefits of gratitude, like having a more positive mindset and relieving stress, then daily writing is probably best for you. However, other people just want a few moments to be positive about something, so for them, a couple of days a week might be more beneficial.

> "Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow." ~ MELODY BEATTIE

How Often do You Like to Write in a Journal?

If you are already someone that writes in your journal once a day, then adding gratitude to this routine daily is going to be easy for you. On the other hand, if you know that you only remember to use it a few times a week, that is probably where you should start with your gratitude.

There are no rules here, so you can always increase or decrease how often you write down your gratitude list depending on how you are feeling, what you have time for, and what is going on in your life. By leaving it open, you take the stress off of it, and it just becomes something you enjoy doing.

Daily is Best, But Any Time is Helpful

For the simplest answer, try to express gratitude every day if you can. Even if that means only writing down one good thing that happened to you that day. You might not be having the best day, where it seems like everything is against you. But you have at least one good thing from that day, and probably many good things. Think of every moment you felt even an ounce of happiness or relief, and write it down.

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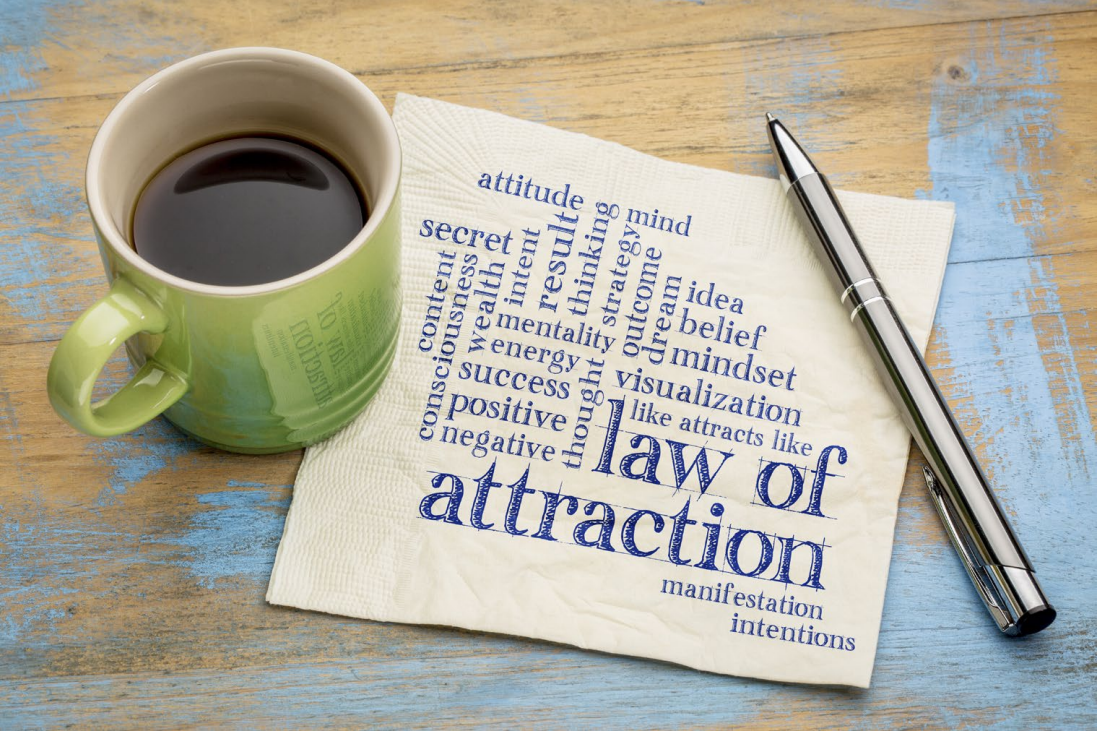
The only “rule” you need with a gratitude journal is try to write in it every day, even if that just means repeating the same 3 things you wrote in it the day before. With more practice, you will likely be able to think about your gratitude throughout the day so by the time you write it down, you already have it on your mind.

Journal Coaching Tip: Be gentle with yourself and your clients. No one, yourself included, should feel badly if they write in their gratitude less than daily, every little bit of expressed gratitude helps. Self-kindness is good for us too!

Tips for Writing Daily Gratitude

If you get to the point where you are struggling to write your gratitude every day, here are some quick tips that can help:

- Think of your daily routine and how you enjoy it.
- Write down any meal or beverage you love to have every day.
- Did you get a compliment or nice gesture from someone else? Write that down!
- Think of a moment that made you smile.



Gratitude with the Law of Attraction

If you have ever looked into the law of attraction and how to manifest things into your life, you are probably aware that gratitude is a big part of it. Gratitude can help increase your vibration and positive energy, which helps tremendously with the law of attraction. Here are some ways you can use gratitude with your law of attraction practice.

Use Gratitude in Your Scripting

The first way to use gratitude with the law of attraction is with scripting. Scripting is the process of writing what you want to manifest into your life, in present tense. You write it down as if it has already happened, focusing on how it makes you feel to increase your vibrations. This is sometimes called "write it down, make it happen journaling". It is also known as "affirmative writing."

This provides the perfect opportunity to add gratitude to your scripting practice. You will write how grateful you are to the universe for bringing you what you desired as you are scripting.

> **Journal Coaching Tip:** For example, if you are striving to grow your six-figure coaching business and you have not crossed this revenue threshold yet, your scripting might read something like this… *"I am so happy and grateful now that I have a six-figure coaching business. I love making money by making a difference."*

Keep Thanking the Universe Every Chance You Get

This is less of writing in a journal, and more of saying it to yourself or even out loud. You are thanking the universe every time something good happens or you get a positive feeling. When you are pouring your cup of coffee, when someone does something nice for you, if the sun is shining, really any time you get a positive emotion, thank the universe for it and show gratitude. As we often say in coaching, "what you focus on grows."

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Outwardly Show Appreciation in Your Life

In addition to thanking the universe, you can also increase your vibrations by thanking other people. Show appreciation for people when they do something nice, when you feel gratitude for their friendship, after a social gathering. Keep showing your gratitude outwardly, whether it is giving an extra tip to the delivery person, or just telling someone you really enjoyed your time together when you went to lunch.

> **Journal Coaching Tip:** One of the number one things that some of my coaching clients (teams and organizations) have told to me that is lacking in their work and workplace is feeling appreciated for the work that they do. In fact, surveys show that lack of appreciation is a common reason that people will leave their job. Therefore, gratitude is a staff retention strategy! You can have gratitude boards in offices, in staff rooms, in schools and in your home. Similar to a gratitude jar, these are places where people can say thank you and be thanked publicly for their good work and contributions. I have never met anyone who quit their job for being thanked too often! Gratitude is not only good for individuals but it is also very good for relationships.

"The deepest craving of human nature is the need to be appreciated."

~ WILLIAM JAMES

Keep Feeling Grateful for Every Blessing

When you start showing gratitude in this way, it will become automatic and natural. It becomes a habit where every time you feel that spark of joy or appreciation, you say gratitude to yourself, out loud, or you write it down in your gratitude journal. This can never be done too much; the more you do it, the more positive you feel, which further helps you to raise your vibrations and help the universe guide you to exactly what you want to attract.

"Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you recognize and express gratitude for the things you have, the more things you will have to express gratitude for."

~ ZIG ZIGLAR

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Bringing Gratitude into Your Coaching

Here are six ways you can integrate gratitude into your coaching…

1. Start a coaching session by asking your client: "What is one thing you are grateful for since your last coaching session?"
2. End a coaching session by asking "what is one thing you are grateful for from this coaching time together?"
3. Suggest your clients keep a gratitude journal and offer them some of the tips you have learned in this Gratitude Journaling tool.
4. Offer them gratitude journaling prompts (see the 50 Gratitude Journaling Prompts below for some ideas) by email in between coaching sessions (you can create personalized gratitude journaling prompts based on the areas you are working on in coaching).
5. Express your gratitude to your clients – send thank you notes when you get a new client, or when you complete your coaching work together, thank clients for what they brought to the session, thank them for showing up, for being on time, for investing in themselves, for choosing you as their coach, for the privilege of sharing their stories and hopes with you and so on! *We teach others the power of gratitude by expressing our gratitude.*
6. You and your clients can use gratitude for future goals and hopes too. For example, I had a dream of publishing a book with a well-known publisher. Before ever getting the publishing contract, I wrote the following in my journal*: "I am so happy and grateful now that we have a publishing contract for our book."* This approach can turn a gratitude journaling practice into a manifesting tool! This is another example of gratitude and the law of attraction.

Pause and Reflect:

What are ways you bring gratitude into your coaching work?

How important do you think gratitude is within coaching?

How have you seen gratitude improve your life? Your clients' lives?

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50 Gratitude Journaling Prompts

> *"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others."*
>
> ~ CICERO

There is nothing too big or too small to be grateful for. You can wake each morning and begin your day with "I am grateful for this new day before me."

Being grateful helps to foster positive thoughts and emotions. It is good for our health and deepens our resilience and well-being.

The following gratitude journaling prompts can help you deepen your own personal gratitude practice.

Enjoy!

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Gratitude Journaling Prompts

1. What are 3 things you are grateful for right in this moment?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2. Who is someone you have appreciation and gratitude for?

_____

3. List the 10 people in your life you believe have impacted you the most?

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2. _____

3. _____

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9. _____

10. _____

4. Who is someone you would love to tell your gratitude to?

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5. Write down the people in your family you are most grateful for.

6. In what ways does your family make you feel gratitude?

7. How can you show the people in your life how grateful you are to have them?

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8. Write down how you are grateful for your friends.

9. In what ways have your friends impacted your life?

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10. How have your friendships changed throughout your life?

11. What do you value the most about your friendships?

12. Write down what you love the most about 3 of your best friends.

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13. What about your job or work in the world makes you grateful?

14. How can you be grateful for jobs you no longer have?

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15. What is a moment in your life that you disliked at the time, but have learned to appreciate?

16. What do you love the most about the various work you have done in your life?

17. List all the ways your current job, work, vocation or retirement brings more joy into your life.

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18. What about your home are you the most grateful for?

19. In what ways does your home bring you joy?

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20. Write down 5-10 of your favorite characteristics of your home.

21. What do you appreciate about the location of your home?

22. Look around in the room you're in, and write down at least one thing you are grateful for.

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23. What room of your home do you love the most?

24. Where in your home do you spend the most time?

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25. Look outside the window and write down everything you are grateful for outside.

26. Do you have an outdoor area, garden, or space that brings you joy?

27. What about your life are you most grateful for?

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28. Write down a challenge you have experienced that you appreciate.

29. What is something difficult that taught you valuable life lessons?

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30. How can you be grateful for the luck you have experienced?

31. What is something you worked hard for that you are grateful for?

32. List your greatest accomplishments.

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33. When you think of moments in the past you are grateful for, what comes to mind?

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34. What is something good that happened this year?

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35. When you are having a bad day, what cheers you up?

36. When you wake in a bad mood, what are 5-10 things you can still be grateful for?

37. How are you grateful for your food?

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38. What are your favorite foods?

39. In what ways does food with family or friends bring you joy?

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40. What is something you sometimes take for granted?

41. What are some of your greatest blessings?

42. What is a moment in your life you are grateful for?

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43. What holidays and special occasions make you feel the most gratitude?

44. What are some of your own talents or skills you are grateful for?

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45. What is a nice gesture someone did for you?

46. What is one of your most precious possessions?

47. What is a gift you were given that you still think about often?

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48. What do you want that you already have?

49. How do you typically express your gratitude?

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50. How does expressing gratitude make you feel?

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

JOHN F. KENNEDY

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Turn Your Gratitude List into a Life Enriching Practice

One of my favourite gratitude journaling exercises is to write a list of at least 50 things I am grateful for. If you find it easy to write down 50 things (people, experiences, things, moments, etc.) then try to make a list of 100 things. This is a way to work your gratitude giving muscles!

This is a great journaling exercise to share with your clients too. I have given this activity to many of my clients with various themes added to it, for example...

- List 50 things you are grateful for about being a leader (or coach, helper, healer, parent, partner, etc.)
- List 50 things you are grateful for about the past year, past 6 months, past week

For now, before asking your clients to create their gratitude lists, **try it for yourself first!**

Gratitude Tip

Making lists of things you are grateful for can be inspiring. To take things to the next level, you need to turn the ideas of what you are thankful for into actual experiences of gratitude. For example, if you feel gratitude for time in nature, the next time you are walking in nature, take a moment to really be with your feelings of gratitude. Let that feeling imprint its goodness into your mind, body, heart and spirit. This helps you hold onto it. This can increase the joy, fulfillment and goodness you gain from your gratitude practice.

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Your Gratitude List

"Gratitude is when memory is stored in the heart and not in the mind." ~ LIONEL HAMPTON

Take time to write down 50 things you are grateful fo

1. _____
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JOURNAL WRITING
Enrich Your Life Through Journaling

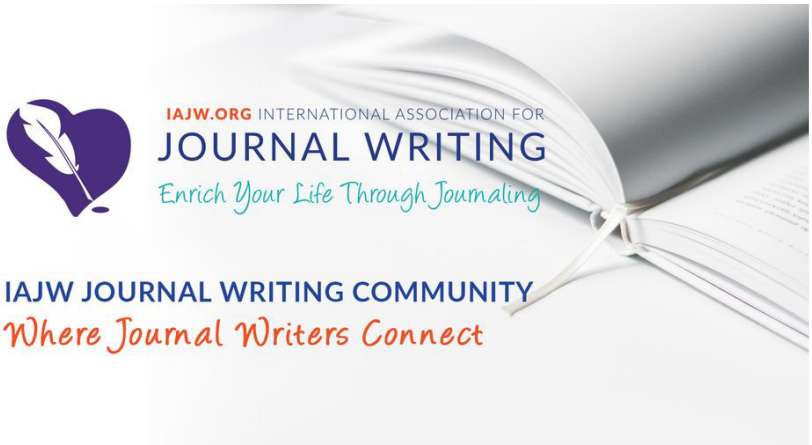
The International Association for Journal Writing (IAJW.org) is an inspiration, learning and membership community for journal writers worldwide. We offer online courses, retreats, coaching programs, journaling tools, writing circles, resources and more to support your unique journal writing journey.

We help you enrich and transform your life through journaling.

Learn more about the IAJW

To learn more about the healing and transformational power of journaling please visit our website at http://iajw.org

Visit Our Website



Join our IAJW Journal Writing Tribe Facebook Group for ongoing inspiration & connection.

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Lynda Monk, MSW, RSW, CPCC, is the Director of The International Association of Journal Writing (IAJW.org), an inspiring membership community for journal writers worldwide. She is the co-editor and co-author of several books including Affirmations for Self-Love; The Great Book of Journaling: Transformational Journaling for Coaches, Therapists and Clients; Writing Alone Together, and author of Life Source Writing. Lynda is Registered Social Worker and Certified Professional Life Coach, with 30+ years' experience teaching, speaking, and coaching in the areas of burnout prevention, resilience, and writing for wellness and personal growth. She was the co-leader of the Life Vision and Enhancement Community of Practice with the International Coach Federation from 2017-2020. She is passionate about the healing and transformational power of journaling!