

# Top 11 Tips for Journaling in Community

Created by Lynda Monk, MSW, RSW, CPCC

Journaling is typically a solitary practice. It can also be shared in community with others. Journaling in community offers inspiration, new insights, and connection. In our International Association for Journal Writing community, we regularly come together to engage with Writing Alone Together™ in our group journaling circles.

Writing Alone Together™ has four key practices...

1. Writing freely
2. Reading aloud (always a choice)
3. Listening deeply
4. Bearing witness

**Connection fuels our creativity!**

Here are my Top 10 Tips for Journaling in Community — designed to support connection, reflection, and personal growth in an emotionally safe and intentionally shared creative space:

## 1. Arrive Fully

Start each group journaling session by grounding and centering yourself. Take a couple of deep breaths and arrive mindfully to the time together. Give yourself permission to be fully present.

## 2. Begin with Intention

Quietly set your intentions. What do you hope to get out of the journaling time together? Bring your intentions to mind and heart.

## 3. Create a Safe Container

You can do this by inviting active listening, non-judgement, and choice in the journaling circle. What's shared in the journaling circle stays in the circle.

## 4. Write Honestly for Yourself

Let go of trying to write something “good” or “shareable.” Your journaling is for you even when it is done in community with others. Authenticity and truth matter most. Journaling is about the process of self-expression not perfection.

## 5. Sharing Is Always Optional

You never have to share your writing. Listening is a powerful way to participate. If you do share, you are always in choice with what you share. You can share what you wrote, a portion of what you wrote, an insight you gained from your journaling or what it was like to do the writing.



## 6. Listen to Others with Full Presence

When others share, listen deeply. Offer silence, not solutions. Simply witnessing someone's words is a generous gift. Journaling in community is about the story, the words, the sharing and the witnessing. There is no critiquing of the writing. It is received with gratitude and respect.

“The shared silence of pens moving across paper can be louder than any conversation.”

– JUDY REEVES

## 7. Release Self-Judgment

Let go of inner critics. There's no right or wrong way to journal. Spelling, grammar, and clarity don't matter—feeling and flow do. Remember, whatever you write is right!

## 8. Be Open to Emotions

Journaling in community can stir up big feelings. That's okay. You're not alone in your experience. Emotions can flow as you write, as you share, and as you listen and witness what others share too. Allow what arises and let yourself be touched by the healing power of journaling in community.

## 9. Notice Insights & Empathy

You may hear your own story in someone else's words. Let those moments deepen your insight and empathy for yourself and others. Journaling in community is a compassion building practice!

## 10. Trust the Process

You don't need to have breakthroughs every time you journal in community. Showing up to your journaling and to the group with honesty, care, and curiosity are enough. Showing up is something of value all on its own! Trust the process, and the power, of writing alone together.

## 11. Nurture the Connection Beyond the Page

Reflect on what you take with you after each Writing Alone Together™ session. Journaling in community offers insights, support, and inspiration. Journaling together builds inner strength and shared humanity all at once!

“Writing in community is like building a bridge between isolated islands—we discover we are part of something bigger.”

– AHAVA SHIRA

## About

Lynda Monk, MSW, RSW, CPCC is the Director of the [International Association for Journal Writing](https://iajw.org), an inspirational and educational community for journal writers worldwide. Lynda is the co-author of *Writing Alone Together: Journaling in a Circle of Women for Creativity, Compassion and Connection*. She is co-editor/co-author of other books including *The Great Book of Journaling*. She is co-author, along with Eric Maisel, of the [Artists Speak creative journal series](https://iajw.org) and [The Art of Journal Coaching program](https://iajw.org). Lynda regularly speaks and teaches on the healing power of journaling individually and together.

