



# Journal Writing

The Techniques, The Purpose, The Benefits

David Bain

CUCB Program Specialist

# Introduction

- Do or have you used a journal?
- Famous journals

# Why People Journal

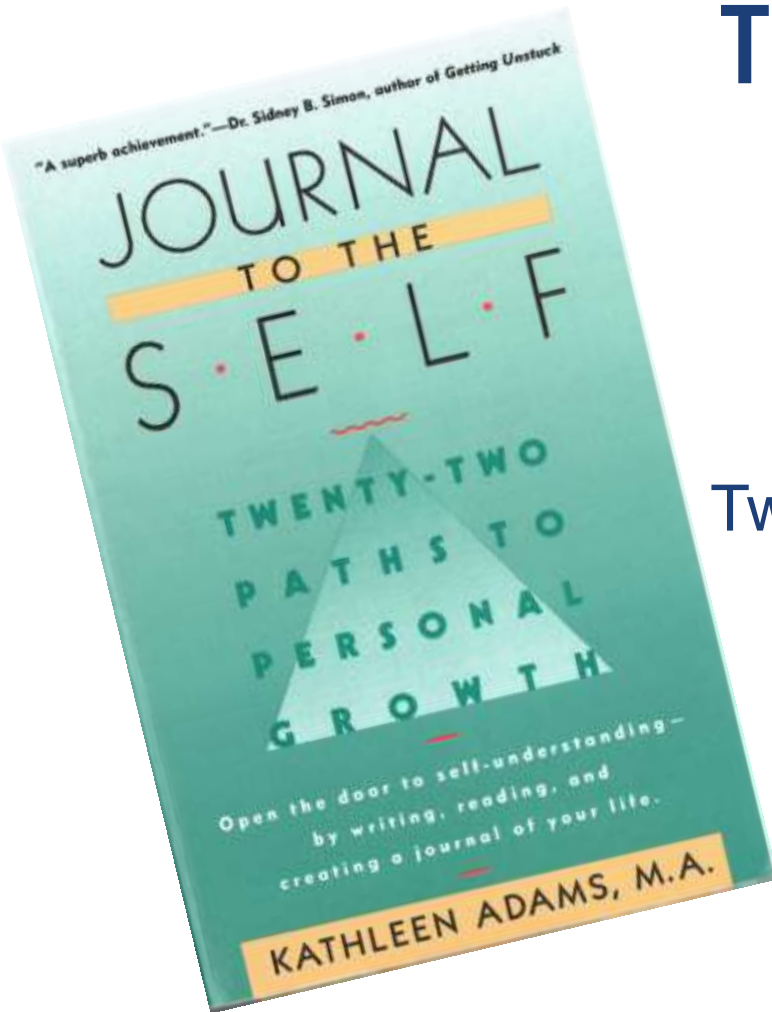
- Discover the writer within you
- Keep a record of how your life unfolds
- Get to know a different part of you
- Take advantage of a “friend in need”
- Heal your relationships
- Access information stored in the subconscious
- Access information from your superconscious
- Explore your dreams
- Develop your intuition
- Maximize time and business efficiency
- Explore your creativity
- Track the cycles, patterns and trends of your life

# Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will:

- Be able to list 3 benefits of journaling
- Be able to list 3+ techniques of journaling
- Have practiced multiple journaling techniques
- Be able to evaluate how they might benefit from journaling

# The Source



*Journal to the Self*

Twenty-two paths to personal growth

Kathleen Adams

# Warm Up Exercise

- Fill in the blanks: “I would like to march right up to \_\_\_\_\_ and say, \_\_\_\_\_.”
- If you could have one talent that you do not have naturally have, what would it be?

# Warm Up Exercise

- Write a one-minute “Thank You” note to someone.
- Complete this thought: “Today I hope . . . .”

# Journal Rules

- Spell all words correctly – use proper grammar and punctuation
- Write until you get to the bottom of an issue. Don't quit until you do.
- Write every day or at least at regular intervals
- My journal should not be messy. No crossed out words or lines or things written in the margins
- My journal should be interesting for others to read
- I shouldn't let *anyone* else read my journal
- I shouldn't say horrible things about people I love, no four-letter words, don't whine, complain or get angry
- Destroy journals / diaries periodically to spare others the pain of reading them
- Once I start journal writing. I should stay with it. It should be a lifetime discipline.
- Write your own rule number 10



# Journaling Suggestions

- Start with an entrance meditation
- Date every entry
- Keep what you write
- Write quickly, and don't worry about penmanship
- Start writing, keep writing
- Tell the complete truth faster
- Protect your own privacy
- Write naturally

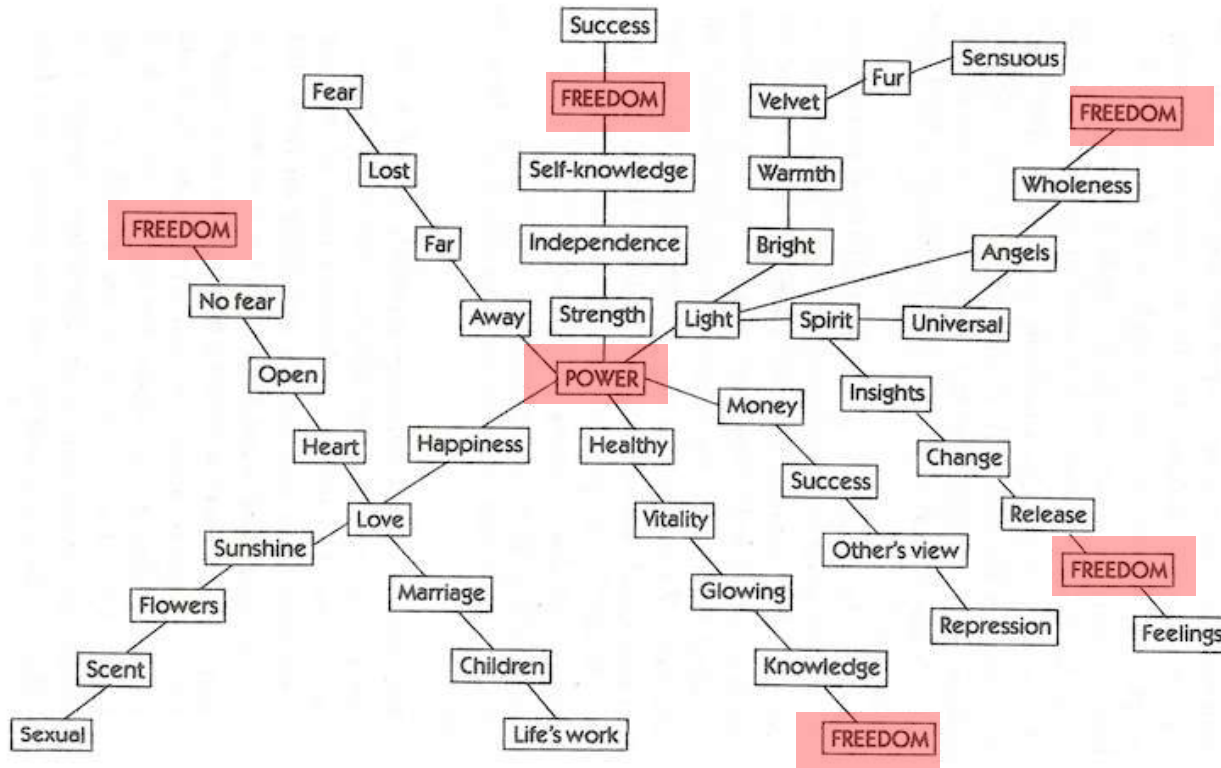
# Exercise 1: Clustering

- Sometimes called Mind Mapping or Webbing
- Helps access lots of information quickly
- A brainstorming technique

## In Journaling

- Help integrate left and right hemispheres of the brain
- Right brain – easy flow of ideas
- Left brain – structure
- Work the process until you have exhausted your immediate possibilities or you have a sense of clarity

# Clustering Example



Hoarding De-cluttering Freedom

# Exercise : Clustering

As your central word use the word  
**SECURITY**

Create a cluster of what security means to  
you

# Springboards

- Two Types
  - Statements
  - Questions
- My mother is driving me crazy.
- Why is my mother driving me crazy?

# Springboards - Examples

- Today I feel \_\_\_\_\_ years old?
- I am excited about . . . . .
- My ideal work environment would include . . . .
- What I value most in my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_
- I'm alone and it's . . . . .
- My biggest [secret, fear, wish, etc.] is . . . . .
- What do I really want?

Pick one of the Springboards above to write about

# Captured Moments

“The Captured Moments journal technique allows you to celebrate and savor, preserving in prose the glory and anguish, the serenity and sorrow, the pleasure and pain of your life.

- Best written from the senses
- Describe in detail the sounds, sights, smells, and feeling of a moment in time and space

# Exercise 2: Captured Moments

- Think of a moment in your life you would like to capture
- Take 15 minutes to capture the feelings, sights, smells, and sounds of a moment in time and space



# Contrast – The Time Capsule

- Captures the events in your life
- Helps identify patterns, peaks and valleys
- The time frame is your choice
  - Daily
  - Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Annually

# Unsent Letters

- One of the most popular and widely used journaling techniques
- Provides catharsis, completion and clarity

The **TRICK** is don't plan to send it!

# Unsent Letters - Examples

- My niece to her son – The loss and grief – then the memory and celebration
- Things you wanted to say to an abusive or deceased parent – my letter to my sister
- A letter of thanks to someone you have lost touch with
- A letter of congratulations to yourself

# Tips for writing Unsent Letters

- Don't censor; don't edit
- Unsent letters don't hurt anyone
- Your Unsent Letter may be to anyone or anything
- Start your letter with a Springboard
- Write a letter to yourself from someone else
- Letters to and from God / a higher power are magical

# Exercise 4: Unsent Letter

Take 20 minutes and write an unsent letter to the person, object, event of your choice

# Contrast – The Dialog

The dialog is an exchange between you and someone or something else, where you play both parts.

On the page it looks like a movie or theater script

“ME: You’re all very small.

FEARS: Fears don’t grow, they multiply.”

# Contrast – The Dialog

Different types of dialogue – Dialogue with:

- Persons
- Events and Circumstances
- Work
- Your Body
- Societies

# Contrast – The Dialog

Different types of dialogue – Dialogue with:

- Emotions / Feelings
- Material Objects / Possessions
- Subpersonalities / Symbols (Health, Thin Self, Fat Self, the Addict)
- Resistance / Block
- Your inner child



# Exercise 5 - Dialog

Pick a person, an event, or an aspect of your life and write a dialog of 6 to 10 lines

# Exercise 6: Lists

Quick! Write a list of the lists you most frequently write.

# Advantages of Lists

- Clarifying thoughts
- Identifying patterns or problems
- Brainstorming solutions
- Getting below the surface
- Getting past the obvious
- Gathering a lot of information very quickly
- Focusing attention on what's really going on

# The Catch

Write a list of 100

- 100 Fears

# The Catch

Write a list of 100

- 100 Things I Need or Want to Do
- 100 Fears
- 100 Things I Like About Myself
- 100 Things I'm Feeling Stressed About

# Tips for Writing a List of 100

- It's OK to repeat
- Write as fast as you can
- You don't have to write in complete sentences
- It's OK to repeat
- Your entries do not have to make sense
- Just get it down!

# Tips for Writing a List of 100

- Number your entries
- Write the list in one sitting
- Actual or journal actions may be suggested by the list
- Anything that is a current issue for you is a good candidate for a List of 100

# I have my List – Now What?

- Look for themes
- Mark each theme with a symbol – a letter - \$ for money – P for people – R for relationships
- Count the number of entries in each category



# Exercise 6 - Lists

- 100 Fears I am having right now
- 100 Things I am grateful for
- 100 People that have added something positive to my life
- 100 Reasons to De-clutter my life
- 100 Things I need to let go of
- 100 People I Want to Forgive
- 100 Things that Make Me Laugh

# My List of 100 Fears

- General 2%
- Financial 6%
- Health 13%
- Appearance 2%
- Failing 42%
- Relationships 17%
- Lack of Control 4%
- Stupidity 12%

# Perspectives

“Perspectives is a journal technique that allows you to explore the possibilities of the roads not taken in your life. With Perspectives, you can step into the future or the past, resolve interpersonal differences with compassion, and glimpse the world as it might have been or you – or as it might be for another. It is a process of altering your personal reality, your world view, to try on another perspective.

# Exercise 7: Perspectives

- Decision Making
- Understanding Others
- Glimpses of the Future
- Roads Not Taken

Choose a Perspective and write on the topic

# Putting It All Together

- Each technique serves a purpose
- Any one technique can trigger a reason to use another
- Using multiple techniques on the same topic can increase clarity
- Goals may change over time – and that's ok