Instructions for Daytime Journal

I will review your journal with you at each session. The sessions are always "client-directed." If you never mention your journal, that does not mean that the journal is not part of your on-going therapy. I always begin each session by “asking” about the past life events which have occurred since our last session. All life events “change” the direction of therapy. “What” activities you choose for your life energy tells me “where” you are on the path to healing. When you show "memory recall" problems of your daily life events, I remind you of the importance of the written journal process.

You will determine your own therapy progress with periodic “reviews” with me of past entries and how these compare with current entries.

**Directions:**

Write your journal at the end of each day, before you go to bed. If an event is very important, write a few notes after it has occurred, then expand upon it in the written journal. Write the journal after you have completed your relaxation and breathing exercises before going to bed.

You will focus on three separate awareness descriptions. Leave enough writing space between the entries to allow for additional writing, as you may “remember” later. If you want to use an OnLine app, which will allow you to also include photos and audio, here is a free one: <https://dayoneapp.com/>

First, write about your "activity": everything you did during the day, i.e., eating breakfast, taking a shower, going shopping, typing a letter, doing progressive relaxation and breathing exercises, sexual activity, an argument with another person (adult or child), etc. Each “activity” is a separate entry. The focus on each activity increases your awareness of how you expend your life energy and what types of activities direct your life.

Second, focus your memory recall on one activity at a time. Write about the sensory memories of that activity: smells, sound, sights, touch, taste (external), and all internal sensations. This increases ability to do sense memory work as well as increase the sensorial scanning awareness.

Third, return to each entry, one at a time, and expand by writing about “thoughts” which you had during the activity. Did you like it, dislike it, what types of judgmental thoughts did you have, future projective thoughts, etc. This is part of OCD exploration, as well as helping you gain awareness of the difference between “actions” (behavior), emotions & feelings (sensory experiences and language for those experiences), and thoughts (conscious cognitions and how the meanings of thoughts are developed, stored, and recalled).

Some Theories about “why” the Journal Process is Vital to Psychotherapy Success:

The primary focus of IN SYNC interventions is to assist you in changing and developing various “states of mind.” These “states” are developmentally formed from your physical body and then are used by your enlarging “sense of self” which comes from the body sensorial experiences being “hard-wired” to brain “consciousness” functions.

You have now developed awareness of muscle tension and relaxation with the various “states of mind” that these physiological factors have upon your “conscious experience.” You have integrated “exteroception” (awareness of your five senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling) with “interoception” (awareness of your internal sensory experiences of temperature, hunger, thirst, sleepiness, alertness, pain, emotions) and with “proprioception” (awareness of body feedback of balance and position of your body). Together, we called this awareness integration “neuroception.” With a growing integration in “neuroception” we are now beginning to change your conscious experiences of life situations.

The purpose of the Daily Journal is to increase your “resiliency” for healing. “Resiliency” is the term we use to describe the natural, innate, born-with process for self-healing from all sorts of life experiences. Your “old and worn-out” habits have hindered the growth of resiliency, though these habits have protected you up to this point in your life. But you are now in the growth stage beyond “mindless, robotic perseveration” of the sympathetic survival response (which we have been referring to as the “OCD brain”).

By exploring your life experiences (no matter how “small or insignificant” your OCD brain may judge these events/activities to be), you will begin to become aware of the “mindless, robotic perseverations” and will begin to develop a larger repertoire of skills and strategies. My therapeutic role is now changing to help you nurture your vision of what life can and should be, providing hope that things can and will get better.

You will gain “flexibility”-- which is an ability to know when to use what skills-- in changing your “state of mind.” You will increase your ability to be able to analyze problems, and to discriminate selectively among options. You will understand the circumstances and be able to think through your options. This will occur in the “here and now” with your new “states of mind” and not be a regression to the “mindless robotic perseveration” of the past traumas.

By going over the activities you have recorded in the Daily Journal, you learn how to identify the “small efforts” which create large changes. You learn how to reinforce and gain gratification from these small increments, seeing them as conscious “states of mind” which will be woven together to form your resilient “self-identity.” A sense of satisfaction will increase your self-esteem and self-initiative, and ground your wishes and desires into reality, not false beliefs.

You will begin to gain awareness of the way in which small, discrete “states of mind” create your behavioral choices, increase intelligence, and lead to emotional regulation with integrated feelings and thoughts. This stage is termed “metacognitive integration” and ends the “compartmentalization” of your learning and the splitting of your “self-identity.” When you have reached this point of awareness, then we begin to explore your relationships (work, intimate others, family dynamics), enabling you to alter dysfunctions which arise in your support systems.