

HOW TO JOURNAL FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

**USE THE POWER OF JOURNALING TO
LEARN, THINK, AND GROW.**

SLIMBO
NOTEBOOK

okslimbo.com

Before you get started, I want to let you know that you are not on this journey alone.

I personally use this system on a daily basis and love to help others along the way. To learn more about my journey and join the community, find us at:

okslimbo.com

Instagram

Facebook

Threads

WHAT'S INSIDE

Introduction	1
Before You Start	9
Core Values	15
Time	25
Habits	33
What can you do next?	41



HOW TO JOURNAL FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

**USE THE POWER OF JOURNALING TO
LEARN, THINK, AND GROW.**

It all starts with questions...

What brought you here and what are you searching for?

Are you satisfied with your life?

What changes do you want to make in your life?

What obstacles are holding you back?

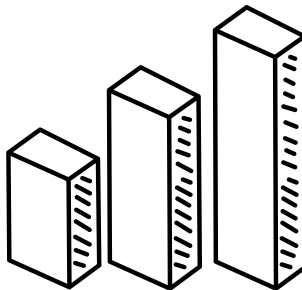
(Don't worry– you don't need to answer these right now.)

Introduction

Journaling for personal growth is all about having the courage to ask and answer the right questions. It's less about the 'what' and 'where' and more about the 'why'.

Chances are you don't spend enough time asking yourself the right questions. There is an even better chance you don't spend enough time answering those questions. Don't be offended, most of us don't. We don't make time for learning and quiet reflection. We have grown uncomfortable being alone with our thoughts. With so much distraction in the palm of our hands (looking at you, smartphone) it's easy to keep ourselves busy and avoid the hard and uncomfortable work.

The good news is that turning things around isn't as complicated as you think. In fact, it's actually pretty simple...but that doesn't mean it's easy.



This guide will put the right questions in front of you, but it can't make you sit down and write. It will take you to the edge of your comfort zone, but it can't make you cross that line. It will give you a foundation, but you have to build something meaningful on top of it.

In other words, you must commit and take action. Don't worry, we will cover that later.

In this guide, we will focus on three main areas to help build a strong foundation for all the amazing growth ahead:

1. Your CORE VALUES

2. Your TIME

3. Your HABITS

Now I am going to assume that you are feeling excited about the personal growth part of this book and a little reluctant about the journaling.

I get it. Journaling can be odd and even hard at first. The more I talk to people about journaling, the more I learn that people are very interested in the benefits of journaling. A quick google search will give you tons of reasons why you should journal, including:

- stress management,
- improved mindfulness,
- better physical, mental, and emotional health,
- strengthening your memory and communication skills,
- increasing joy,
- building stronger relationships...
- and the list goes on and on.

Even with all of these benefits, most people don't give it a try because they can't figure out how to:

- Slow down.
- Focus.
- Get comfortable in silence.
- Approach life with child-like curiosity.
- Develop a relationship with their inner self.
- Use pen and paper.
- Establish consistency.

But journaling and personal growth work so well together. Let's take a look at the definition of each to better understand why.

(1) Journaling is writing down your experiences, thoughts, and feelings so you can understand them more clearly.

(2) Personal Growth is a process of developing new skills, attitudes, and habits that can improve your overall well-being.

Put (1) and (2) together and you get:

Journaling helps you (1) write down your experiences, thoughts and feelings (2) to develop new skills, attitudes, and habits so you can improve your overall well-being.

This guide will help you do just that.

Remember when I told you it was simple? It really is.

Let me be clear: I believe in the power of pen and paper.

Don't get me wrong, I love technology and the productivity that comes with it. I just don't believe technology is the best tool for journaling or personal growth. Let me tell you why:

- 90% of the people who use technology for notetaking or planning end up distracted with another, unproductive task. (1)
- People who write things down are 1.2-1.4 times more likely to accomplish their goals. (2)
- Research suggests that people who write things down have better memories, experience more joy, and live longer. (3)
- In 2023, 57% of people surveyed believe they are addicted to their phones (4)
- Studies show stronger brain activity after writing on paper than on a tablet, phone, or computer. (5)

Sources

1. Study conducted by Princeton/UCLA
2. The Gender Gap and Goal Setting Study
3. Tons of research on this one
4. <https://www.reviews.org/mobile/cell-phone-addiction/>
5. Study conducted at the University of Tokyo

Introduction: Key Points

- Journaling for personal growth is simple, but not easy.
- To make lasting change you must put in the work.
- This guide will help you (1) write down your experiences, thoughts and feelings (2) so you can improve your overall well-being.
- Technology is great, but also the primary distraction for most people.
- Pen and paper are the best tools for journaling and personal growth.

Introduction: Key Questions

You didn't think I was going to forget about these questions, did you? Take some time to reflect and write on each one before you get started.

- What brought you here and what are you searching for?
- Are you satisfied with your life?
- What changes do you want to make in your life?
- What obstacles are holding you back?



BEFORE YOU START

Tools and Tips

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

Loa Tzu

Interactive Journaling

I use journaling as a form of training. I have used it to process, plan, and create big things in my life. For me, it wasn't enough to just write about it. I always challenged myself by asking:

- What I can I do about this?
- What can I try?
- What action can I take to improve?

This drive for action took my journaling routine to a whole new level. I was constantly writing and reflecting. I would set weekly or monthly challenges for myself and track my progress in my notebook. I would ask others for feedback and ideas.

One of my friends called my process "extreme journaling". It was intense. It was active. It was happening around me, all the time. Over time, I decided to call it 'Interactive Journaling'. That is the technique we will use in this guide.

Once you get in the groove, it can get addicting. Why? Because it works and it is simple. Okay, now I am excited. Let's do this!

Let's learn a little about **Interactive Journaling**.

The key difference between standard journaling and Interactive Journaling is the **call to action**. The call to action means taking our internal dialogue and creating external ripples. It means creating action and interaction from our thoughts, goals, and dreams. Action is what will help drive true and lasting changes in the most important aspects of your life.

I have narrowed down the process to three steps. Here is how they occur in Interactive Journaling:

1. Learn (what we know or want to know)

This is the part where you ask, listen, research, and read. In other words, you pick a topic, and you LEARN as much as you need to make yourself dangerous.

2. Think (the journaling)

Here is where you take everything you've learned and reflect on it. The primary question you will ask is:

"What does all of this knowledge mean to me and what do I want to do with it?"

Journaling is so important because it connects what we KNOW and what we DO.

3. Grow (the action we take towards what we want)

This is the part where the magic happens. This is where you take a step out into the world and actually DO something about it.

Three steps. That's it. Simple, right?

Here are a few tips to help you with Interactive Journaling:

1. Don't rush or hurry through an activity. Most activities are designed to be worked on over time. In some instances, a day, a week, a month, or longer if needed. Take your time. It's your journey.
2. Get into the habit of carrying a pen and notebook with you. You need to be ready to jot things down as they happen. The sooner you can get it in your notebook, the better. I have created some awesome pocket notebooks that are perfect for this. Check them out at okslimbo.com.
3. Try to step outside of your comfort zone. If it doesn't feel a little uncomfortable, you probably aren't pushing yourself enough.
4. Give yourself a break. If you're honest and committed, there is a good chance you will learn somethings about yourself that you may not be happy about. That's okay. Give yourself a break and remember...you are working on it.

Remember, we will follow these steps:

1. Learn
2. Think
3. Grow

Focus on you

This guide is all about you. You are absolutely no good to others unless you are good to yourself. **Building a foundation that gives you a deep sense of confidence, peace, joy, and love will improve how you interact with the world around you.**

In order to be good to yourself, you have to know the real you. You have to understand your past, who you are now, and who you want to be in the future.

Most of us don't take the time to know and understand who we are or what we want. We don't know how to align our actions with the things that really matter to us. We fill our days with things that keep us busy and at the end of the day, there is very little time for the things we love. There is always tomorrow, right?

Wrong! Tomorrow is a wish. Today is a gift. Do more of what you love now. A lot more of it.

I know how hard life can be. I have found myself in that busy, frantic approach to life. In fact, I lived there for over 30 years. I still find myself in that place more often than I'd like. But now I make sure my visits are short. I know what I value and where I want to go. I am aware of the things that push and pull at me and how to deal with them. This self-awareness allows me to get myself back on track quickly. I often have to remind myself that it's **progress over perfection.**

I have learned that the relationship you have with yourself is often the most difficult relationship to manage. We are hard on ourselves. We neglect our needs and over time, we forget how to love ourselves. Self-love is defined as regard for one's own well-being and happiness. This book is about taking the first steps towards more of that.

Before you set off on a journey to get to know yourself, here are some of the things you need to get comfortable with:

1. **Be honest.** Even if it is painful, allow yourself to be vulnerable. Journaling creates a safe place for the good, the bad, and the ugly. As you work through your journal, you will gain confidence knowing that the person you are now is not the person you have to be tomorrow.
2. **Forge your own path.** What works for someone else, won't work for you. In fact, it probably doesn't really work for them.
3. **Be confident in who you are and what you want.** Did you know that the average person is unhealthy, unsatisfied, too busy, and drowning in debt? Those people may think you're weird and that is perfectly okay.
4. **Your circumstances change and so should you.** If you don't create change in your life, change will create you.
5. **Time is your most valuable resource.** Spend it wisely. You will never get it back.
6. **Real and lasting change takes time, patience, and practice.** Focus on progress over perfection and commit to showing up even when it's hard.

Tip: Write down the parts in bold on the first page of your notebook as reminders to keep you motivated.

Okay. That is enough to get you started. Let's dig into your first activity.



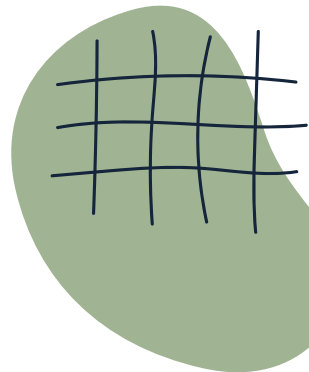
1

CORE VALUES

**The foundation for everything we
do, say, and want.**

"Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words. Keep your words positive because your words become your behavior. Keep your behavior positive because your behavior becomes your habits. Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny."

Mahatma Gandhi



Activity 1: Core Values

Core Values: Learn

What are core values and why do they matter?

Core values are a set of fundamental beliefs that influence how you live your life. They play an important role in shaping how you respond to situations, manage relationships, and set goals.

Your core values help you understand:

- 1. Who you are.**
- 2. What you want.**
- 3. Why you want it.**

It is important to note that what you see as a core value doesn't have to align with how you currently live your life, and it doesn't have to be a strength of yours. **Sometimes, we can know what we value but fail to prioritize it.** This is something you can work on once you understand your values.

Here is why determining your core values is so important:

1. **Finding your purpose:** Helps you figure out what you want out of your life.
2. **Guiding your behavior:** Helps you behave in a way that matches who you want to be.
3. **Helping you make decisions:** When you're facing a decision, you can align your options with your values.
4. **Increasing your confidence:** Brings a sense of safety and stability into your life.

Now that you know just enough about core values to be dangerous, the next step in our process is THINK.

Let's transition into some writing, reflecting, and thinking...

Core Values: Think

This 5-step journaling routine is simple, yet extremely effective in helping you determine your core values because it helps you connect with the past, present, and future version of yourself.

I recommend you read through the entire routine before you get started. It is designed to be completed over 5 days. Don't rush through it. Be sure to carry your notebook with you and jot down thoughts, feelings, and experiences as you go. There is no better way to learn about yourself than through intentional observation.

Day 1: Write down your values.

Brainstorm a list of values that most accurately describe your feelings, beliefs or behaviors. Try to list 10-20.

Here are some examples of values: living a healthy lifestyle, compassion, fun, family, creativity, success, faith, making money, kindness.

Day 2: Consider the people you most admire.

Values are typically personified in people whom we admire and love. Write down 3 people you admire and identify values they possess that resonate with you. Add any new values to your list from Day 1.

Day 3: Consider your experiences.

Think back to the best and most challenging times in your life. Consider what these experiences reveal about your core values. What happened? How did you feel? How did you respond? How did you change? For example, the loss of a loved one can reveal how important "Family" or "Love" is to us. Add any new values to your list from Day 1.

Day 4: Categorize values into common themes.

Review your list of values and group the values into common themes or categories. For example, 'learning' and 'intelligence' can be grouped together, if that makes sense to you.

Once you have categorized your values into common themes, choose a word or short phrase that best represents each group.

Day 5: Choose your top core values.

Rank the categories in order of importance. 1 being the most important, 2 being less important and so on. Those you rank 1-5 will be your core values. It's okay to select more than 5 but try to keep the list as short as possible.

Choosing too many will make it difficult to figure out what is really a priority. Less is more. Keep it short and simple.

Thinking is hard, right? But here is the good news. Once you establish your core values, you have taken a huge step on the long and winding journey of personal growth. You will have a set of fundamental values that will guide and motivate you along the way. You will have purpose and that is a powerful thing. Now, grab your pen and notebook and get to writing.

1. Write down your values.
2. What do you value in those you admire?
3. Consider your experiences.
4. Categorize your values into common themes.
5. Choose your core values.

Are you still with me? I know this is a long activity, but it's such an important one to work through.

This may be a good time to take a little break. Go do something fun and give that writing hand a break. We can start the growth activity tomorrow.

But don't give up! The growth activity is where the magic happens.

Core Values: Grow

How we spend our time is a reflection of the things we value. This includes:

1. What we do.
2. Who we do it with.
3. How we do it.

For our growth activity, all you have to do is live your life and take notes. Easy enough, right? Here is the activity:

Before you start, write down your top 5 core values in your notebook.

1. Over the span of a week, write down, in as much detail, how you spend your time. Write down every task, meeting, meal, meaningful conversation, moment of leisure, workout, distraction, etc. The more detail, the better. It's just for one week. You can do it. (Make sure you keep this somewhere safe. You will use it for the second activity).

2. At the end of the week, review each day and reflect on the following:

- What are you doing that doesn't add value or align with your core values?
- What core value are you neglecting?

Core Values: Wrapping Up

You should now have a much better idea of:

1. Who you are.
2. What you want.
3. Why you want it.

But remember, **who you are is constantly changing so work on your core values often.** I review my core values once per year. I share them with the important people in my life. I suggest you do the same. Doing so acts as a declaration of who you are and why you do the things you do. It also creates external accountability.

At the end of the activity, you reflected on:

- What are you doing that doesn't add value or align with your core values?
- What core value are you neglecting?

Hopefully, these questions sparked a desire to make some changes. If that is where you are, great. We are on track.

But the truth is that you won't be able to make any changes in your life until you become the master of your time and the creator of your habits.

Let's shift our focus to taking back your time.

