

Why Keeping a Journal Can Help Relieve Stress

Regina Arnold



It might be surprising in today's digitally dominated, stressed out world, but journaling has become incredibly popular these days. In fact it's actually recommended by health professionals as a scientifically proven way to help cope with the stresses of modern day life.

If you're not familiar with the concept of journaling, think back to when you were younger. In your prepubescent years you might have started a secret diary and wrote about whomever your secret crush was that week, or how you managed to sneak out to hang with friends when your parents thought you were in your room diligently doing your homework?

Journaling is similar, but is generally a safe place for you to express your deeper thoughts, feelings and emotions rather than just catalogue daily events.

So how can journaling help you cope with stress?

It releases pent up feelings

Think about it. Do you always say out loud everything you think? Probably not. Most people don't. We all have thoughts that are never verbally expressed, especially the negative ones. So instead of letting those thoughts become pent up emotions that eat you up inside, write them down instead. It can be a great stress reliever to tear up the paper once you're done - symbolically getting rid of the negative feelings and dumping them in the trash where they belong.

Nobody is judging you

Allowing pent up emotions to build up inside will eventually have a negative effect on your well-being. Journaling is an excellent way of getting things off your chest and releasing your emotions in a non-judgmental environment. You can clear your mind and mentally purge the stresses of your day without worrying what somebody else might think. Thoughts and emotions you might otherwise have kept hidden and never talked about can be released.

Gain greater self-awareness

Writing down both positive and negative feelings helps you become more self-aware. Write down how you felt about something that happened in your day. How did you react? How do you wish you had reacted? What thoughts did you have but didn't vocalize? What would you do if the same thing happened again?

Reading back what you wrote every few days allows you to re-assess the issues that arose and then learn from them. Knowing your emotional strengths and limitations is one of the best ways to understand yourself so you can cope better with stress as it arises, as well as grow and thrive both mentally and physically.

Better mental clarity

Sometimes your thoughts and feelings can seem like a jumbled mess, especially when you are stressed and your mind is anxious. Writing your thoughts down and feelings down can help you sort them out logically so you can understand them better. Having the words on paper in front of you can also help you see things more clearly and put situations into perspective.

Recognize the positives

Journaling isn't just for getting rid of negative emotions. Keeping a gratitude journal is an excellent way of focusing on the positives rather than dwelling on the negatives. When you write down the good things in your life and give thanks for them, it will often allow you to see the wood for the trees as the saying goes, and realize that maybe things aren't quite as bad as they first seemed.

As you have learned, there are many reasons why keeping a journal helps you cope with stress. All you need is a notebook and pen to get started. You will not only feel less stress by writing down your daily thoughts, journaling is also proven to improve cognitive function, strengthen the immune system and improve your memory. Why not get started today?



Personally, I've found that writing in a college type notebook just doesn't work for me. If you don't already have one, find yourself a nice, leather journal; one that appeals to your senses when you first see it. You'll know that's the one for you, believe me 😊