

Journaling *Ideas*

katemcbarron.co.uk

When you open your journal...

There is so much to discover. You can find relief, release, nourishment and new ways of looking at the world. All this, and more, is available through the pages of your notebook.

Journaling is a chance to connect with your whole self. To help make the most of this experience, approach your words with self-compassion and an open mind. You might find these guidelines useful:

Write without judgement

Respond from the heart

Invoke curiosity!

Think about self-care

Embbrace the process

Above all, your journal is for you. So, use it as needed. Over time, you'll get to know what works best for you. And you may even find that you've made a friend for life.

Happy writing

Kate

Mindful writing

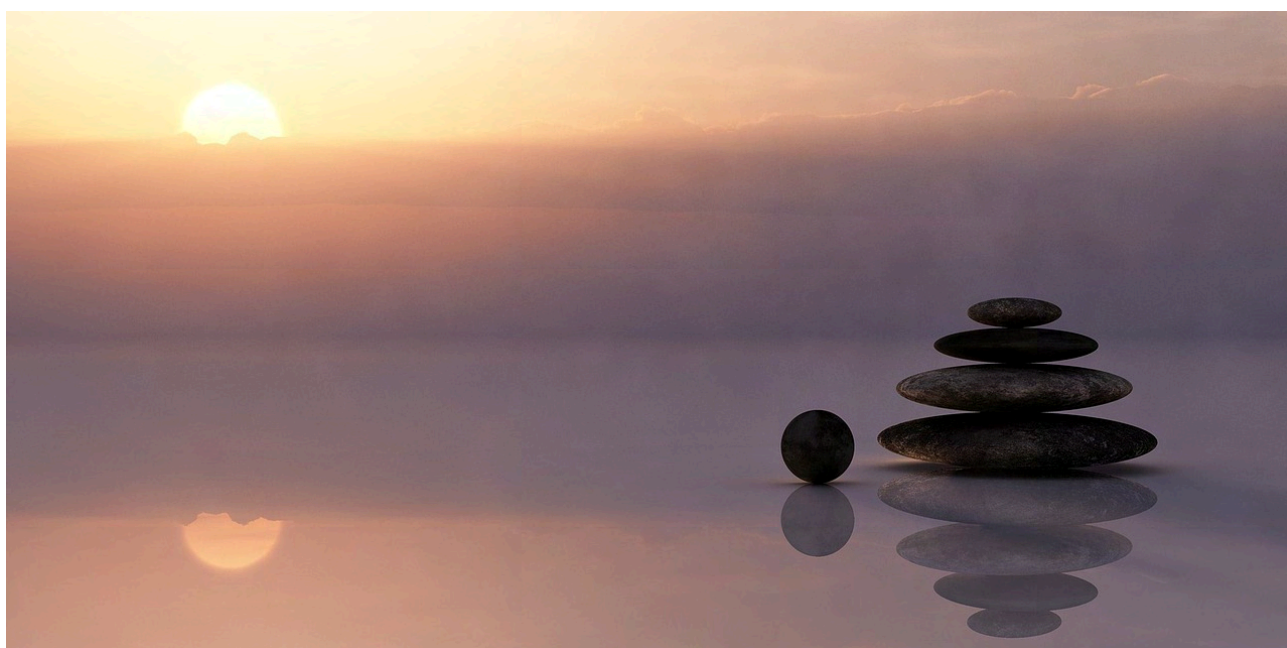
Mindful writing is a wonderful way-in to journaling. You can use it as a warm up, to ground yourself in the moment before going on to write about something else. Or you can use it to spark ideas as you follow your curiosity and let your words flow.

Have a go

Settle yourself somewhere comfortable. Then, using the sentence stem below as your starting point, write about wherever you are. Tune into your senses as you describe your surroundings.

Here...

Write for at least 5 minutes.



Meaningful moments

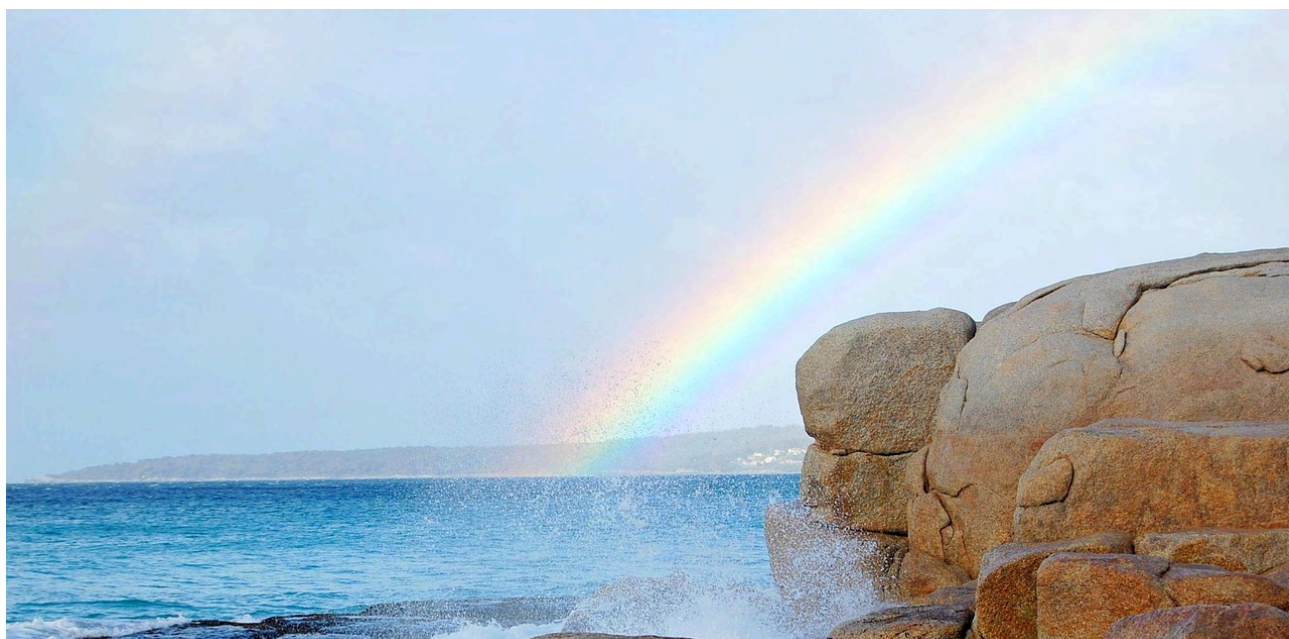
Our journals are, of course, ideal places to preserve precious memories. Once they're on the page, we can return to these memories and enjoy reliving them time and again.

Have a go

Consider the following themes:

- Celebrations you've been to
- People you enjoy spending time with
- Places you want to go back to

Then choose one theme and decide on a moment that you'd like to preserve. Go with whatever comes to mind, without overthinking it. Write about your chosen memory in as much detail as possible. Focus on your senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) to help bring the moment to life on the page.



Gratitude writing

Research has shown that focusing on things we're grateful for can boost our wellbeing. Writing is a great way to harness the power of this approach. You can write about a single thing in detail, or write a gratitude list. Give this approach a go whenever you want to lift your mood. Afterwards, you might like to share your words with someone else and spread the positivity!



Have a go

Think about something you're grateful for. It could be something quite small and fleeting, or something very central to your life right now. Why do you feel grateful for this thing? Write about it in detail, focusing on your senses as well as your thoughts and emotions.

Shaking things up



There are lots of different ways you can approach your journal entries. Sometimes you may want to pour your thoughts onto the page in a stream-of-consciousness style. At other times, a list or mind-map might feel helpful. Or you could choose to doodle or draw your thoughts and feelings. Try out a variety of approaches and see what works for you.

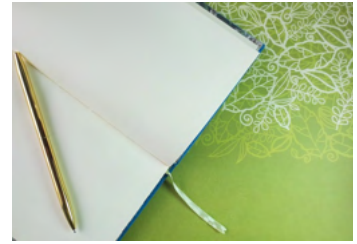
Have a go

Choose a question that's been on your mind lately and respond to it in one of the following ways:

- Write a list
- Write a letter, to yourself or another recipient (this could be a person, an object or even an imaginary friend)
- Create a mind-map
- Doodle your thoughts and feelings

Remember to look after yourself during and after journaling. If a prompt causes you to feel overwhelmed, give your mood a lift with a self-care activity.

On reflection...



A journal is a natural place for reflection. You might find yourself thinking back over your day, or a situation you're curious about, or a problem that's been bothering you. Reflection can also involve looking back through the pages of your journal itself. This can be a great way to gain extra insights. You can learn more about who you are, how far you've come and where you're going in life. Look for patterns, and stay curious.

Have a go

Choose a journal entry to reflect on... What do you notice about it? Does anything surprise you? What do you feel in your body as you reflect on your words? Make some notes about what you discover.

Then, flick back through multiple pages of your journal to see what catches your eye. Do you notice any recurring themes or patterns? Are there experiences in life you'd like more of or habits that you need to break? What insights can you take away with you? Jot down any thoughts. You might wish to use these as the starting point for a new journal entry another day.