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**8 Great Journaling Tips**

**By Catherine Franz**

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Mix a martini, don't forget the olives, or pour yourself a tea, relax and enjoy!

There are no hard-set rules for keeping a journal. How often you write, time you spend, and how rigorously you maintain a regular journaling schedule are matters of personal choice and circumstance. Therefore, it is important to find what works for you. Here are nine guidelines to assist you.

1. Allow for regular writing times. Find a time of day that works well for you and use this time every day. As much as possible, control interruptions during this time.
2. Give yourself an inviting writing environment. If you need quiet space, find a time that you can write without noise and interruption. If the hum of the world around you is soothing rather than distracting, plan to write during a time when other people will be engaged in their own work and not looking over your shoulder.
3. Develop a centering ritual. Associating journaling with another pleasurable habit can guide to strengthen the routine and create an atmosphere of self-nurturing. When you are ready to write in your journal, consider pouring yourself a cup of tea or coffee. Play relaxing music. Take a moment for meditation, deep breathing, or prayer.
4. Prompt your writing with a routine self-reflection question: Triggers such as "What are you feeling right now?"

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or "What's on your mind?" Anais Nin suggests asking "what feels vivid, warm, or near to you at the moment?"

5. Write because you desire to write, because you know it's a comfortable place to be you. Don't allow journaling to become an obligation or chore. Remember not to demand more of yourself than you can give. If you have missed a day, or several days, accept that journaling, like life, is imperfect and go on. Write the next time you have a chance.

6. Create a positive feedback loop. As you continue to use the journal as an opportunity to be with and learn about

yourself, you will find that the practice gains a momentum all its own. Discovering your own hidden depths piques your curiosity and stimulates you to continue, setting up a positive feedback loop between your conscious and unconscious mind.

7. Emphasize process rather than product. An important purpose of journal writing is simply expressing and recording your thoughts and feelings. Concentrate on the process of writing — keeping the flow of words rather than worrying about the result. If your goal is to have specific audiences read your piece, go back to it later and edit it. Use your journal as the raw material for more polished writing.

8. Learn from your own experiences. It is always good to reread your entries a month or so down the road. It demonstrates your growth — a nice pat on the back for all of us. Look for patterns and correlations. What improved, what stayed the same? Learning from yourself is so much more gentler on the self-esteem. Use objectivity to review your life from a different perspective with hindsight.

Relax, have fun, and don't forget to laugh! Journal writing is its own reward. Once you get started, your journal will become another one of your good friends — one who is always available and never presents a deafening ear. Your journal loves you for being you.

Catherine Franz has taught journaling for the last 15 years, including two US Presidents and First Ladies, and hundreds of workshops internationally. She currently has two informational documents available on journaling at: <http://www.abundancece>

## Stress-Free Scrapbook Journaling Ideas

By Elaine Clay

Do you find it intimidating when you come to journal your scrapbook pages?

You are not alone! Many scrapbookers find it hard to get started when it comes to adding journaling to their scrapbooking layouts.

If you are one of those people who go blank at the thought of having to journal, don't worry. Here are some stress-free scrapbooking journaling ideas to help you write the right words whatever your page theme.

Make a list.

This is a fairly simple journaling technique that is suitable for use with any type of page theme, for example:

Doing a friendship page – list how you met, where you met, how long you have known each other, include what you like about your friend and why you are both pals.

Doing a recipe scrapbook page – then make a personal top 10 list of reasons why you like Grandma's chocolate cake so much.

Doing a baby layout – do a list of baby's favorite foods, you can even do one for the foods they don't like!

A variation of this technique is to use bullet points to mark each line on your list, giving you an opportunity to empathise each item of your journaling: Anguilla April 2004 My first trip to the Caribbean This is the view from my hotel balcony overlooking the cove - I can't wait to go swimming the sea looks so nice!

Make sure you have fun experimenting with all the different kinds of embellishments that you can use as your bullet points!

Another bonus with using the list technique is that you do not need to worry about the structure of your sentences or that your journaling makes sense because the list breaks down what you want to say into it's basic readable form.

Write a Letter.

This is one of those great scrapbook journaling ideas that's fairly simple to do and it's also a lovely, personal way to journal your layouts too.

All you have to do is pretend you're writing to a friend telling them what is happening in your

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photographs and including the "Dear ...." at the beginning of your writing will give your journaling an intimate feel.

Sent any emails lately? Like letters, emails are also a good source of journaling material that you can use for your layouts.

If you are unsure of your own journaling then doing it in a letter format could help your writing flow more easily, as you describe the people and the events taking place, letting you tell the story naturally and in your own words.

Ask a question.

If you are completely stuck and cannot think of anything to write this can be a good quick fix technique to use. Just ask some simple questions like, "What was your favorite part of..?" or "Did anything funny or embarrassing happen?".

This technique can be very effective when used for a special occasion layout, like a bridal shower, where you can ask each of the guests to tell you about their favorite memory of the bride-to-be.

Why not take it a stage further? Give each shower guest some suitable decorative paper and let them write down their own memories rather than journal all of them yourself.

For an extra special touch, you could get the guests to bring with them their favorite photo of the bride-to-be. Ask them to journal why they picked that particular picture and then do a separate layout for each individual photo.

This is an effective way to make a wonderful and unique scrapbook that is quick, simple and full of memorable pieces of journaling that add a very personal feel to the album.

If you are one of those people who find it difficult to begin the journaling process these fun scrapbook journaling ideas will provide you with some basic tips and techniques to help make it easier.

So go on, try out the scrapbook journaling ideas above for yourself and add some stress-free journaling to your pages... Once you've finished you'll see that it's been well worth the effort.

Elaine Clay is the owner of

:: your one-stop online scrapbooking

resource. Find inspiration, increase your creativity and have fun with our helpful tips, ideas, articles and much more.

– Feel free to use the above article on your web site or ezine. Provided that it is published in it's entirety, including my resource box above and a "live" clickable link to:

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Stress-Free Scrapbook Journaling Ideas  
The Power Of Scrapbook Journaling  
Four Keys to Successful Journaling  
Think It and Ink It  
5 Benefits of Keeping a Personal Journal

The Art of Kissing  
101 tips to stay fit and live longer.  
The Great Big Book of Internet Marketing  
Time Stretching Tips  
How to keep up the SPICE in your Love Life.



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