

Three ways journaling can boost your creativity and your business

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Three ways journaling can boost your creativity and your business

By Michele Pariza Wacek

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Wacek

I have a friend who has struggled with her creativity for a long time. She's extremely uncomfortable thinking of herself as "creative." We've been working together on it, and making progress. One of the tools that's really helped her has been journaling.

From Julia Cameron's *The Artist Way* to Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones* to Linda Trichter Metcalf, Ph.D. and Tobin Simon, Ph.D.'s *Writing the Mind Alive* to numerous other publications, journaling has enjoyed a long history of creative-nurturing along with a host of other benefits.

For my purposes, I'm defining journaling as any sort of loose, longhand writing. Whatever thoughts come into your head you put them down on paper. There's no structure, no form, nor concern about spelling or grammar or even legibility.

Even if writing isn't your dream, incorporating a regular program of journaling into your life is a wonderful way to jump-start your creativity and cultivate a constant flow of new ideas. Here are three reasons why.

1. Helps you get rid of the junk in your head. We all have it. Junk thoughts. Everything from self-defeating comments ("Oh, I'll never be good at that." or "Who told you that you could be a writer?") to the "worry of the moment" to neurosis of every type to the ever-growing, constant to-do lists.

Who can be creative with all that noise going on? For that matter, who could even hear a creative thought over all that racket?

Journaling is a way to quiet the mind. Writing all that junk down transfers it from your head to the paper. Suddenly, you find you can actually think rather than simply react.

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The best part is this quiet lasts long after the journaling is done for the day. And if you journal frequently, then the effect is cumulative.

When I finish journaling, I find that I feel peaceful. Calm. Able to focus. The junk is gone, leaving space to be creative.

2. Gives you a chance to try new ideas. What better way to see if a new idea will work than to try it out on paper? You can write out the pros and cons, describe a scenario, play "what if" games ("What if my new business was successful?" "What if I tried that new advertising campaign?" "What if I contacted the editor at Money Magazine?"). And the best part is it's all in a private little notebook that no one will ever have to see.

Try writing down your hopes, dreams, goals, visions. Play around with them. You may find as you journal about them, a strategy for making them come true suddenly presents itself, right there in the

pages of your notebook.

3. Helps you build a bridge to your muse. This one really only kicks in after you've sufficiently done number one (at least, this is the way it works for me). It seems only after I've gotten most of the junk out of my head that the muse sometimes slips out to play a bit.

How do you know the muse came to visit you? When that brilliant idea flashes in your head. It may not happen while you're journaling, but instead while you're showering, walking, driving or something else. This is the muse talking to you.

It's important to remember muses have quiet voices. They can easily be drowned out by the incessant bickering of the other noisy chatter going on in your head. Once you can get those other voices to shut up, you can start to listen for the muse.

Don't worry if this doesn't happen right away. There have been weeks and even months when I write nothing but junk down. But then, one day, that great idea appears on the paper or in my head as I'm walking my dogs.

And when that happens, I know all the time I spent journaling about nothing has paid off.

Creativity Exercises — Journal more ideas

I would love it if you made a pact with yourself to journal regularly for a month. If that's too much of a commitment for you, try it as a creativity exercise.

Write down your challenge at the top of a piece of paper. Maybe it's ways to increase business or promote your products more or a new PR campaign. Now just start writing about it.

Don't think, just write. Fill a few pages of musing about that particular challenge. Don't type it either — write longhand. If you wander away from it, try nudging yourself back.

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Write for at least 20 minutes. If no answer presents itself in that time, don't get too hung up about it. Try it again the next day or a few days in a row. Sometimes it just takes awhile to jar things loose. And remember, great ideas have a tendency to pop up in the most unexpected places, not just when you're doing something "creative."

Michele Pariza Wacek is the author of "Got Ideas? Unleash Your Creativity and Make More Money." She offers two free e-zines that help subscribers combine their creativity with hard-hitting marketing and copywriting principles to become more successful at attracting new clients, selling products and services and boosting business. She can be reached at <http://www.TheAuthorSoul.com>.

The Power Of Scrapbook Journaling

By Elaine Clay

By journaling your pages you will transform an ordinary collection of photographs into a vibrant and visual storyboard – telling the stories behind the pictures, revealing hidden memories and emotions.

It will give your scrapbooks a unique and intimate feel, it is this personal touch that turns your albums into something very special.

That is the power of scrapbooking journaling and why it is one of the most important elements of your scrapbooks.

What to write...

When you are doing your scrapbook journaling think about the people who will read it in the future. Try and remember that they weren't there, give them as many details as you can so that they can relive your memories and stories for themselves.

One favorite scrapbook journaling technique is to write using the 5 W's method.

Who :: who's in the photo, who took it and who else was present. It is important to name the people in the pictures you use. People change throughout their lives, especially children, so it is vital to tell readers who they are looking at.

What :: what is the photo about? Describe what is happening.

Where :: where is the event in your photo taking place? Give some background information.

When :: when was the photograph taken? Give a specific date and include the year if possible.

Why :: why did you use this photo? Does it show a special event like a wedding or a milestone birthday? Explain why it is so memorable.

Tell the story...

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Don't be afraid of scrapbook journaling. Just ask yourself, "What would I want to tell future generations about the photos on my page?" and then write it down.

A tip to remember is that all stories have a beginning, a middle and an end.

For example, a nice way to start off your scrapbooking journaling is to give your album a title page. Use one of your favorite photos and write down who or what your album is about, you can even include famous sayings, quotes or a special poem if you want.

This leads nicely onto the 'middle' part of your story, the actual scrapbook pages and when you get to the 'end' make a page about yourself. Perhaps use a picture of you working on one of the pages and explain why you have made the scrapbook.

Elaine Clay is the owner of Online-Scrapbooking-Guide.com :: 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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The Healing Powers of Journaling
Four Keys to Successful Journaling
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