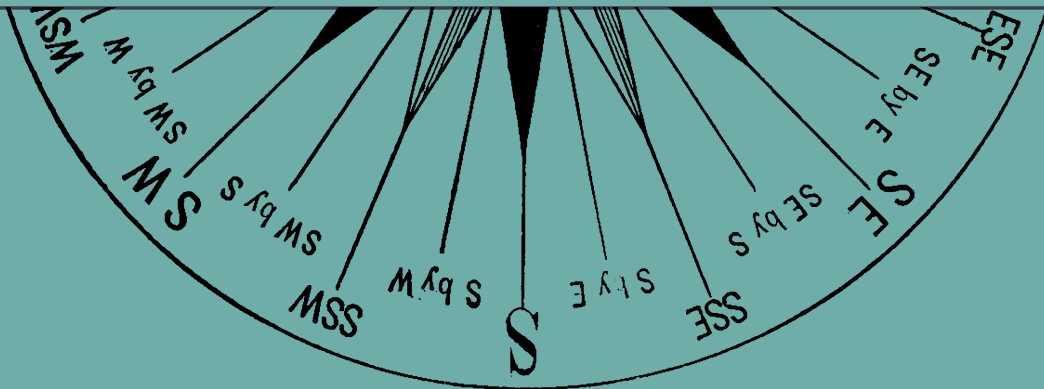


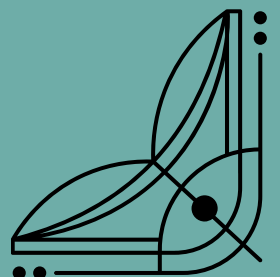
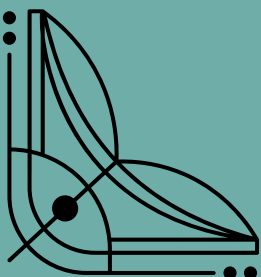
Expressive Writing

5-DAY TRANSFORMATIONAL STORYING JOURNAL
TO HELP NAVIGATE CHALLENGES



By Dr. Victoria Harris

"WHO LOOKS OUTSIDE DREAMS; WHO LOOKS
INSIDE, AWAKES" - CARL JUNG





Welcome to your Expressive Writing Journal!

Life can be challenging. Having the skills to navigate challenges is important in creating greater well-being and a more peaceful mind and body. During my years of psychotherapy training, working as a therapist, and through my own experiential work, I have learnt that it is only by doing inner work that change happens. When we allow ourselves to express and process all feelings safely we can gain confidence and a new perspective.

Commitment

This is a 5-day journal. Please commit to writing in this journal everyday for 5 days and then have a break to focus on self-care. You can use this anytime you want to work on a challenge and/or for personal development.

Create

Make sure you create a safe space and time to write. I suggest at least 20 minutes is allocated each day you do this expressive exercise.

Compassion

Please be compassionate with yourself during the process. It may bring up challenging feelings.

Understand that you may feel a bit wobbly at times as you express and process big feelings. This is normal. But please seek support if you need it. Make sure you are kind to yourself after your writing, take time to mind yourself and focus on self-care.

It is for your eyes only – so even if you are unsure about how to write or draw feelings have a go and don't think too much about it. You can destroy it after.

Disclaimer

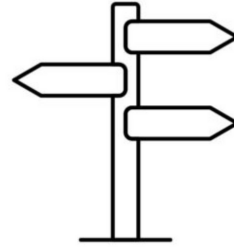
This is a therapeutic technique but it is not a **replacement** for actual therapy. Remember – seek support if needed.

D A Y 1

Setting the Intention & Focus for the Journey

It is best to plan a route when thinking about embarking on any journey.
This is true of any inner journey too.

Know where you are going and why



Think about a challenging event, stressful or difficult issue in your life that you feel keeps you stuck and you want to work through.

Is there a symbol from the world that can represent it?
Write it down or draw it in the box below.

Write down 3 descriptions of it

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

We all need strategies or things we can do that help us process and move forward as we navigate big feelings, and learn to regulate and calm our body/mind when we feel overwhelmed or dysregulated. These are our coping/self-care strategies.

The boat image gives some examples.

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____



Make a Commitment to Self Healing

Sometimes we fear our feelings so we try to avoid them. This keeps us stuck. Give yourself permission to express and process all feelings. This is important if you want to move forward with greater integration and connection.



Write down what your focus is or what it is you want to work on (X) and your intention or why (Y) you want to work on it.

I want to work on __X__ and this will help me __Y__

The Call to Adventure

When we notice we are feeling stuck and there is a desire to move forward, this is our *call to adventure*.

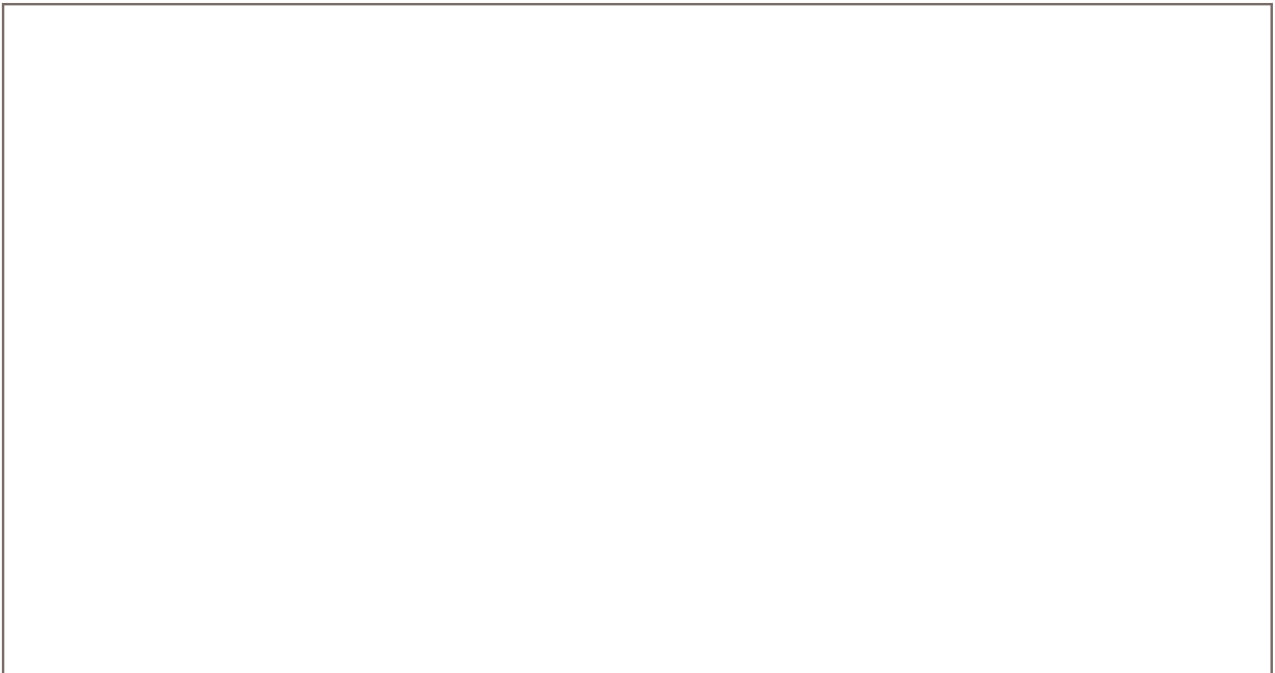
Now you have set your intention and have a clear focus about what you want to work on and why, you have listened to the call, and have taken the first step on your journey – WELL DONE!



D A Y 2

The Story

1. Pick an animal (any type) from nature that best represents you. Don't spend too much time thinking about it.
2. Write down in the box or draw the animal and three words or phrases to describe it.



3. Now write a short story with the animal as the main character.

The story structure has a beginning, middle and an end.

Include -

1. The symbol (that represents the issue) from day 1
2. A mission, quest or something the animal has to overcome
3. The obstacles encountered and/or a villain
4. A conclusion

Include the deepest thoughts and feelings of the main character (animal) and the details of the stressful/traumatic experience/event or issue that you have chosen to focus on.

Spend 10-20 minutes writing the story.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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MY REFLECTIVE NOTES

WHAT DID I NOTICE ABOUT THESE PARTS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER? DRAW OR WRITE THEM IN THE BOXES.

NEEDS

THOUGHTS

FEELINGS

BEHAVIOUR

Listen to a grounding visualization.

Make sure you mind yourself and pick something from your self-care strategies.

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DAY 3 - THE STORY

Write the story again as before with the same beginning, middle and end. For 10–20 minutes. Focus on what happened and the thoughts, feelings and struggles of the main character, but this time **write the story from the perspective of a different character/object**.

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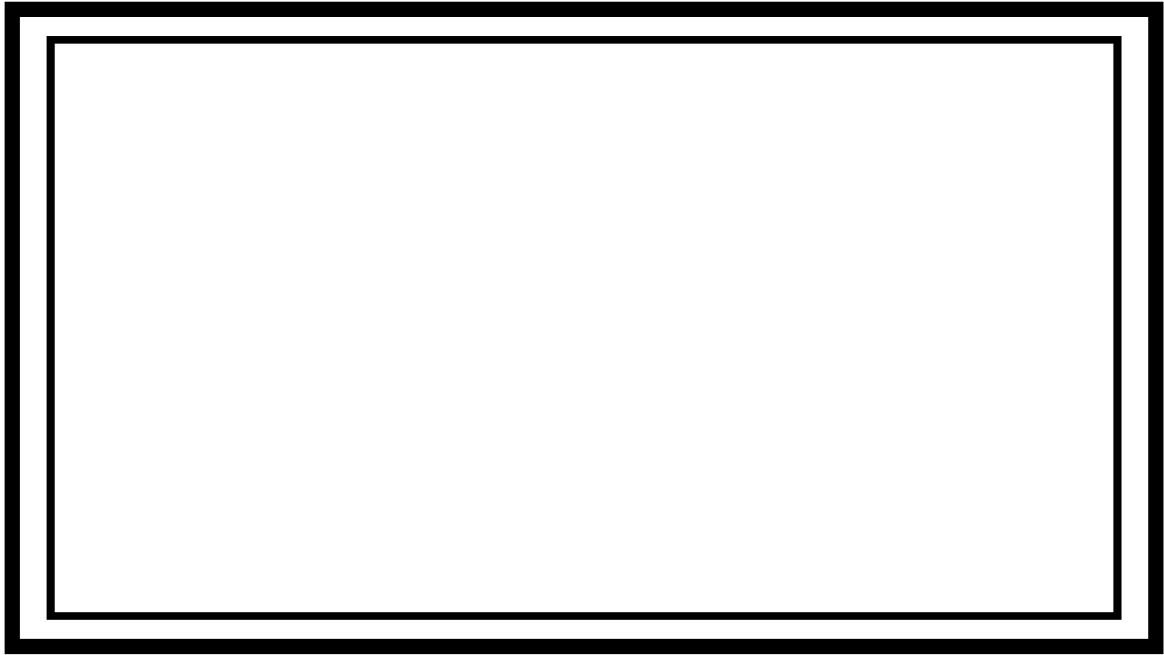
[illegible]

[illegible]

Make sure you mind yourself and pick something from your self-care strategies if you feel dysregulated.

D A Y 4

Consider the main character in your story. What helps (or could help) them move forward? What or who might help them get greater clarity or heal? Write a description or draw a symbol to represent this below.



Write an additional concluding chapter to the story including the helper character or symbol.

DAY 4

[illegible]

DAY 4 - MY NOTES

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT THE HELPER & THE
MAIN CHARACTER FROM WRITING THIS?

Write or draw your learning.

Listen to a grounding visualization.

Make sure you mind yourself and pick something from your self-care strategies if you feel dysregulated.

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DAY 5

INTEGRATION

Reflect on the past few days of writing your story.

How did you feel about the story you wrote?

What did you notice about the experience of writing it?

Was there any resistance to doing it? If so, why?

How do you feel about the last chapter?

Did you learn anything from the experience?

How did your choice of symbol relate to your experience/event?

What is your take away learning?

What can help you move forward?

Through the process of writing down your story you can gain a greater understanding of yourself, and allow the expression and processing of all feelings. This can be beneficial to your well-being, and to those around you.

When we are more open, understanding and reflective, we gain greater connection to all our parts, including parts that are difficult to live with or process. This can widen our perspective, lead to greater compassion, confidence and peace of mind. Using the medium of a story it can feel safer to explore challenging feelings or experiences.

Furthermore, there is a body of research which shows that either writing or reading stories can be healing. Guided, detailed writing can not only help you process what you've been through, it can assist you in envisioning a path forward, and have a positive impact on your physical well-being too. Write for at least 3 days in a row to help express what needs to be processed. Focus on the events, thoughts and emotions. You can either use symbols like in this journal, or write directly about the event. If that feels safe to do so.

You can use writing using symbol and metaphor at any time, as a healthy coping/self-care strategy to help anchor you as you continue on your journey of self-discovery and greater internal peace!

For grounding visualizations you can visit my website for details.

Much love,
Dr. Victoria Harris

