

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands writing in a spiral-bound notebook. The person is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, long-sleeved shirt. They are holding a blue and silver pen. The notebook is open, and the page shows some handwritten text. A pair of glasses with thin frames is resting on the notebook. To the left, a dark-colored cup is partially visible. The background is out of focus, showing some indistinct shapes and colors.

A guide

HOW TO START JOURNALING

and make it a habit

PROJECT JOMO

Sneha Mehta

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A journal is your completely unaltered voice.

– Lucy Dacus

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF JOURNALING?

Growing up, I saw a line of diaries on our bookshelf. They belonged to my grandfather and great-grandfather. There were random entries of daily activities and lists that did not really make sense to me. However, those diaries felt like memories. They felt like a gateway to my great-grandparent's soul.

But that wasn't something I was sure about. Also, I was 6 so I don't think I was ready for that kind of journaling. When I asked my mom about it she told me she used to keep a diary of quotes she loved. That made some sense. But if I was to only jot down things I liked it was not something I would be doing every day. Anyway, I liked the idea and started doing this. I even added lyrics, sometimes tiny drawings etc.

For you, the motivation can be anything. Maybe because you have heard that it helps you give clarity, maybe because you want to keep a record of memories. Whatever it is, if you are struggling with where to start, I am here to help.

THE BENEFITS OF JOURNALING



“I write in a journal daily. This extraordinary ritual has revolutionized my mindset, transformed my heartset, and generally influenced in my life exponentially.”

– Robin

In 2020, I took a course called the science of well-being. It was a good course and gave me some in-depth understanding about happiness. One of the habits that it stressed upon was journaling. Why? Because journaling has a lot of benefits.



REDUCES STRESS

[This study](#) showed that journaling 3 minutes every day helped patients, families and healthcare practitioners helped reducing stress.

CLEAR MIND

When you write everything down, your mind becomes emptier. It also helps you articulate your own thoughts in order to understand yourself better.

HELPS PROCESS YOUR EMOTIONS

Sometimes you keep on thinking about the same thing again and again in a loop. At those times, it becomes hard to understand how you feel about things. Going on overdrive is easy when you don't have a way to let it all out. And the easiest way to let it all out? Journaling.

IMPROVES MINDFULNESS

Being mindful means being present. Journaling helps you get out of the endless cycle of thinking and overthinking making you more mindful.

ACTS AS A MOOD BOOSTER

Journaling clears your mind, helps you sort your emotions, makes you mindful and hence it is a mood booster.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF JOURNALING



“Journal writing, when it becomes a ritual for transformation, is not only life-changing but life-expanding.”

– Jen Williamson



1. **Gratitude Journal** - Writing thing you're grateful for.
2. **Fitness Journal** - Keeping track of your workouts, food intake, health etc.
3. **Food Journal** - Write down things you eat/ want to eat. This one can even have some recipes.
4. **Doodle/ Sketch Journal** - Drawing things you feel like in the moment.
5. **Events of the day Journal** - Recalling things that happened throughout the day.
6. **Dream Journal** - Jotting down your dreams.
7. **To-do list** - Just the regular to-do list.
8. **Stream of consciousness Journal** - Emptying your mind of thoughts you're having in the moment.
9. **Mix Journal** - All of the above things.

Apart from this, you can also make topic-related journals.

Example: Journal about books which can have quotes, designs, and themes from the book you're reading.

Series and shows related journal that has your favourite dialogues and information on actors etc.

Or you can use prompts to write your journal.

THINGS THAT STOP YOU FROM JOURNALING



“Journaling is like whispering to one’s self and listening at the same time.”

– Mina Murray, Dracula



1. FAILING TO FEEL THE GRATITUDE.

It is possible that you want to start writing a gratitude journal but you come up with same 3 things you’re grateful for or you don’t know what you’re grateful for. In this case, write a gratitude list every other day or once in two days. That is enough.

2. LACK OF MOTIVATION.

You want to journal but you just don’t want to actually do it. If you keep postponing things to tomorrow, the tomorrow

will never come. In this case, you need to summon all your courage and do it now.

Decided to doodle everyday? That is a difficult to achieve goal. If you don't know what to doodle, just look around you for inspiration. Miss a day if every day is too much. Don't go for perfection or for something very time-consuming.

3. FEELING BLANK/ CLUELESS.

This is one of the biggest problem. You stare at a blank page and don't know what to do. Use journal prompts on such occasions.

4. FORGETTING TO JOURNAL.

Until it becomes a habit, you will need a reminder. Keep your journal next to your bed or at a place where you can see it. Set up a reminder on your phone. Try to write at the same time every day. Or find an accountability partner.

5. FEELING OVERWHELMED.

Opening a blank journal and deciding what to write can be overwhelming. This is similar to feeling blank or clueless. In such case, start with something very simple or use prompts.

6. LACK OF TIME.

You can always take out 5 minutes to journal but it is not easy to journal in 5 to 10 minutes. Most of us spend a lot of time thinking what to write and that makes us think that we don't have enough time. If you decide your journaling format and stick to it, you will be able to find time.

7. ALL OR NOTHING FEELING.

I recently read somewhere that something that's worth doing is also worth half-assing. Why? Because even if you write just one line, it is better than not writing at all. So you need to leave the all or nothing thought behind.

8. USING THE WRONG JOURNALING METHOD.

I mentioned the different types of journaling earlier. If you start the type of journaling that doesn't work for you, you won't be able to continue it.

9. FEELING LIKE YOU'RE NOT GOOD AT IT.

Honestly, you don't have to be good at it to do it. You journal for yourself not for the world to see.

HOW TO START JOURNALING AND MAKE IT A HABIT



“Preserve your memories, keep them well, what you forget you can never retell.”

– Louisa May Alcott



First of all, you need to **find out what type of journaling you're** into. Something that you can go on doing in a long run.

So, **start small.**

Instead of trying to write a gratitude journal every day, try writing a mixed journal every day where you can write anything to everything. Just add the date and write one thing that's on your mind.

Analyse your journal after 30-60 days and you will see a pattern. Find out what you're writing the most about, when you go beyond one line per day and what triggers you. Once you have analysed it, you will know your journal type. Once

you know what you like, it will become relatively easier for you to continue journaling.

You can also keep on writing **one line every day** in case you feel like going for one particular topic is a lot. In that case, you can have two journals:

1. One for your one-line entry.
2. One that you fill in occasionally based on a specific topic.

Have a fix time to write your journal entries. Having a fixed routine makes it easier to form a habit. Journal before or after your daily [meditation](#). Clubbing two tasks makes it easier to build a habit.

Use what you have. You don't need a fancy journal to start. You can use any notebook, your note-taking app or even an online blog as your journal. The choice is yours.

A journey of 1000 miles begin with a single step.

- Chinese proverb

So, the first thing that you need to do is to decide to start and then start. **Start now.**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sneha Mehta AKA Sam is the founder of Project JOMO.

She is a marketer, author, foodie blogger, and content creator who got fascinated by the word JOMO and decided to share her JOMO journey with the world.

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