Starting Your Journal in the New Year

Journaling is a positive way to channel your creative energies and get focused on your goals. The beginning of a new year is a perfect time to start a journal. The blank page represents the boundless opportunities that await. Here are some things to consider before starting your journal in the new year.

**Your Journal and Life are Works in Progress**

A journal full of blank pages can be intimidating. What will you write about? Should you write every day? Do you need to use perfect grammar? Trying to answer all of these questions can be overwhelming.

Make one of your New Year's Resolutions a commitment to be perfectly imperfect. Be yourself, flaws and all. Don't labor over each sentence in your journal in an attempt to make it polished and worthy of a writing award. Remember that if the writing comes from inside of you it is always the right thing to write.

One of the pleasures of starting your journal in the new year is that you will be able to look back on it a year from now and see how much you've grown. If you make journaling a habit you will notice that your ability to communicate through writing improves with time.

Don't judge your writing ability in the early stages. Don't despair over where your life is when you start. Realize a journal and the life that inspires it are works in progress. Just start writing and enjoy the process.

**The Difference Between Being Selfish and Practicing Self-Care**

One of the most common objections to keeping a journal is the investment of time required. You may feel that setting aside even a small amount of time for yourself is selfish. It isn't.

A woman was once tasked with caring for her terminally ill husband. After he passed away a visitor noticed that the woman had a list placed on the front of her refrigerator. The list was titled "Priorities" and the first item on it was an admonition for the woman to take care of herself. The second and last item was to take care of her ailing husband. This perplexed the visitor who could not understand how the woman could put herself first.

"I had to put myself first," the woman said when asked why she made the list so. "If something were to happen to me there would have been no one to take care of my husband."

This story serves as a powerful example of the difference between selfishness and self-care. When we practice self-care we are making an effort to be the best version of ourselves. When we become the best we can be our ability to serve others increases. In that context, self-care is magnificently unselfish.

Taking time each day to write down your thoughts is wonderful self-care. It will help you assess feelings and emotions and help you to create the best version of yourself.

Journaling is about the journey. The journal you create this year could help you appreciate your own journey toward practicing self-care.