

U-JOURNALING PRACTICE

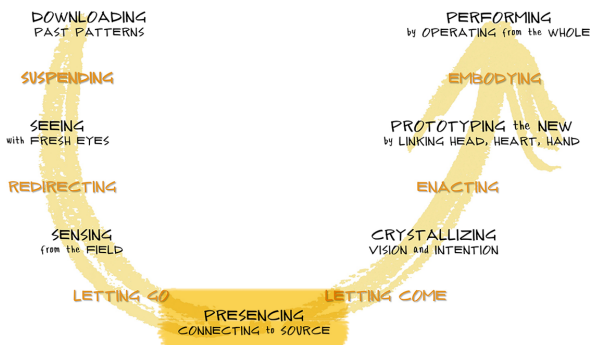


OVERVIEW

Guided journaling leads participants through a self-reflective process following the different phases of the U. This practice allows participants to access deeper levels of self-knowledge, and to connect this knowledge to concrete actions.

PURPOSE

Guided journaling leads practitioners through a process of self-reflection that moves through the U-process. This process allows participants to step into a deeper level of reflection than in an un-guided journaling process, and identify concrete action steps.



Journaling practices can be used in all phases of the U-process especially during the sensing and presencing steps.

PRINCIPLES

- Journaling is a personal process. Never ask participants to share their journaling notes in public.
- After completing a journaling practice you may create an opportunity to reflect on the experience of journaling. Again: emphasize that participants decide what they want to share.
- Journaling means that you think through the writing not to think and reflect, and then write up the reflection. With the instruction emphasize that participants should just start writing and see what emerges.

USES & OUTCOMES

- Access deeper levels of self-reflection & knowledge
- Learn how to use Journaling as a reflective tool
- Connect self-reflection to concrete action steps
- Use with...Awareness or embodiment practices

EXAMPLE

Alan Webber recalled what kept him going on his journey to co-create *Fast Company* despite all the obstacles he encountered:

“People who have genuinely been taken over by an idea or a belief usually can’t answer the question ‘Why are you doing this?’ in rational terms. Years ago my father bought me a collection of interviews of great fiction writers. The interviewer was George Plimpton. He’d say, ‘Why did you become a writer? Why do you get up in the morning and write?’ The answer invariably was ‘Well, I can’t not.’”

People would ask me ‘Why are you doing Fast Company?’ At first, the answer was very rational: ‘Well, you know, it’s a magazine about this and that, and the world doesn’t have one.’ But I soon realized that those reasons weren’t the real ones. The reason you do it is because you can’t not do it. But it’s hard to explain that to people without sounding like a lunatic.”

RESOURCES

C. Otto Scharmer, (2009) *Theory U: Learning from the Future as it Emerges*. Berrett- Koehler: San Francisco.

PROCESS

SET UP

People & Place

- Journaling Practice can be used in groups of any size. The exercise follows the co-sensing phase meaning that participants have already moved through the left side of the U-Process.
- It is important that the room is quiet and no noises or other distractions in the environment interrupt the participants.

Time

- A minimum of 45 minutes is required. Depending of the context this process can take up to 60-90 min.

Materials

- Pen and paper for each participant

SEQUENCE

Step 1: Preparation

Prepare a quiet space that allows each participant to enter into a process of self-reflection without distractions.

Step 2: Guided Journaling Questions

Read one question after the other; invite the participants to journal guided by the respective question. Go one by one through the questions. Move to the next question when you sense that the majority of the group is ready. Don't give participants too much time. It is important to get into a flow and not to think too much.

Guided Journaling Questions:

1. **Challenges:** Look at yourself from outside as if you were another person: What are the 3 or 4 most important challenges or tasks that your life (work and non-work) currently presents?
2. **Self:** Write down 3 or 4 important facts about yourself. What are the important accomplishments you have achieved or competencies you have developed in your life (examples: raising children; finishing your education; being a good listener)?
3. **Emerging Self:** What 3 or 4 important aspirations, areas of interest, or undeveloped talents would you like to place more focus on in your future journey (examples: writing a novel or poems; starting a social movement; taking your current work to a new level)?
4. **Frustration:** What about your current work and/or personal life frustrates you the most?
5. **Energy:** What are your most vital sources of energy? What do you love?
6. **Inner resistance:** What is holding you back? Describe 2 or 3 recent situations (in your work or personal life) when you noticed one of the following three voices kicking in, preventing you from exploring the situation you were in more deeply:
 - a. **Voice of Judgment:** shutting down your open mind (downloading instead of inquiring)
 - b. **Voice of Cynicism:** shutting down your open heart (disconnecting instead of relating)
 - c. **Voice of Fear:** shutting down your open will (holding on to the past or the present instead of letting go)
7. **The crack:** Over the past couple of days and weeks, what new aspects of your Self have you noticed? What new questions and themes are occurring to you now?

8. **Your community:** Who makes up your community, and what are their highest hopes in regard to your future journey? Choose three people with different perspectives on your life and explore their hopes for your future (examples: your family; your friends; a parentless child on the street with no access to food, shelter, safety, or education). What might you hope for if you were in their shoes and looking at your life through their eyes?
9. **Helicopter:** Watch yourself from above (as if in a helicopter). What are you doing? What are you trying to do in this stage of your professional and personal journey?
10. Imagine you could fast-forward to the very last moments of your life, when it is time for you to pass on. Now look back on your life's journey as a whole. What would you want to see at that moment? What **footprint** do you want to leave behind on the planet? What would you want to be remembered for by the people who live on after you?
11. From that (future) place, look back at your current situation as if you were looking at a different person. Now try to help that other person from the viewpoint of your highest future Self. What **advice** would you give? Feel and sense what the advice is and then write it down.
12. Now return again to the present and crystallize what it is that you want to create: your **vision and intention** for the next 3-5 years. What vision and intention do you have for yourself and your work? What are some essential core elements of the future that you want to create in your personal, professional, and social life? Describe as concretely as possible the images and elements that occur to you.
13. **Letting-go:** What would you have to let go of in order to bring your vision into reality? What is the old stuff that must die? What is the old skin (behaviors, thought processes, etc.) that you need to shed?
14. **Seeds:** What in your current life or context provides the seeds for the future that you want to create? Where do you see your future beginning?
15. **Prototyping:** Over the next three months, if you were to prototype a microcosm of the future in which you could discover "the new" by doing something, what would that prototype look like?
16. **People:** Who can help you make your highest future possibilities a reality? Who might be your core helpers and partners?
17. **Action:** If you were to take on the project of bringing your intention into reality, what practical first steps would you take over the next 3 to 4 days?

Step 3: Reflection on the Practice

Split up the group into pairs, and invite participants to reflect on their experience. Again, mention that journaling is private and that each participant decides what she or he wants to share