

HEALING NEGATIVE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES WITH JOURNALING

Have you ever found yourself confronting painful memories of situations you experienced when growing up? Remembering these situations can be like re-opening old wounds and feeling the same emotions over and over again. Fortunately, ***you can use some very productive strategies to help you heal.*** One of those strategies is journaling – writing down how you feel and think.

Try these journaling techniques to help you resolve the pain of negative childhood memories:

1. **Write about what you thought and felt.** Going back in time, ponder what the negative situations were like for you. Did you feel embarrassed when Dad pointed out your teeth to people? Were you angry about Mom's consistent efforts to make you

stand up straighter and taller? Write it down.

2. **What are your current thoughts and feelings?**

Next, use your current “adult mind” to take a look at the situation the best you can. ***What does your adult mind tell you about what really happened?*** Maybe you see things more clearly now. Was Mom or Dad’s goal to simply make you a “better person?” Jot down your current interpretation of the situation.

3. **Document how the challenging situations**

affected you then. How did you react as a child to what happened? How did you make sense of the trying situations then? Who, if anyone, did you talk to about the troublesome times? Mention them in your journal.

4. **Ponder how the hurtful events from the past**

affect you now. See if you can make any connections between your past and present.

Make a conscious decision to better manage your feelings and behavioral choices now. Write down how you can manage your emotions differently.

5. **Vow to gain understanding.** If it was a situation

when your parent did something that you just couldn’t understand, can you make sense of it now? Maybe your father didn’t make you stay home from a trip to punish you - perhaps he thought you’d be exposed to something unsavory

or even unsafe and he was hoping to protect you.

- Explore these possible explanations through writing in your journal.
6. **Re-write your history.** Re-construct your childhood on paper how you would have liked it to be. It's a learning experience to formulate how you would have liked your growing up years to have been different. Re-writing your history can also help you heal.
 7. **Make a conscious decision to overcome your past.** Whatever your old hurts, *decide to disconnect them from your current life*. This effort must be made consciously and with great thought. Write down how you can release yourself.
 8. **Recognize these events were in the past.** As you record your thoughts and feelings, make note of how long ago the situation or events occurred. Label them as "in the past" in your journal. Start a new section called, "In the present" and write about how you'll respond to those types of hurts now.
 9. **Formulate a plan to let it go and move on.** In your writings, consider steps you might take to move on in your life and live more openly and without

being tethered to your historic pain.

10. **Give yourself permission to release the old, negative emotions.** In your journal, jot down that you no longer have to carry the hurt. Allow yourself permission to leave it behind you. You can even draw a picture of the tangled web of feelings and state you're leaving all the pain right there between the lines of your journal.

Expressing yourself with pen and paper, or even on a computer, will help you discharge your troublesome feelings and move on with your goals. Live your best life now by using journaling to help heal old wounds.