

Beyond Journaling: Write about your day – in 30 different ways!

The basic journal entry will often consist of a blow-by-blow description of your daily events, thoughts, or tasks. Sometimes these daily logs completely fill the pages. There is certainly nothing wrong with this – except that it gets boring and does not do much to exercise your creative muscles.

Consider writing about your day with these little challenges and twists:

- Describe your day through **one particular sense**: Instead of “this happened and that happened,” try “Those smelled like this, and when he entered the room, I smelled that” or “the sounds I woke up to were... then I heard...”
- Focus on **one color, thought pattern, or emotion** during the day: “The first time I noticed the color green/ my self-doubt/ a surge of annoyance today... Then just an hour later, as I...”
- Describe the day as if through the eyes of a **small child or elderly person**, far from your age and perspective: “Then that crazy lady jumped over the puddle... JUMPED! If I had done that...”
- Make as many **lists** as you can during the day: “The colors of blouses which MIGHT go with my navy slacks are...” “The shifting emotions I felt during the meeting were...” “Six things I COULD do during my lunch break are...”
- Compare your daily events to what **COULD have been worse**, if “everything had gone wrong” (as we too often exaggerate): “If the world really WAS against me, my boss would have fired me, but instead she just...”
- Write your day as a **documentary** – “A day in the life of a —” and use a **narrator voice**: “But what REALLY gets today’s saleswoman excited is...” “But alas, when you are a modern artist, you must answer the phone in the midst of inspirational moments.”
- **Record only the dialogue** from the day – and rate the performances if you like: “Yes, Dear, you MUST wear socks under your rain boots.” “But MOM!...” (2 stars) “Sally, I really think we need to focus on...” “However, Bill, did you consider...” (4 stars)
- Have fun deleting and/or **replacing select words** within actual dialogues from the day
- Record select scenes from the day as **acts in a play**, or as descriptive or symbolic poetry
- Write character descriptions of the **“players”** in your day
- Explain, as if to someone new to the human race, exactly what the “players” in your day were REALLY **thinking/trying to accomplish** (including yourself!)
- Exaggerate the events of the day to **make yourself the hero(-ine)** of a fantasy, a legend, or a romantic short story
- Relate the events of the day from the perspective of either **your hands or your feet**

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- Relate the day's events from the **perspective** of your child, your parent, your best friend, your boss, or your nemesis
- Write about the day from the perspective of **gratitude**: "But I am grateful I did not have to..."
- Describe the day from the perspective of **super-self-improvement sleuth**: "I behaved — when —" "My attitude changed when —" "I did GREAT when —" "I could have done better by — when —"
- Write the day out as a series of **"how-to" articles**: "How to apply make-up with an affectionate cat on your lap" "How to explain being 5 minutes late when your boss is Ms. Perfect Attendance"
- Scan for those **"little things"** in your day that you normally do NOT notice, and give them a little "air time": "I never really noticed the tiny blue tea cups that looked like Alice could use them at her smallest size." "While my focus was on —, I was completely oblivious to the sound of — coming from —"
- Be creative and describe what COULD have happened, if you were **living in a dream or in a cartoon**
- Write what COULD have happened, if you had had **unlimited time**, or if this had been the **LAST time** you would ever do each task
- Hunt out and reveal all the **possibilities and opportunities** that came up during the day – decide which one(s) perhaps should not have been ignored
- Write about ALL the **tiny sensations and minute pleasures** you COULD have allowed yourself to experience throughout the day
- Describe how the day would have been different if you had experienced **extremes** of temperature, hunger, or emotional state
- Tell how your own parent, child, sibling, or friend would have **dealt differently** with the day's events
- Write the day in **total opposite** – if you were cold, describe how hot you felt... if you felt disappointed, describe your elation...
- Describe the day as if telling the story to a complete **foreigner**
- Use only **similes and metaphors** to describe the day: "The car behind me was as close as a flea on a monkey's scalp" "I felt like a pig in a mud puddle"
- Choose a dozen or more good, descriptive words from a **thesaurus** and use them in a description of (or labels for parts of) your day
- Write the day as a series of **small confessions**: "If I didn't have my coffee each morning, I think I'd be a serial killer" "No one knows this, but I was the one who put Splenda in the sugar jar"
- Hunt out and write about all the tiny **customs and traditions** you observe during your day – where did they come from and how did they gain a foothold in YOUR life?

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If you are more of a visual artist, try illustrating your day in these ways:

- Describe your day with **photos only** – no words!
- Make a **“map”** of your day – physical map and/or mental and/or emotional map
- **NAME** the “places” on your map, and use **colors** to convey emotion
- Create a **collage** of your day using your own photos, magazine clippings, words, and phrases
- Create a **timeline** of the day’s events – with doodles for labels
- Make a **timeline-like painting** of the day, which colors and figures changing appropriately as your surroundings and attitudes change
- Make a **cartoon strip** of your day – or select scenes from the day
- Make word webs or other visual representations of single **words/themes** from your day
- Crochet a **granny square** for your day, using colors and textures to represent places, people, and moods
- Sculpt a basic pot (or construct a paper box or paint a plastic container) for each of your everyday “environments”– each day, collect some small item (paperclip, dry leaf, post-it note, dust bunny) from each location to keep as a **memento or souvenir**

Of course, if you are musically inclined, or have some other special skill, be sure to invent ways to use it in your journaling!

