

Sneak Peek!

Expressive Journaling

Expressive Journaling **has taken my life by storm**. It's put the zing back into my creative juices and gotten me excited about a million things—and actually *doing* them. **It gives you real clarity in real time**. What I've also found is that, for us writers, it provides a fresh way of getting to the heart of things. Instead of just writing it all out like we usually do, we actually get to take part in the electric round-table style sessions that teams of writers for shows get to do every day.

This style of journaling can be done alone or with a partner, but for now let's just focus on the alone part. **This is high vibe brainstorming**: just you, a recording device, and as little as thirty seconds. Expressive journaling is great for any thinking-out-loud, but especially good for working through problems in your book, creative blocks, decision-making, tackling your inner critic head on, getting giddy about new projects...the sky's the limit! But let's hover just a tiny bit above ground for right now. We're going to take the energy of a great brainstorming session and apply it to a deep look at your creative life as it is right at this moment.

A quick note on the method: you may be tempted to skip the recording and just walk around your living room talking about loud to yourself. This is okay, but not ideal. Something about actually speaking into the device, *knowing* you're being recorded (even if you never plan on listening again, or sharing it with anyone) gets you jazzing. It's energetically stronger (dare I say **ELECTRIC?!)** and you'll get a lot more bang for your buck. Just try it and see what this free association style of working does for you. **Don't be surprised when plot snarls come undone and revelations abound**.

Tech: Having an app on your phone is the easiest, plus you can stick your headphones in and take your journaling on a walk and no one will be the wiser. I recommend a simple one like Voice Recorder (its thumbnail looks like an old-school cassette). We'll get into dictation software a bit later, if that's your jam.

Consider my bonfire metaphor for how to build and sustain a creative life (<https://thelotusandpen.com/2018/05/19/how-to-start-a-fire-aka-how-not-to-lose-heart/>) and take a look at these prompts and questions below to get some brainstorms simmering. When you're ready, turn on your recording app and have at it! Doing this while walking is great, too. I also really enjoy when I'm home alone and just wander around. Don't try to do a task, though—then you're not really getting those juices flowing properly. You can keep it all in one recording or do a separate recording for each question. Up to you! If you want, listen afterwards and jot down notes. You might be surprised by what you hear, or be able to make even more connections.

- Quick: how does the bonfire metaphor make you feel?

- If you had to create a metaphor for your writing life as it is right now, what would it be?
- On a scale of 1 – 10, how likely do you think it is you'll be published by a major publisher?
- How would you feel if you never got published? Or, if you're currently published, how would you feel if you didn't sell another book? What would you do?
- **Wood:** How's your writing going? Are you dedicating enough time for it? Do you feel like it's a strong foundation for your fire?
- **Newspaper / Kindling:** If you're already investing in a spiritual technology, how's that going? What do you need to do to keep it fresh and to get it working for you? If you don't have one, what are you curious about in this arena? What digging do you need to do?
 - **Perspective:** What's your cosmic perspective? How does it help you when shit gets real—or does it not help you? What about your personal orbit perspective? For example, what are you grateful for and how does your understanding of that ease the pains of rejection or other disappointments?
 - What perspectives do your spiritual technology give you?
 - **Your Essential Self:**
 - What stories about yourself are you buying into? (That you're not talented, you're invisible, you're too old...).
 - How do these stories run you?
 - What values from your childhood and upbringing do you still hold dear? How do they come into play with your writing and your writing life?
- **The Match:** What is your intention as a writer?
- Does your intention align with the effort you're currently putting into your writing life?
- **The Flame / Your Personal Power:** What's your level of drive, audacity, will, ambition? Where are you giving your personal power away? Who are you giving it away to?
- Riff on what your artist's statement might be.
- **The Invitation:** Who are you inviting to sit around the fire with you?
- Are you okay sitting by yourself?
- What support are you lacking that you need?
- Who's got your back?
- Who doesn't?
- When's the last time you really got your shit together in your creative life?

The choreographer Twyla Tharp calls creative play **jazzing around**. There's no pressure—you're just exploring, seeing what happens. It's the same with Expressive Journaling. We're just jazzing around. Release expectations and give yourself permission to go on the ride and see what comes up. Even if you don't have immediate results, you might see the effects of this process down the road. Sometimes clarity is instant, and sometimes it takes a while to get through the murky bits. To find out more how I can support your creative practice, you can find me at heatherdemetrios.com. Have fun!

