

pray
process
proceed

a guided journal by

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introduction

"I WRITE BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT I THINK
UNTIL I READ WHAT I SAY"

FLANNERY O'CONNOR

Flannery O'Connor's words hit way too close to home. For me, writing has become an essential component to my mental and emotional health as well as the health of my relationships. Emotions are complex, thoughts are unpredictable, and words are hard. It's no wonder that articulating how you're feeling can be overwhelming. I want everyone to experience the enlightening, therapeutic, and restorative effects writing can offer when done intentionally. This journaling method was created with the help of a licensed counselor and is designed to help us process all the thoughts and feels and ultimately call us back to truth in the midst of the madness.

Just a heads up, this will get spiritual. I believe humanity was designed by God, that God both created and entrusted humans with thoughts emotions, and that to think and feel are essential elements in the human experience. I also believe that sometimes, some of us give these things a little too much power and can find ourselves living at the mercy of our thoughts and emotions. But the truth of the matter is that neither our feelings nor our thoughts dictate our reality. We are not slaves to our emotions. What we think is true doesn't always make it so. These things don't have any power over us that we do not give them. Like everything else in life, it's simply a matter of how we steward them.

This journaling method is intended to be a practical step forward in stewarding thoughts and emotions well. The first step is to pray and invite God into the process, asking for help and clarity as we interact with our emotions. Steps 2-4 are designed to help us process how we're feeling through guided questions. Steps 5-6 are geared toward helping us create practical actions steps for moving forward in light of truth. In and of itself, this journaling method cannot and will not fix anything, but hopefully it will equip us to interact with and articulate our emotions a little better than before, and ultimately enable us to point others to the Lord in the process.

best,
sarah scott pape

how it works

- 1. pray:** ask God to open your eyes and heart as you write and process. ask for his insight.
- 2. write:** write down everything you're thinking and feeling without holding anything back.
- 3. analyze:** read back through what you've written and answer the subsequent questions. circle any emotions you're experiencing and try to determine what may have prompted those feelings.
- 4. identify:** after analyzing what you wrote down, identify any extenuating circumstances that might be contributing to or intensifying the situation (*i.e. unresolved hurt, insecurity, etc.*) and if applicable, identify any lies you might be believing about yourself, about the people involved, about God, etc.
- 5. remember:** remind yourself of what is true: about yourself, about the people involved, about God.
your thoughts and feelings do not determine what is true.
- 6. respond:** choose how you want to respond to these thoughts and emotions. how you react and how you respond do not have to be the same. make a plan for moving forward.

process: write it out

if you already know how you're feeling, skip to the next page and circle your emotions to guide your writing. if not, write everything you're thinking and feeling first, then move on to the next section.

process: analyze

read back through what you've written. after analyzing you've written, identify how you're feeling and what may have prompted those feelings.

feeling blah

sad	off	anxious	unworthy	mad
hurt	apathetic	desperate	nervous	jealous
grieved	numb	insecure	overlooked	threatened
neglected	confused	worried	embarrassed	betrayed
disappointed	restless	directionless	overwhelmed	misunderstood
discontent	stuck	hopeless	ashamed	annoyed

feeling pretty good

happy	ecstatic	affirmed	smart	interesting
excited	purposeful	cheerful	proud	fun
giddy	fulfilled	kind	motivated	admired
in love	needed	content	inspired	hopeful
grateful	confident	compassionate	enthusiastic	thoughtful

analyze:

what prompted these feelings?

process: identify

identify:

are there any other factors or extenuating circumstances that could be intensifying these feelings? (*unresolved hurt, insecurity, etc.*)

identify:

are there any lies you might be believing or toxic thoughts... about yourself? about people? about God? write them down.

proceed

remember:

what is true about yourself? about people? about God?
(if you're lost, go to scripture and trusted friends/family for guidance)

respond:

what is your next step? is there a conversation you need to have
or something you need to let go?

"Praise be to the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the **Father of compassion**
and the **God of all comfort**,
who comforts us in all our troubles,
so that we can comfort
those in any trouble
with the comfort we
ourselves receive
from God.

For just as we share abundantly
in the sufferings of Christ,
so also **our comfort**
abounds through Christ.

And our hope for you is firm,
because we **know** that
just as you share in our sufferings,
so also you share in
our **comfort"**

2 Corinthians 1:3-5,7