

Managing Pain Through Journaling

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Aging and Integrative Pain Assessment and
Management Initiative



Florida Blue
Foundation



Introduction

Who Am I?

Holistic Doctor, Functional Medicine Practitioner, Founder of Let Go & Grow®, Author of The LG&G Publishing House books: Holistic Journal, Holistic Guide Book, Reminders Workbook, and the children's book series Let's Grow With Zo.

What does my practice look like?

I create evidence based, holistic treatment plans for my patients, and then, I partner with them to meet their unique goals through building a strong and resilient foundation focused on healthy fundamentals such as mindset, diet and lifestyle medicine. Find out more at drbrookestuart.com

What will we be up to today?

In this session, you will learn the ins and outs of journaling and how you can use it directly to rework and enhance your reality creation to meet the criteria you have for yourself, health and wellbeing. Walk in with an open heart and mind and walk out with a toolbox of healing techniques, prompts and takeaways.

Writing A New Story: LG&G Philosophy and Process

Reconnect. Reset. Remember.

- Waking up to who, what and where you are
- Connection. Presence. Observation.
- The past is not predictive of the future. We can set the future free, creating through our choices now

Engagement in the Let Go & Grow Process

- Look at - learn from - let go of - grow through our experiences - evolution
- On what is possible, what you want wants you too
 - Why cope when you can clear?
- Empowering Yourself Along the Way: As you move through the process, make sure to be on your own team as a throughline, empowering yourself and shifting the dial of your choices to align with what you envision for yourself, your life and the world

Healing Mode: ON

- Distress, tension and inflammation can be seen as your system's way of communicating information. Here, we have the opportunity to learn a new language and begin a new conversation!

The 5 Core Principles of Let Go & Grow

Own Your Power. Lead Your Life.

1. You are the creator of your reality

2. You have the power to choose

3. Challenges are opportunities for growth and development

4. When you get it, your body and life will begin to reflect it

5. Your entire life happens for you not to you

Let Go & Grow Guidelines

Mind
Be present and receptive
Choose to observe rather than judge
Exercise your power of choice
Embrace your feelings. Ask solution-oriented questions
Focus on what works, let go of what does not

Heart
Go within and connect to your heart
Notice when you expand and when you contract
Tune in and seek the essence
Cultivate gratitude and appreciate your experiences
Have compassion for yourself and others

Body
Eat healthy, real food that works for your body
Move your body in a way that you enjoy
Make time to play, explore and be in nature
Take the time to process and reflect
Optimize your sleep for deep restoration

Life
Take ownership of your life
Release resistance for resilience
Check your intentions to empower your choices
Communicate clearly and directly
Enjoy the journey and focus on the process

The Guidelines are broken up into 4 categories.

Mind. Body. Heart. Life.

Although the categories each hold 5 different bullet points for reference, they are all connected and tied into you. Each has a ripple effect, all overlap- yet the distinction can be a helpful tool in the learning and application of this material.

Researched Health Benefits of Journaling

There are so many researched health benefits of journaling and new forms and practices emerging, such as Narrative Medicine.

Some of the major benefits include:

- Builds Self-Awareness
- Supports Personal Goals and Achievements
- Enhances Communication and Relationships
- Boosts Creativity and Self-Confidence
- Helps Manage Pain
- Reworks Perception, Thoughts and Feelings in the Now and Over Time
- Releases Trauma, Eases Transitions, Break Ups and Brings Peace to Grief Cycles
- Cultivates Gratitude and a High Vibrational Healing Ecosystem
- Helps You Stay on Track and Accountable with Health and Wellness Goals
- Optimizes Daily Healthy Habits

Researched Health Benefits of Journaling

Dr. Pennebaker, author of *Writing to Heal*, has seen improved immune function in participants of writing exercises. A lot of stress is reflected physically through decreased immune function and is reflective of unaddressed trauma.

“When we translate an experience into language, we essentially make the experience graspable.” - Dr. Pennebaker

Findings show that journaling about the intense, conflicting and often painful experiences that terminally ill patients must deal with can help improve immune function, simultaneously easing symptoms and creating space for change.

American Medical Association Study

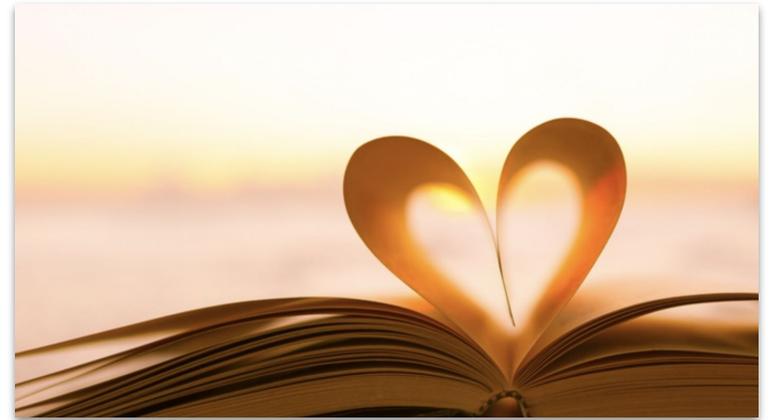
A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (1999) led by Joshua Smyth, PhD, relayed interesting results on the physical benefits of written therapy.

In this study, **107 patients** with asthma and arthritis were told to write for **20 minutes a day**. 71 of them were told to write about stressful experiences, while the others wrote about less emotional situations. The study concluded after four months and revealed that **all but one of the patients who had been writing about their stress showed significant improvement**. Only 37 of the control patients for both groups showed improvement.

This heavily suggests that the content of your journaling is just as important as the act of journaling itself. Writing about the people, places, things and situations that create a sense of distress, or pain, gives you the opportunity to look at, address and work through difficulties in a different, more empowered way!

What Is A Pain Journal?

A pain journal is a simple tool to assist you in keeping track of your pain flare-ups, intensity, treatment, appointments, and emotions. With these logs, you can share pain episodes or symptoms with your doctors. A simple habit of recording this important information can ensure you remember to share details and receive safe and effective pain management plan options when you have health care appointments.



How Awareness Can Help To Rework Pain States

Journaling can be used to promote expression of emotions as well as awareness and the acceptance of the present moment.

When used regularly, writing in a journal can help us shift our attention, even briefly, away from pain. As we continue journaling, we become better at making this shift on our own, resulting in the improvement of pain symptoms.

One of the good things about journaling is how easy it is! All you need is a place to write, and journaling can easily be combined with other treatments. It may help increase mindfulness of your daily routine and how it affects your pain, as well as gratitude towards yourself for making an effort to ease your pain and trying to understand it.

Benefits of Pain Journaling

- It helps you have a record of important details about pain episodes
- It can help you track trends or abnormalities with your pain
- It can help you identify the pain management regimen that works best
- It can help you communicate with your health care providers
- It is completely free to do!

Pain is a personal experience for every person. Even people living with the same health conditions do not experience the same pain or manage it in the same way. Pain journaling can help find out what works and what does not. You are not alone!

Pain Journal: What Can You Track?

- Create a simple pain scale to record the intensity of pain
- Time & date of pain episodes
- Recent activities and possible triggers
- Changes in your medical condition
- Changes in your medications
- Recent pain experienced- record the location, intensity, duration
- Effect of any pain relief medications or practices/methods used
- Emotional or mental health effects of pain experienced

Be consistent, and remember that there is no wrong way to do this. One page and one breath at a time!



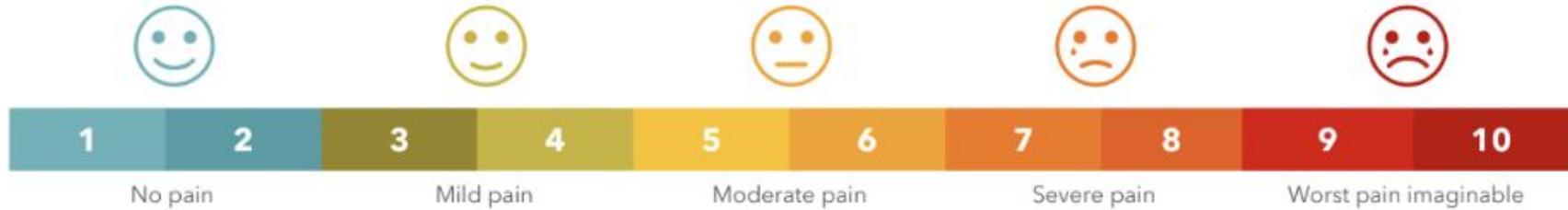
Pain Journal: What Can You Track?

- Pain location (example: lower left side of back)
- Pain feeling (example: sharp, burning, full, steady, throbbing)
- Pain intensity (using pain scale)
- How long and how often your pain occurred
- Factors that ease pain (cold compress, heat pad, repositioning?)
- Factors that increase pain (moving, temperatures, time of day)
- Usefulness of pain relieving medications

Be consistent, and remember that there is no wrong way to do this. One page and one breath at a time!



Pain Log Example Layout



Day	Time	Scale	Type of pain	Activities causing pains	Symptoms	Medicine or supplements
1						
2						
3						

Pain Journaling Resources

On your smartphone's App Store, search for “**pain log**” or “**pain diary**” for dozens of options. Here are some popular smartphone apps:

- PainScale
- My Pain Log
- My Pain Diary and Symptom Tracker
- Symptom Tracker: Pain History

Tips For Tracking Mood/Emotions

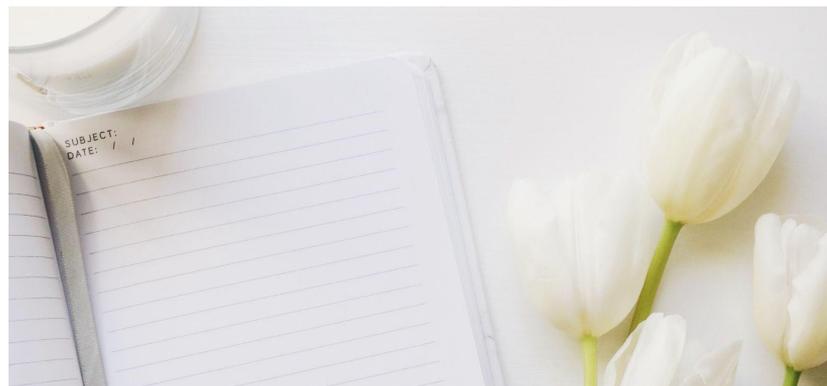
- Be consistent, write regularly and often
- Find a quiet and relaxing space
- Include positive experiences and feelings, too!
- Limit journaling time to 20 minutes per day
- Keep your journal next to your bed / desk
- Use a phone, tablet, or computer if writing by hand is difficult

Journaling can help individuals take control of thoughts and worries and put them in perspective. Negative moods should not be the only focus; positive moods should also be included. Positive gratitude statements help retrain the brain to positive self-talk. Reflection upon a journal can provide reassurance that things are improving or can indicate that things are worsening and help is needed.

Writing Frequency

You do not have to make a note every single time you are feeling pain- this could be overwhelming. Try breaking writing sessions up into intervals if possible, morning-afternoon-night. Or, another option could be to give a recap at the end of your day.

If you have a major pain episode, you may add more notes as needed. Journaling should work for you and your schedule!



Beyond Pain Journaling

Let Go & Grow Through Journaling

Journaling can help you generate awareness, identify patterns, see constellations and connect the dots, daily. It is both a therapeutic experience and a valuable resource that you can draw from time and time again as a means of support to help you move forward, with momentum, walking on solid ground.

There is a life you are here to live and power you are meant to have- and this class is built strategically to help you turn the page and write a story reflective of the vision you have for yourself and your life experience.



Different Types of Journaling

If you aren't sure if journaling is for you, you can look into different types of journaling and see which one may work best for you!

- Bullet Journaling
- Calendar Journaling
- Meditation Journaling
- Video Journaling
- Creative Journaling
- Travel Journaling
- Gratitude Journaling
- Five Minute Journaling
- Morning Pages Journaling



Annual Assessment: Prompts

- In your own words, what patterns would you like to address this year?
- When did these patterns start?
- How have these patterns affected you and your life?
- What have you done about these patterns so far? What has worked?

Annual Assessment Categories:

- ❖ Health
- ❖ Personal Development
- ❖ Relationships

Annual Assessment: Health

All of the categories are interconnected and overlap.

This assessment is to help you to open up and consider where you are at now, where you want to go with and how you can experience new and improved realities in every area of your life.

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PHYSICAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SPIRITUAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOCIAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ENVIRONMENTAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Annual Assessment: Personal Development

All of the categories are interconnected and overlap.

This assessment is to help you to open up and consider where you are at now, where you want to go with and how you can experience new and improved realities in every area of your life.

CAREER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FINANCES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CONTRIBUTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
EDUCATION & SKILL BUILDING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NEW EXPERIENCES & ADVENTURES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Annual Assessment: Relationships

All of the categories are interconnected and overlap.

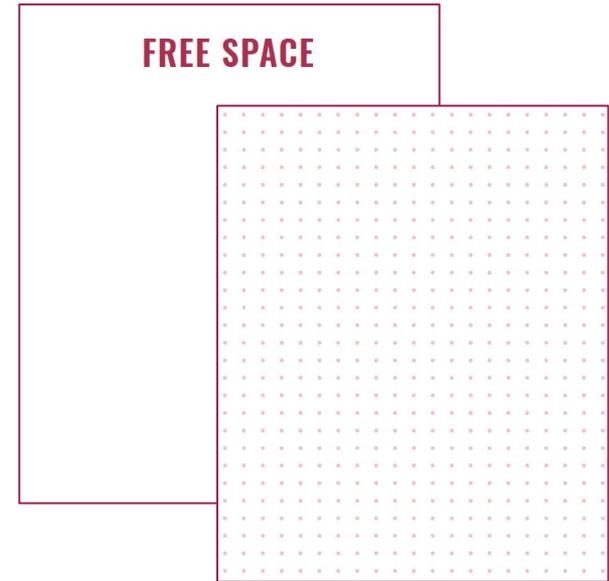
This assessment is to help you to open up and consider where you are at now, where you want to go with and how you can experience new and improved realities in every area of your life.

INTIMATE PARTNERSHIP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FAMILY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FRIENDSHIPS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WORKING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
COMMUNITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Plan Your Work & Work Your Plan

You can use these 5 questions as an iterative filtration system and a way to mobilize change throughout the year.

- ❖ Where are you at now?
- ❖ Where do you want to go?
- ❖ Why do you want to go there?
- ❖ How can you get there?
- ❖ What is the next best step you can take now?



If You Had A Magic Wand...

- If you had a magic wand and could transform any 3 things related to your body, mind or life, what would they be?
- What would you need to let go to make these 3 things happen? When did these patterns start?
- What patterns could you incorporate to make these 3 things happen?

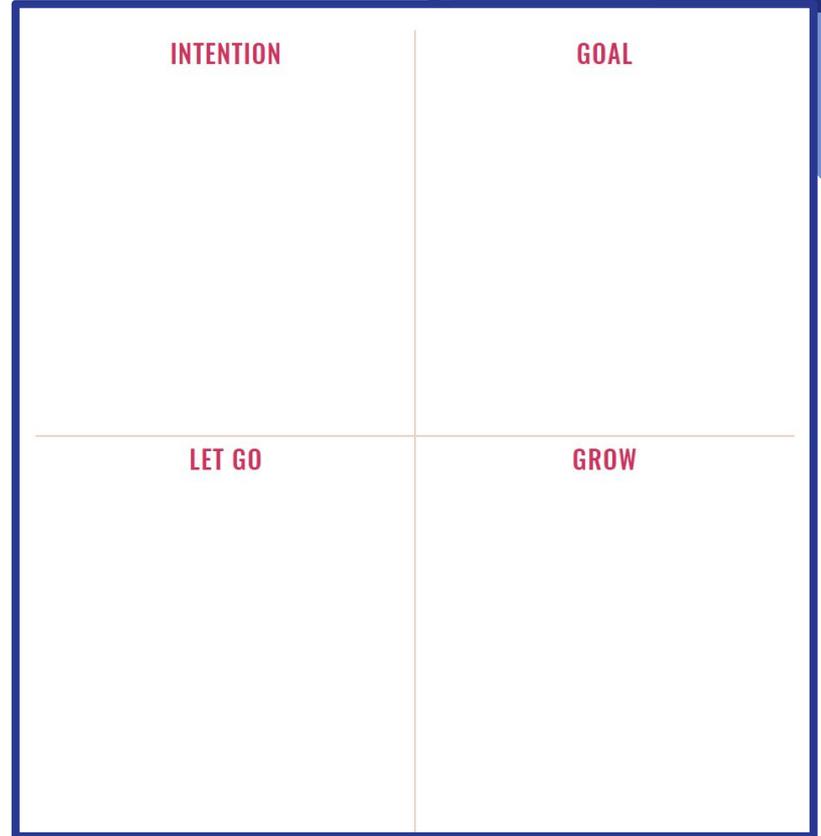
Now take a moment to envision and paint a clear picture of what your life experience would look and feel like if you made these changes.

On a scale from 1-10 how committed are you to this journey?

NOT COMMITTED 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 VERY COMMITTED

The LG&G Matrix

The purpose of the matrix is to bring clarity so that you can guide your life experience and create from a centered state- even in the midst of the ever changing. By understanding where you are now, where you are looking to go and the choices that can take you there, you can begin to apply your awareness and bridge the gap better able to identify the noise, let go of what inhibits and navigate forward, intentionally, with each decision you make.



The Heart Based Practice

A simple 3 minute meditation

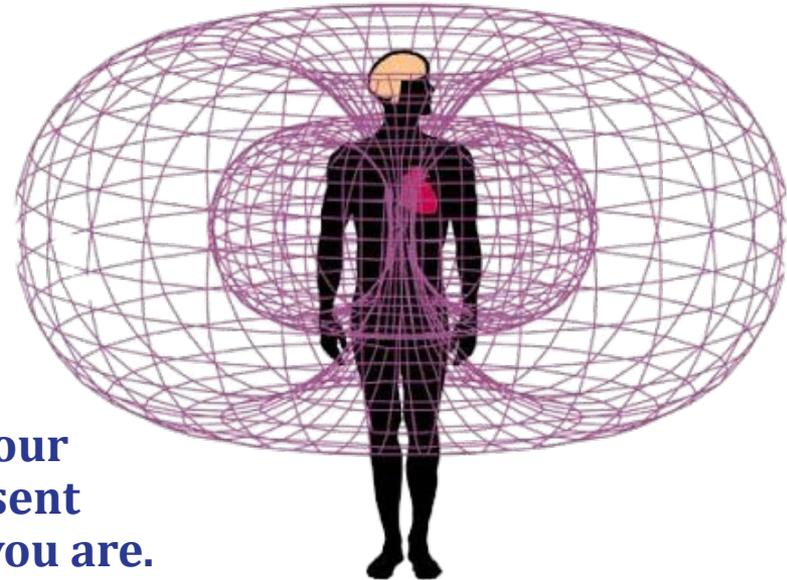
Choose to go within and reclaim your power by taking 3 min. to make a statement and send an empowering signal to your system by placing both hands over your heart, feeling your heartbeat, inhaling and exhaling with a 5 count through your heart and down your spine until you come into your own natural rhythm.

Reconnect.

Reset.

Remember.

This can act as a reminder to reconnect to your heartbeat, reset and return home to the present moment, and remember who, what and where you are.



The Present Moment

As you're writing in your journal, it is important to write from where you are now, from who you are now. You do not need to bring yourself to the past, you have already lived that- bring yourself into the space that you've grown into and continue to grow and invoke being the highest level of growth you've achieved and can consciously access!

If you are in the present, you will feel completely here in your place of power, capable and able to “bring it” to and receive from your life- that nice balance.



Dietary Tracking & Notes

Water  Record your water consumption, each drop represents one 16 oz glass.

TIME	FOOD/DRINK/SUPPLEMENTS	NUTRITION
	CALORIES	P _____ R <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> G <input type="radio"/> B F _____ P Bl W T Br C _____
	CALORIES	P _____ R <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> G <input type="radio"/> B F _____ P Bl W T Br C _____
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DAILY TOTALS	CALORIES	NUTRITION P _____ F _____ C _____ R <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> G <input type="radio"/> B P Bl W T Br

Macronutrients - P: Proteins F: Fats C: Carbohydrates
Phytonutrients - R: Red O: Orange Y: Yellow G: Green B: Blue P: Purple Bl: Black W: White T: Tan Br: Brown

	12AM	2AM	4AM	6AM	8AM	10AM	12PM	2PM	4PM	6PM	8PM	10PM
ENERGY LEVEL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

• Excessive • High • Moderate • Low • Asleep

DIETARY NOTES

Kickstarting a new diet and cultivating a new mindset around food can be fun, especially when you approach it through an exploratory lens and decide to create health. Remember that food is more than just calories, its information and it has the power to bring about vibrance and fuel your being. Here, you can make notes and implement what you have learned.

Diet & Lifestyle Evaluation

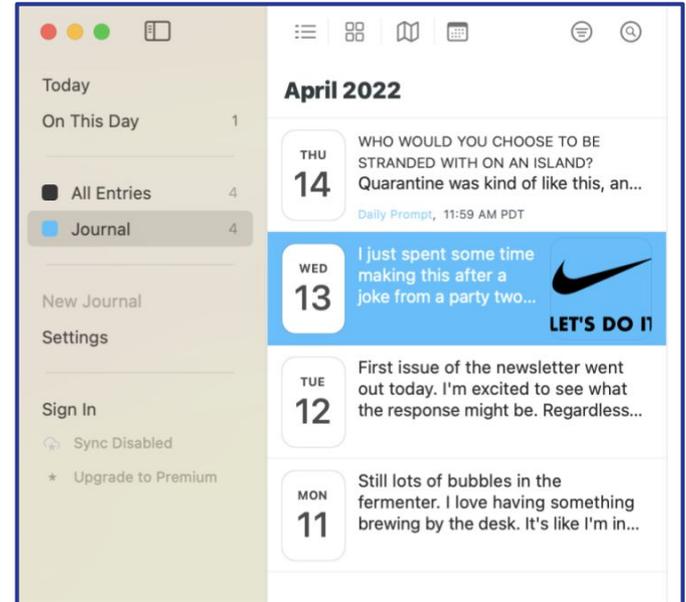
MINDFULNESS	RELATIONSHIPS
CHALLENGES	LIGHT
REFLECTIVE PRACTICES	DARK
Mood 	
MOVEMENT & PLAY	SLEEP & RELAXATION
PLAY	RELAXATION
MOVEMENT	SLEEP QUANTITY & QUALITY

The diet & lifestyle evaluation is the perfect opportunity to look at your diet and lifestyle objectively. Here you have a self-explanatory place to track your diet, movement, play, sleep, and relaxation.

Journaling Resources

Popular Journaling Apps

- [Day One](#) for Mac and iOS users
- [Diarium](#) for Windows users
- [Penzu](#) for private journaling
- [Grid Diary](#) for organized journaling
- [Five Minute Journal](#) for beginners
- [Dabble Me](#) for email journaling
- [Daylio](#) for capturing moods and activities



Continual Support

We're here for you every step of the way!

For more information and free resources, check:

drbrookestuart.com

letgoandgrow.com

To reach out, feel free to contact our team here at anytime:

contact@drbrookestuart.com