

Appreciation Journal

Appreciation journaling is a simple but powerful practice for freeing yourself from the grip of the inner critic and reconnecting with your basic goodness, worthiness, and value as a human being. It is simply this: whenever you receive an appreciation, some recognition, or positive feedback that feels meaningful, you take a moment to add it to your Appreciation Journal along with the name of the person who said it and the date that you received it. Your Appreciation Journal can also be a place for you to acknowledge and appreciate your strengths, positive qualities, and achievements.

I have kept an Appreciation Journal since 2013. It is now over 20 pages long. It continues to be a very helpful practice and resource in my life. Here are a few examples from my personal appreciation journal:

2016: *"I really enjoyed mindfulness and it played a key role in me taking better care of myself and it also affected my school work in a positive way."* — Mindfulness student, 6.7.16

2017: *"Your poem was so exquisite. I taped it on my bathroom mirror. Thank you for the gift of you."* — Friend, 8.16.17

2018: *"Thanks again for an amazing staff retreat and even greater tools I can use in my everyday routine. I appreciate everything you've done and do each day for our community! With gratitude"* — Staff member, 5.09.18

Your Appreciation Journal can be a dedicated journal that you write in or a digital document you can access from your computer, tablet, or smartphone. I recommend the latter, ideally stored in a cloud, so that it is easy to add to and review anytime, anywhere. You never know where the next meaningful appreciation will come from or when the inner critic is going to give a hard time.

It can be helpful to know as you start your own Appreciation Journal that when the inner critic attacks, it will try and convince you that reading your journal is frivolous. It will likely try to persuade you that it will not help. This is often a trustworthy indicator that this is when you need it most. Often reading even one or two pages will be enough for you (or your clients) to begin to feel relief from the inner critic and reconnect with your basic goodness as a human being.

I encourage you to start your Appreciation Journal today and challenge yourself to add at least one entry to it every day for the next week. This will help you establish the healthy habit of adding to and reviewing it regularly.