



## Journaling with Equilibrium Dynamics *Emotional Competence in Action*

### Introduction

Research has shown that journaling can actually promote general health and there are numerous books available on journaling.

In the long run journaling can save time by making it easier and quicker for you to recognize a problem and design a resolution. Practicing these skills will also help improve your emotional competence skills.

To be productive journaling requires you to include **both facts and feelings**.

Through the writing process you will become your own 'emotional detective'. Your task is to shed light on interactions, getting the facts accurately, write them in the same sequence they happened and describe opinions and feelings separately. This helps to increase your understanding of other people and yourself in interactions. The clarity you get from this exercise is essential for easy social skills and healthy relationships.

Positive feelings often require less management because people are usually happy to have them linger. However, feeling good provides an excellent opportunity to practice your self-awareness skills so that you can increase your ability to create pleasure in your life.

As a footnote, happy feelings can be a management problem if the happiness is the result of destructive behavior, e.g. the rush of dangerous or risky behavior, or when it leads to substance abuse to "celebrate." Try journaling to understand your emotional responses to feeling good.

Used well, journaling can expand your self-responsibility skills, which guide your self-development to enhance your own feeling management skills and build your emotional competence.

### Getting started

- Plan to journal **at least 20 minutes, three times a week including both facts and feeling**. It is helpful to get into the habit of recording what is happening in your life, what you are doing and how you feel about it.
- Any kind of notebook that you can write in can be used for journaling. If you prefer to use a computer, take care of your need for confidentiality before you start. Protect your journal with a password and use your own personal computer.
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Even if you hate to write, jot (or type) a few notes about what you are thinking and feelings. Bullets are fine too.

- Don't be put off by worries about spelling or grammar. Remember this writing is for your emotional health, not English class.
- There seems to be a mental process that happens with writing that differs from what happens mentally when thinking or talking about an issue. People often describe the feeling of getting an issue 'out of their head' and down onto the paper. This helps them get a perspective and view the situation more objectively.

### **Journal Review and Reflection**

Review your journal from time to time, at least once a month. You can use these retrospectives to assess how you are progressing. The review and reflection helps maintain self-awareness and documents your personal growth and development. It can help you recognize when you are stuck or could use some help.

- Consider the actual experience of journaling itself. Did you do it? If not, why not? If you did do it, even once, how did you feel about doing it?
- Was it helpful to write about events and feelings in your journal? How? If not, why not?
- When you look back at what you wrote, see what did you included and what you left out. Think if you can explain why to yourself.
- Do you see any recurrent themes, or habitual feelings that seem to occur a little more than any others?
- What can you learn about yourself from this review? Notice how you feel about any discoveries.
- How can you use any of this information in your self-development? In what ways can your new insights guide your self-development and empower you moving forward?

If you would like to share your experience with Equilibrium Dynamics we'd love to hear about it. Please contact us [contact@eqdynamics.org](mailto:contact@eqdynamics.org)