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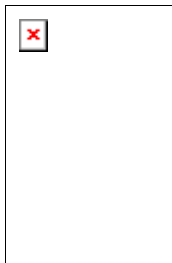
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Interview with Sandy Grason

Interview by Jenna Glatzer



*Sandy Grason regularly leads Journalution! Workshops and lectures on the topics of writing a journal for the purposes of emotional healing, inspiration, self-expression, manifesting, and as memoir. Her website (<http://www.SandyGrason.com>) is a popular connecting point for avid journalers to share journal entries and use Sandy's techniques for inspiration in their own journaling practice. The website includes an interactive database that connects readers to Journalution! Groups in their area. Her book, *Journalution: Journaling to Awaken Your Inner Voice, Heal Your Life and Manifest Your Dreams*, was recently published by New World Library (May 2005). Sandy lives in South Florida with her husband and two daughters.*

Journaling to Awaken Your Inner Voice, Heal Your Life and Manifest Your Dreams, was recently published by New World Library (May 2005). Sandy lives in South Florida with her husband and two daughters.

I've always found the pressure of the first page the toughest in a new journal. Let's say I'm a new journaler. I bought a notebook, I picked some nice pens... how do I figure out what to do with that first page?

Ah, the pressure of the first page in a new journal. It holds such possibility, but where to begin? That's why I love prompts so much. They give your brain something to play with so your inner critic will stop for a moment. There are 47 prompts in my book and you can also get a free report with more than 30 prompts by going to my website and "Joining the Journalution." The trick with prompts is don't think... just write, anything and everything that pops into your mind. You want to get to a place where your inner critic stops chattering and you just let it all flow... It's a wonderful feeling.

You give the same advice that I do when I teach workshops-- get the scary stuff out first. I love your prompt "I don't want to write about..." Why do you feel

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this is important?

Because otherwise you are just circling around the real stuff, avoiding writing down the thing your soul really wants to talk about. I find that the things that were scariest for me to write, the ones I had to cover with my hand because I was afraid to look at them, lost their power once I dumped them on the paper. I think the reason is that all those “scary” thoughts seem much, much scarier when they’re running around in your head; they take up so much energy. But the blank page has the power to soak up that emotion and the scary thoughts lose their power over you. Once you dump it onto the page, you become more comfortable with who you are-- the good, the bad, and the ugly, it’s all just pieces of you on the paper and you will begin to love all aspects of yourself.

Do you think there's any such thing as over-analysis of one's own life?

Interesting question... I usually get the people who haven’t even begun to really look at their lives. Maybe they are afraid of what’s been hiding inside. So over-analysis... I guess it’s all in the attitude that the analyzing takes place, if one is constantly analyzing, looking for things that are wrong, things that you need to “fix” about your self. If you find you’re never satisfied or happy with your life, then, yes, I think that would qualify as too much. However, I also believe that we are constantly growing and learning, we are always put in positions and relationships that help us grow as human beings. I don’t think we’re ever really get “there” on this journey of life, because we’re already there, right now, in this moment.

I hope that your journal will help you become more observant of the special moments and help you celebrate them more often.

Sometimes journaling can feel like a chore. What are some ways to make it fun?

Well, it certainly should never feel like a chore! Don’t do it if it’s not leading you somewhere. Many times I am journaling because I’m confused or upset about something. I know that if I write long enough I will eventually turn off my mind and my inner wisdom will show up and tell me the next step. I’m always amazed at what comes out, but it doesn’t surprise me anymore. I keep writing, I expect it, I know it’s coming.

If journaling feels like a chore, I might suggest that you’re not writing about anything really important to you. You might just be skimming the surface. So the answer is to go deeper, talk about something real. Or write at the top of the page “I don’t want to write about...” And watch all the thoughts that pop up! Take a deep breath and go.

One of my problems with journaling, as your sister experienced, is that I have sometimes "watered down" my journals knowing that someone could find them and read them one day. I've never found the perfect hiding spot that still keeps the journal in an easily-accessible place for me. Any suggestions for this?

Try keeping it with you for a couple of weeks. In a canvas bag with other books or projects or if it’s small enough in a purse, or even in your car as you go about your day. Again, for me, the fear of someone reading it was much greater before I wrote

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anything important down. As I became more comfortable with those “scary thoughts” I didn’t care as much if someone read them. I’m not even ashamed or embarrassed of the angry rants in my journal anymore because I know that it’s just one moment, it doesn’t represent all of me, it’s just a piece. If someone were to read it, oh well... I don’t really care anymore.

In fact, many of the things I used to be so scared to write down are the things I now read aloud in my workshops! Just to show everyone I’m not perfect; I struggle with the same overwhelming feelings as everyone.

In your book, you describe one of the ways journaling changed your life-- it helped you forgive your father for walking out on you and your mother. When you teach workshops, you must hear about ways journaling has changed other people's lives, too. Can you give us some examples of stories that stand out in your mind?

There are many in the book that I love. The guy I met at Gilda’s Club (the organization founded in memory of Gilda Radner for people dealing with cancer) who wrote with the prompt “Conversation with my 99-year-old self” and told me until that writing session he had never pictured himself living very long, and certainly not in good health; it gave him a new vision to live into.

My friend who made a list in college of all the qualities she wanted in a husband and now is happily married for more than ten years with four kids and tells me her husband is better than what she wrote!

The woman who used her journal to write letters to her mother, who passed away when she was a child, and then connected to her mother in a most profound way.

These are some of the bigger stories, but I hear from people every day, all over the world, that journaling is something they do for themselves. They tell me it brings them peace of mind and a calmness and clarity to their lives. Keeping a journal is an act of self-love and you will feel it immediately.

When you look back on your older journals, how do you feel about them?

I love them. It makes me feel very proud of how far I’ve come in my life. When I started journaling I was an extremely insecure, confused, angry young woman. My journal helped me figure out my passion and my purpose and those old journals contain the seeds of many, many dreams. I love to look back at the person I used to be. It reminds me of all that I’ve accomplished. I’m the type to constantly ask, “What’s next? Okay, so I’ve published a book, now what?” So my journals remind me to celebrate my life and all that I’ve become. And every time I read an old journal, I am reminded of the millions of little moments that go by unnoticed. If I hadn’t written it down, it would be lost forever. Those old journals contain pieces of my life, good and bad, beautiful and ugly (sometimes very ugly 😊), living and breathing on the page.

How did you sell this book? How long did it take?

I have been working on a book project for more than five years. But I have two little girls, so it wasn’t full-time working. The book took many different twists and turns, but basically it was a process of overcoming extreme self-doubt. “What do I have to say that’s different or important?” “Who do you think you are?” Those

questions played out quite a bit over the years. I wrote a book proposal, I got turned down by 30 agents, I hired a freelance editor to help me clean up my proposal and then I finally got an agent and sold it (I'm not absolutely sure about the order...). I believe once you have fully committed to writing a book, the universe will guide you. I questioned myself for a very long time before I got serious and then I sold it.

Tell us what it's been like working with New World Library.

I love New World Library-- their tagline is "Publishing Books That Change Lives"-- I love that! They are a very supportive publisher and I feel they've done a great job helping me launch this book. My editor was fabulous. But, having said all of that, it was a process for me. Working on Journalution on my own for so many years... when you sell your book, it's like handing over a baby to strangers. It took a little time to trust in the process.

You got some terrific endorsements, too, from Deepak Chopra, Louise Hay, John Gray, and others. Did you already know them from the speaking circuit? How did you approach them?

No, I didn't know any of them. I've developed a system for getting great endorsements and I believe I'm going to be teaching it at Mark Victor Hansen's Mega Book Publishing Event next year. And I did most of them before I even sold my book (that probably helped sell it).

Basically, I checked schedules for all the people who were on my "dream" list, and if any of them were going to be near me, I went to their event and asked them personally. I always told them how meaningful their work was to me and tried to tie in my book to their message (i.e., why it would make sense for them to endorse my project). And then follow up-- get e-mail info or office or assistant's name, etc., and follow up. Also, offer to send a couple of "drafts for them to edit." If they're very busy, this helps them save time and makes it a no-brainer to say yes. Take a camera and get a photo with them, then enclose the photo with your package or e-mail to remind them who you are.

Can you give our readers three quick tips that would help them immediately?

Sure!

- a. No Rules-- Just Write: Don't edit, just dump it all out. It doesn't have to be "pretty" or even make sense, just get it on the paper. I love Natalie Goldberg's philosophy-- you have to be willing to write the worst junk in America to be a writer. (Don't know if that's the exact quote.) Even the best writers in the world have editors.
- b. Use Prompts: They will move you past any blocks you might stumble upon (I give out more than 30 when you subscribe to my newsletter at www.SandyGrason.com). ☺
- c. Start a Journaling Group (or writer's group). Getting together with other people who are interested in similar things will help you become all that you dream of. My writing group helped me move past that "I want to write a book" phase into actually doing it. I feel so strongly about working with others that I set up a place in the Journalution Community for people to get together. You can search by state

and find others who want to get together and use the prompts in the book. Your dreams and visions multiply when you share them with others!

Anything else you'd like to add?

Yes, if you have a dream inside of you to write a book then never doubt that dream. It is there for a reason. And it is your responsibility to make it a reality. I believe we are put on this earth with a purpose, a voice. You must figure out what your voice stands for. No one can do this for you. So go forward, take a step today toward your dream, whatever it is. Tell the universe that this is what you want and then quiet your mind and watch what happens. You will be guided. Your inner wisdom is there, guiding you in every moment. You just have to be still enough to hear it-- and then write it down!

*Jenna Glatzer is the editor-in-chief of www.AbsoluteWrite.com and the author of a slew of books, including *MAKE A REAL LIVING AS A FREELANCE WRITER*, which comes with a *FREE Editors' Cheat Sheet* at www.jennaglatzer.com.*



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