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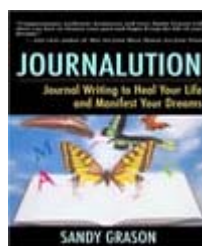
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Journalution:
*Journaling to Awaken Your Inner Voice,
Heal Your Life, and Manifest Your Dreams*
by Sandy Grason



(A Book Excerpt Compliments of New World Library)

CHAPTER 4: Expectations and Major Life Transitions

They say we pray to God when the foundations of our lives are shaking, only to discover that God is the one shaking them. Going through any big change in life - leaving home, getting married, breaking up, having kids, losing a job, or relocating - can shake us up.

Does change rattle your self-confidence and make your insides flutter? You're not the only one. But big change can be a big blessing. What is it about change that sends our humanness into overdrive?

Why do we question ourselves during times of transition, wondering whether or not we can handle the next day or even the next moment?

We are creatures of habit. Our routines ground us and give us the illusion that we are in control of our lives. We feel safer when we know what the next day holds. But though we feel better without unexpected circumstances popping up and getting in the way of our plans, living in complete safety and control can get a little boring.

In the movie Parenthood, life is compared to a rollercoaster - a ride that can make you frightened, scared, sick, excited, thrilled, and happy, all at the same time.

If you could design your life more like a merry-go-round, would you? Just going around and around, the same thing

around every turn, no surprises, no changes or transitions? Life would get pretty boring without any variation or evolution.

Some people love surprises and thrive on the unknown. My friend Sara told me that she loves change. "The bigger the better! Bring it on! What's so great about the past?"

However, for many people change represents strange and unfamiliar territory that can be a source of stress. Your journal can be an extremely helpful tool for helping you embrace the unpredictable path of your life.

Let's take a look at some of the kinds of life transitions for which journaling can be useful.

Career Changes

We spend a large percentage of our time at work, so switching careers or losing a job usually means we're in for some big changes.

It's the first day of your new career! You have your new suit on, along with your freshly ironed shirt, new briefcase, and pen. The butterflies are dancing in your belly. The future is bright, yet uncertain.

Starting over in a new place surrounded by unfamiliar faces can be exciting and unsettling. Writing about these feelings in your journal can help calm you down.

Are you feeling like the new kid on the block, left out or maybe a little overwhelmed? Are you worried that you might not live up to expectations and job performance standards?

Or perhaps you've lost your job and feel as if you'll never get another one. The money pressures are growing, and you are imagining how it will feel to be evicted from your apartment or to have your car repossessed. Your worries are spiraling out of control.

If you dump your concerns out on the page, they begin to lose their power over you. Give the journal a chance to help you work it out. Once you freely express your worrisome feelings, you can begin to give yourself the kind of sunny encouragement that just can't break through when your head is clouded with anxiety.

A better perspective is sure to show up, helping you see a clear path rather than wallowing in fear.

Try This ***CEO: Chief of Emotions Officer***

Focus on the career changes you are going through. You may have grand plans for these transitions. Do you see yourself working your way up through the corporation and

becoming the CEO?

Or would you like to gain some valuable experience and strike out in your own business? Have you set goals for your performance in the coming months? Build yourself up by writing all the congratulatory phrases you would love to hear from your superiors.

Write about how proud you are of yourself - or how scared you are. If you are still in the middle of the interview process, imagine yourself having several job offers from desirable companies. While changing jobs or careers can be stressful, it is also a fresh beginning - a chance to reinvent your life.

Use your journal to write about all the things you would like to attract into your life. Let yourself unload, dumping your emotions onto the page. Write anything. Nothing is off limits.

Another effective technique for gaining a better perspective is dialoguing with your inner wisdom (or a higher energy, or God). Here's a journal entry from David, who was having a conversation with his inner wisdom during a difficult time in his life:

Work - I am out of work, unemployed, again.

You are never out of what you call "work."

Well, I know I always "work." My soul is always undertaking that which I came here to do.

So why are you so concerned with employment?

Fear.

Yes, fear. That is what your "work" is about, is it not?

Hasn't most of your life been a battle with fear?

Yes.

So, here it is again. Asking. Waiting.

Waiting? For what?

To be loved by you.

Why?

So that it can come home.

Why does it need me?

You created it.

Why?

You were curious.

David told me that dialoguing with his inner wisdom, or Spirit, keeps him coming back to his journal. He can hear a voice that is not always present in his daily thoughts.

The journal turns up the volume on this wise voice. Today, David is the successful owner of Changing Times Books & Gifts in West Palm Beach, Florida.

This wonderful store carries, among other things, hundreds of beautiful journals. David's passion for his work is apparent the moment you walk in the door.

When I first began teaching journaling workshops, I had to make the leap from thinking about doing it to actually picking up the phone and calling the manager of my local bookstore to ask if they wanted to hear about the journalution.

I had a vision that I wanted to inspire millions of people to use journaling as a tool to heal and to manifest their dreams, but I hadn't actually done anything about it yet.

What if they said no? What if they laughed at me? At moments like that, when the doubt begins to surface, it's a great time to do a dialoguing exercise such as the one David used.

Try This *Dialoguing*

Have a conversation with the critical voice in your mind. Listen to all the doubts and fears that seem to be ready and waiting to pounce on your dreams. Then bring another voice into the dialogue: a supportive, wise voice.

Use that voice to give yourself some encouragement, just as you would encourage a dear friend or family member who was going through self-doubt. Let the critic and the supporter talk back and forth until the critic begins to soften.

Allow yourself to anticipate victory, see it, and feel it. Paint a picture in your journal of your dreams coming true. See yourself as powerful and capable of accomplishing this task, as well as many more even greater feats.

Take a deep breath and tell yourself that you can do it. There is nothing stopping you unless you allow it to.

Moving Out into the Real World

Do you remember what it felt like the first time you lived on your own? What's more thrilling - or scarier - than being completely independent for the first time in your life? It's the most exciting thing in the world, and yet it can feel pretty overwhelming.

I remember thinking that college was going to be like a summer camp. On being dropped off, I couldn't wait for my mother to get out of the dorm so I could hang out with my friends.

No curfew! No rules! It didn't take long for the realization to sink in that my family was hundreds of miles away and I was sharing a small room with a complete stranger. A journal is the perfect companion to have by your side at every twist and turn of this adventure.

It's there for you when you are juggling friends, new responsibilities, and difficult situations. The real world is full of friends, fun, new experiences, and having to act like you've got it all together.

In those moments when it seems like you'll never have it figured out, your journal is the perfect place to turn. When you're older, it will be lovely to reminisce about what the enthusiastic, spontaneous, open-minded young person you are now was thinking about the world.

Your journal doesn't have to be just words, either. You can draw pictures, paste photos, make collages, and tape mementos into your journal. Scrapbooking has become so popular that there are now entire stores dedicated to supplies and inspirations for putting together these beautiful books.

Try combining journal entries with your scrapbooks. Write little notes about thoughts and feelings that go along with the items. Experiment with your journal, and visit one of these scrapbook supply stores for inspiration.

In her book *Spilling Open*, Sabrina Ward Harrison shares her journal/scrapbook of her life between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one. She describes feeling disconnected from her body and feeling watched. Ms. Harrison's wisdom surfaces in her journal and offers a gem for us all, young and old:

If I was to have an answer to this growing pain question it would be something like this: You've got this amazing creature - yourself. That can move and breathe, dance and cry. And you have a certain amount of moments.

And you have this chance to do absolutely anything; to dance on the roof in euphoria and pray beside the ocean. We have the chance every moment to be alive and to give to this world, who needs each one of us so badly.

Try This ***Inspiration for Your Journal***

Gather a few magazines, markers, crayons, scissors, and

old photographs around you on a table. Flip through the magazines looking for words or pictures that inspire you or that express exactly what you are feeling right now. Clip out at least five things.

Turn to a blank page in your journal and use the crayons and markers to make a backdrop, or just begin writing using different colors for different letters and words. Cut your old photographs, magazine pictures, or clipped out words to fit into the journal entry.

Just the eyes or lips or laughing faces can be glued or taped all over the page or in between the words to help express yourself in this moment. There is no wrong way to do this.

Let yourself revert to being seven years old. Have fun! This is a great project to do with children; they will love to create their own journal entry, too.

I wish I'd discovered my passion for journaling earlier in life. I would love to go back now and read what that young girl was thinking and feeling. Did life turn out as she hoped and planned? It is such an important time in life, stepping out and discovering who you will be.

If these moments and decisions are not written down, they will be forgotten. The act of writing ensures that these occasions will be waiting for you when you are ready to look back on your journey and make sense of it all.

When the newness of being on your own is over and you have survived out in the "real world," your journal will still be there to guide you through your next big decisions and transitions.

Excerpted from ***Journalution: Journaling to Awaken Your Inner Voice, Heal Your Life, and Manifest Your Dreams.***

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