THE PAST

Making sense of *your story.*

Return to the moments that shaped you. Understand your story with a little more clarity and care.



THE PRINTABLE WORKBOOK

Up to 4 hours / at your own pace

A little space to write, reflect, and find your way.

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A LITTLE ORIENTATION

Inside these pages

Follow the exercises in order, then repeat the worksheets for the traits, goals, or experiences you choose.

Before you begin 3

Making space for your story 4

The chapters of your life 6

Experiences from this life period 7

How it shaped you 8

What you carry forward 9

A moment to look back 10

A little more room 11

GETTING STARTED

Before you begin

Return to the moments that shaped you. Understand your story with a little more clarity and care.

This is a space for you. Write honestly, at your own pace. Take a break and return whenever you are ready. Suggested lengths and times are guides, not deadlines.

> Print on A4 paper at actual size, or choose Fit for US Letter. Write on the ruled pages. Use the extra writing page whenever you need more space.

These pages work entirely on paper. No account or internet connection is needed after downloading. Keep your completed pages somewhere private.

Your path through this program

01 Map your life periods

02 Remember meaningful experiences

03 Reflect on their impact

> Map your life periods. For each period, list meaningful experiences. Describe each event, then repeat the two reflection exercises for every experience.

Name (optional) _____ Started _____

GETTING STARTED

Making space for your story

Why write?

Writing is a sophisticated form of thinking. Thinking prepares you to perceive properly and act intelligently. If you don't think things through, particularly difficult things, then you are likely to make serious mistakes and to hurt yourself and other people. When you write about personally important matters, you can start to identify the causes of events that might hurt and damage you. You can begin to understand how you might have to change the way you see and think to avoid unnecessary pain and suffering.

You have to mine the information that the past provides to ensure that the present and future emerge positively and productively.

It is best to do the writing that is associated with this exercise by entering into a reverie. A reverie is a state of contemplation, like a daydream. Normal focused goal-oriented thought tends to be narrow, precise and expressed in words. Image-laden thought - the movie that runs in your head - is more dream- or story-like. To complete this exercise properly, you have to daydream about the past, and let thoughts and images come to you, instead of controlling them. This can be frightening, if you start to remember unpleasant events from the past. However, it can be very useful to confront things that you are afraid of, voluntarily, particularly if your fears are stopping you from living properly in the present and the future.

Voluntarily facing the remembered things you fear or that you hate is the best way of dealing with them. Don't rush this exercise, or the ones that follow, if you decide to complete them, as well. They are not something to merely complete. You have to take your time. In a reverie, or a daydream, parts of your mind that haven't been able to speak because of your focused concentration or moral opinions have a chance to let themselves be known. These are parts of you that need a voice. If you take your time, then you can make contact with parts of yourself that have been shut away. You will need the abilities and energies that are contained within these shut-away parts to deal with the challenges of the present and the future.

Sleeping

It may be best to do this exercise, as well as the present and future authoring exercises, over several days. The research done on the relationship between writing and mental and physical health has demonstrated that sleeping and, more particularly, dreaming, can help you participate more deeply in the writing exercise and consolidate your new ideas.

Attitude While Writing

If you are rushed, or distracted, or bored, then you are not doing the writing in a manner that will benefit you. If you are writing about important events, you may find the exercise difficult and emotionally challenging, but it should not be boring. If you are rushed or distracted, then you are trying too hard to finish, or have not put enough time aside to do the writing.

It is very important to negotiate with yourself properly when trying to write about important things. Try to think through the fact that spending some time dealing with your past can benefit you in many ways. It can help you escape from the ghosts of the past. It can lower your level of stress. It can help you think more clearly now and in the future. It can help you get to know who you really are and how your life has affected you, positively and negatively. It can help you become healthier, mentally and physically. It can help you enjoy your life in the present, eliminate your resentment and misery, and prepare you to plan for the future.

It is worth putting in the time to reap such benefits.

Many times when a person is writing, they are writing for some other person or for some outside reason. If you have done this writing exercise properly you will be working primarily for yourself. What you produce should be a deeply personal document.

YOUR LIFE PERIODS

The chapters of your life

Divide your life into meaningful periods. Start with seven, or choose the number that feels right. An epoch might be "Grade school" or "My first year away from home".

Life period 1

Title / ages or dates: _____

Life period 2

Title / ages or dates: _____

Life period 3

Title / ages or dates: _____

Life period 4

Title / ages or dates: _____

Life period 5

Title / ages or dates: _____

Life period 6

Title / ages or dates: _____

Life period 7

Title / ages or dates: _____

REPEAT FOR EACH EXPERIENCE

Experiences from this life period

Repeat for each life period. Use one event-description sheet per experience.

Life period: _____

Describe significant positive or negative experiences from this period. We suggest 4-6. Give each a title and describe the event itself; you will reflect on its impact next.

For each period, aim for 4-6 experiences. Give each one a title and describe what happened before reflecting on its impact.

Experience title: _____

Describe the event itself

REPEAT FOR EACH EXPERIENCE

How it shaped you

Complete this exercise for every experience in each life period.

Life period: _____ Experience: _____

How has this experience shaped who you are today?

Your reflection

REPEAT FOR EACH EXPERIENCE

What you carry forward

> Complete this exercise for every experience in each life period.

Life period: _____ Experience: _____

What have you learned from this experience, and how might that affect your choices now?

Your reflection

YOUR FINAL REFLECTION

A moment to look back

Read through your pages. You can revisit any answer as your perspective changes.

What do you understand more clearly now?

What is one small step you want to take next?

Before you put these pages away

- [ ] I have worked through the exercises I chose.
- [ ] I have reviewed my reflections.
- [ ] I have chosen a next step.
- [ ] I have put my pages somewhere private.

EXTRA WRITING PAGE

A little more room

Print this page as often as you need. For repeated exercises, copy the relevant worksheet pages or continue here.

Exercise / trait / goal / experience: _____