

Five Step Process for Journal Writing

At People Rich, we propose setting up your reflection journal via a five step process:

1. **Select a journal that inspires you to write in it**, of an appropriate size to be able to travel with you. We recommend an A5 sized journal.
2. **Write your name and address on the first page**. Also write a message asking the reader to return your journal if it is found. It is also recommended to leave a message that the journal's contents are of a personal nature and ask them to respect your thoughts and writings by not reading the journal.
3. **Make a snap-shot of your life on the next few pages**, which may include your personal attributes (height, weight etc), job information (title, company, salary rate), your marital status (may include your family's details), your investments (passive and portfolio, including their value), and your financial standing (your bank balances, the values of your investments etc). This information becomes important when you compare your journals in later years and realise the amazing changes in your life. In fact, seeing how much things change can be motivational. You will be surprised how much of your life changes in only a few years. You will need to decide what information is too personal to include, especially if you take it out of your home and it is likely to be lost or stolen. On the other side of things, having a lot of detail is quite valuable to you when reflecting on changes and growth.

4. **Include your Goal Template** (refer to our Goals information). The journal becomes the place to write about your progress that uses your stated goals as a baseline. It will record the activities, challenges and outcomes of your efforts, including the very important thought processes that will show you what works for you and what does not.

5. **The remainder of your journal can hold anything that is important to you**.
The following examples are some things that you may find in a reflection journal:

- *Personal experiences* – events that have happened in your life.
- *Thoughts and feelings* – how you are approaching and experiencing life.
- *Books you are reading* – this may show how you are being influenced and how your opinions and beliefs are being developed.
- *People you are meeting* – this may show you how networking is helping you achieve your goals, or how people are influencing or helping you.
- *Courses you are doing* – this keeps track of your formal education and learning experiences.
- *Ideas you are creating* – this may lead to future business and investment endeavours. We know of a gentleman who had kept a journal and was excited about a new business idea. After looking at the feasibility of the idea, he was quite surprised to find that the idea originated some 12 years earlier when he was reflecting on his earlier writings. This shows the importance of reading previous journals and reflecting on their contents.

- *Changes that you notice about yourself* – this includes things you are aware of that are part of your physical growth. It may include statements about your health or notable changes, such as your eyesight.
- *Performance reviews and other tests* – measures that help benchmark and track your personal progress. These may include work-related reviews, job-matching physiological tests and awards you are receiving.
- *Your goal template* – your goals, their progress, and your dated achievements.
- *Photographs of places, family and friends* – remember the old adage that a picture can paint a thousand words. How more powerful is your story and writings if you can add a picture as a visual stimulant to reflect on.
- *Tickets from events you have attended* – to help you remember the events that you have attend. This may include tickets to museums, theme-parks, movies and trips, particularly when you are visiting a new country, as they become a record of where you were and when.
- *Email extracts letters and notes you receive* – these may include promotions, job offers and thank you cards. If they are positive in nature, they often help you reflect on your good points at times when you may be feeling low.
- *Quotes and other interesting facts* – things that you see and find interesting or inspirational. Too many times to you see something that has a significant message for you and you write it down on any little slip of material, only to soon lose it.

The great thing about a journal is that it is yours, and you can put in it anything you desire. The most important thing to do is simply get started and keep using it. We can also learn from others' experience, such as People Rich's Managing Director, Todd Hutchison, who has been writing reflective journals for over 14 years. He notes his only regret is that he has periods of up to 18 months when nothing was recorded in his journal, and it becomes very evident that many things have changed when you are reading back and seeing the discord between the gaps in your writings. You then wish you had *made the time*. Then again, if you haven't even started a journal - can you afford to leave it any longer?

Please send us an email at info@peoplerich.com if you would like more information.

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