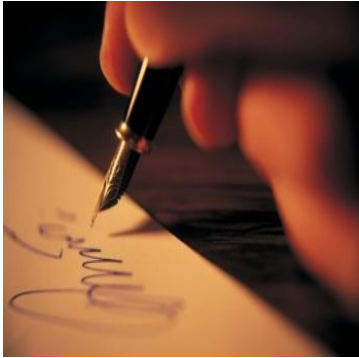


Healthy Living Coach Self Care Techniques

Journaling



In the past ten years mind/body medicine has seen great advancements in understanding how our emotional state affects health. Diseases like arteriosclerosis, cancer, autoimmune conditions all have been found to have an emotional component, especially when it comes to repressed feelings like anger or unresolved conflicts. As more and more research shows the strength of this connection the medical community is beginning to see the validity in incorporating a biopsychosocial or holistic approach to treatment.

A biopsychosocial approach is one that considers biological, psychological and social implications in the expression of disease. It utilizes the information gleaned from biological measures like blood tests and scans. The psychological approach considers the implications of cognitions, attitudes and beliefs that influence a person's perception and perspective of disease and health and the sociological state of an individual views his support system as an important part of diagnosis as well as treatment.

Due to this increased interest in the psychological influence on health, researchers have focused on a variety of therapies that include a simple technique some of us do already. Journaling is a simple, effective and inexpensive form of therapy shown to help individuals deal with unresolved issues. In the process, overall immunity is improved.

There is however a process Dr. Pennebaker and colleagues suggest, drawn from dozens of successful journaling studies. It follows distinctive well-thought out and studied steps. Dr. Pennebaker, in his books, *Write to Heal* and *Open Up*, suggests that during the process of writing about a highly charged situation, the individual may find themselves becoming weepy or highly emotional. This is usually a short term experience. The studies show that in the long term, journaling enhances positive feelings and happiness.

To augment your journey to wellness, Dr. Yim encourages you to journal as a personal contribution to your treatment. However, he also suggests that if you find an issue you are not ready to deal with, that makes you feel uncomfortable or that feels confusing arrange an appointment with him for further suggestions and alternatives. The following pdf file is for you to download and use as a guide. You may want to add it to your Fresh Start binder.

Pennebaker's Process for Confronting Trauma and Negative Emotions through Journaling

1. Take twenty minutes a day for four days to write.
2. Find a private, safe, and comfortable environment where you won't be disturbed by family or phone.
3. Choose a subject or issue you are trying to find resolution over. This could be a thought that won't stop or a trauma you have never discussed or resolved.
4. Share joys, successes, and pleasures.
5. Write what happened, the feelings surrounding the event and why you feel you felt way, linking the feelings with events.
6. Write as detailed as you can and do so in organized, vivid and emotionally charged language
7. Get rid of your inner English teacher! Do not worry about grammar or spelling.
8. Your writing is for your eyes only, you may want to keep it or discard it in some symbolic manner. If you choose to keep it place it somewhere safe where no one else's eyes will see it.
9. Writing can be a form of avoidance from taking action, check in with yourself periodically to ensure you aren't using it for that purpose.
10. Keep the language simple and avoid over-intellectualizing.
11. Avoid complaining; use it instead as a way of working through an issue or problem.
12. Being overly analytical can be counterproductive make sure you include solutions to your writing as well as the problems.
13. Journaling is not a substitute for therapy or medical care. If questions arise while you are writing that are troublesome or frightening, contact Dr. Yim's office at 250-755-1930.

This is only one part of your therapy. Taking care of yourself physically, spiritually and mentally is equally as important as considering your emotional health.

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Journaling

Suggested Journal Topics



If you have difficulties choosing a topic consider these statements. For further help in these areas ask Dr. John Yim about Psych K or Energy Psychology.

1. "I'm not good enough." If your inner voice makes this statement write about how it makes you feel and why you think it could be true. You may also consider where this belief came from. Was there an event from childhood that triggered this belief? Write about the event, how you felt and why you felt the way you did.
2. Unresolved issues and emotions concerning events or involving an individual can erode your sense of well being and positivity. If there is an unresolved issue in your life, describe it. Why is it impacting your life?
3. "I have to be strong." Do you feel you have to do things yourself without asking for help or admitting weakness? This can come from a childhood belief that your parents can't support you and you must and do fend and take care of yourself. Can you recall a specific incident where this belief began or was solidified?
4. "It's not right for me to be angry." How many of us believe this statement? Sometimes, we even feel that if we get angry we won't be loved or lovable. Overtime anger builds up inside without being allowed release. Remember a time when you felt very angry but kept it inside. Describe in detail, including the sensory experience of sight, hearing, sound and smell.
5. "I'm responsible for the whole world." Do you feel the weight of the world on your shoulders? How does that make you feel? How does it influence your actions? Write in detail the answer to these questions. Try being a third observer watching you carry the world, describe what they see.
6. "I can handle anything." Can you? Ask yourself about the things you really can handle and what you feel is beyond your ability to handle.
7. "I don't exist unless I do something." Our programming suggests that we do something remarkable or substantial to be seen in the world or to be of relevance, yet we feel ill equipped

for the responsibility. Do feel like you need to justify your existence by doing something? What is it that you need to do?

8. "I have to be very ill to deserve to be taken care of." As a child, were the times you got the most and best attention when you were sick? How did it feel when you were healthy and didn't get the attention?

Remember, your journaling exercise is personal and private. If you are concerned that your writing may be read then with gratitude and a spirit of letting go, burn the material and watch it disintegrate and disappear. The exercise of destroying what you wrote can be very cathartic in itself.