

Healing Negative Childhood Memories with Journaling

Have you been hit with some painful memories you experienced when growing up? Did it feel like re-opening old wounds and feeling the same emotions over and over again?

You can use some strategies to help you heal. One of those strategies is journaling – writing down how you feel and think.

Try these journaling practices to help you with the pain of negative childhood memories:

1. **Write about what you thought and felt.** Going back in time, ponder what the negative situations were like for you. Did you feel embarrassed when Dad pointed out your slouchiness? Were you angry about your Mom on you about your grades? Write it down.
2. **What are your current thoughts and feelings?** Now, use your “adult mind” to look at the situation. **What does your “adult mind” tell you about what really happened?** Maybe you see things clearly now. Was Mom or Dad’s goal to make you a “better person?” Write down your current explanation of the situation.
3. **Journal how the situations affected you then.** How did you react as a child? How did you make sense of the situations then? Did you talk to anyone about the times? Who did you talk to?
4. **Reflect on how the hurtful events from the past affect you now.** Can you make any connections between your past and the present? Make a conscious decision to manage your feelings and behavior choices now. Write down how you can manage your emotions differently.
5. **Promise to gain understanding.** If the situation was when your parent did something that you just couldn’t understand, can you make sense of it now? Maybe your mom made you stay home from a trip not to punish you – perhaps she thought you’d be exposed to something unsafe and she was hoping to protect you.
 - Discover these possible explanations through writing in your journal.

6. **Re-write your history.** Re-write your childhood on paper. How would you have liked it to be. It's a learning experience to express how you would have liked your growing up years to have been different. Re-writing your history can also help you heal.
7. **Make a conscious decision to overcome your past.** Whatever was your old hurts, ***decide to disconnect them from your current life.*** This effort must be made consciously and with great thought. Write down how you can release yourself!
8. **Recognize these events were in the past.** As you record your thoughts and feelings, write how long ago the event happened. Label them "in the past" in your journal. Start a new section called, "In the present" and write about how you'll respond to those types of hurts now.
9. **Formulate a plan to let it go and move on.** In your journal writings, consider steps you might take to move on in your life and live more openly and without being tied to your historic pain.
10. **Give yourself permission to release the old, negative emotions.** In your journal, jot down that you no longer have to carry the hurt. Allow yourself permission to leave it behind you. Let it go. You can even draw a picture of the tangled web of feelings and state you're leaving all the pain right there between the lines of your journal.

Expressing yourself with pen and paper will help you discharge your troublesome feelings and move on with your goals.

Live your best life now by using journaling to help heal old wounds.