

Ally - Expressive Writing*

Why

“When we experience a stressful event or major life transition, it’s easy to ruminate over that experience. Expressive writing allows us to step back for a moment and evaluate our lives... [W]e can become active creators of our own life stories—rather than passive bystanders...Transforming a messy, complicated experience into a coherent story can make the experience feel more manageable.”

How

Find a 20 minute block of time in which you won’t be interrupted, and write continuously for the whole period, without worrying about grammar, spelling or what anyone else might think of it. Write what is on your mind and how it makes you feel. This may include tying current events and feelings to events or patterns from the past, but it doesn’t need to.

This should feel extremely personal and likely quite vulnerable. Otherwise, you could be holding back something that would be good to get out on paper.

The best results come from doing this for four consecutive days. At the end of your writing, you may wish to keep the product, but you can just as easily choose to throw it away, never to be seen again. The greatest impact is in the process, not the output.

* From the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkley, visit https://gqia.berkeley.edu/practice/expressive_writing for detail