



Caregiver Tips: *Journaling*

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Never kept a journal before? You might want to start because journaling:

- Gives you a private place to record your thoughts and feelings
- Can be used as a tool for problem-solving
- Provides a place to “practice” things you want or need to say
- Might become a way for you to explore other issues in your life besides caregiving.

Make the journaling process your own. You don't need to write in complete sentences. Use single words, rhyming words, or make up your own words. Or maybe you don't even want to write at all. Feeling pressure? Draw a picture of a monster that represents the stress you feel. Borrow your child's crayons to add color and emotion.

How Do You Begin?

- Select a notebook and determine when and where you want to do your journaling. Try to establish a routine.
- For your first entry, finish this sentence, “I hope this journal will help me to . . .”
- As you journal, think about who or what should be the focus of that journaling experience. On Monday, you may focus on, “Why am I so angry today?” By Friday, you may want to write a letter to your spouse, rehearsing some things you really want to say to her or him.

How Do You Keep Going?

Professional writers sometimes encounter what they term “writer's block,” an inability to put words on paper. When that happens:

- Find a quote from someone else, write it in your journal, and describe your feelings about that quote. There are many quotation books and Internet sites for finding quotes on almost any subject you can think of.
- Play some music and allow it to guide your writing.
- Besides dealing with issues in your life, journaling can and should also include the joys. Stuck for a topic? List the top 10 things you love about your life, your job, or where you live. ❖