



**ROY B. NASH, M.Div.**

**LICENSED AND CERTIFIED: L.M.F.T., L.C.P.C.**

BD CERT DIPLOMATE: AM PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION  
BD CERT DIPLOMATE: AM ASSOC INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE  
DIPLOMATE: INT ACAD OF BEHAV MED, COUNS & PSYCHOTHERAPY  
BD CERT FELLOW: AM ASSOC OF PASTORAL COUNSELOR  
BD CERT MEMBER: AM ASSOC - MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPIST:  
BD CERT CHAPLAIN: ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONAL CHAPLAINS

**BELIEF-FOCUSED CARE & HEALING**

5004 EAGLE RIDGE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62711-7830  
217-415-2978 FAX: 217-787-4973

EMAIL: [roynash@springnet1.com](mailto:roynash@springnet1.com)  
[www.roynash.com](http://www.roynash.com)

## Journaling

## JOURNALING CREATES

## "AGED REFLECT1ON"

Beyond the direct and personal therapy provided by a therapist in either a group or individual session, the next most helpful healing and recovery activity a person can do for oneself is to write out some parts of their life journey in what is known as "journaling." The subject that one writes about are the feelings, thoughts, struggles and other significant life experiences of the author -- specifically, one's inner life journey.

**The benefits of journaling are many:** [A] Feelings are ventilated and de-intensified; [B] Feelings and life issues become more clearly focused now that they are in black and white; [C] Over time, patterns of feelings and behaviors can be identified in oneself, examined and new decisions made about them; [D] By dating each entry, a chronological journey is recorded, and thereby progress, growth, healing and change can be more readily observed; [E] The healing and recovery process continues beyond the therapy sessions because journaling requires reflective thinking about the life issues that need addressing and re-decision making; [F] One's healing and recovery is speeded up because more time and 'creative energy' is focused and devoted to the healing process; [G] Journaling is economical because for every hour devoted to journaling beyond each hour's therapy session participants receive that journaling hour as free therapy. And there are surely other benefits as well.

Each participant is invited and urged to journal, although this is not required when one is in therapy. If journaling is done, then each person is asked to bring their journal with them to all sessions — as a reference source for focusing on their needs and insights during therapy.

**Life experiences + Aged reflection = Growth**

**BASIC PROCEDURE:** Select a 6½" x 9" or smaller, notebook on which you write on the front and back cover [*Your Name*]'s ***Growth Journal – Do Not Touch!*** Always keep a wide rubber band around it. The basic writing procedure is very simple: [A] Date each entry when you begin to write. [B] Write about yourself: your feelings, relationships, significant life events of the day or week, significant ideas you come across, values, priorities in life, the changes you are experiencing, hopes and hurts, expectations, beliefs, and disappointments. Mainly, write about "what is going on in your inner life." [C] Close each entry with your signature. [D] Twenty minutes every other day is minimally recommended.

**WHEN STARTING IS DIFFICULT:** When you start to write and find it difficult to get started, review these following topics to help you get started. Ask yourself:

**What impacts are my life experience's making on my inner world, regarding:**

- **my relationships with the important people in my life?**
- **those significant non-personal events that have recently happened?**
- **my deeper feelings, especially hurts, disappointments, hopes and dreams?**
- **any significant losses in my life at this time, or earlier in my life?**
- **the changes I am experiencing in life, my relationships with others and God?**
- **the ideas, thoughts and quotations that I have heard or read?**
- **how my values, beliefs and priorities in life are changing?**

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