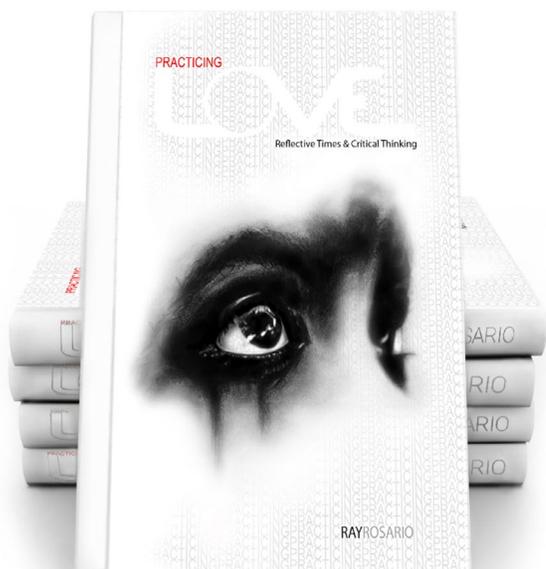


PRACTICING LOVE

Reflective Times & Critical Thinking

Upward Bound Program

Reflective Reading, Journaling,
and Critical Thinking Guide



Purpose

The purpose of this book is to broaden the way you think about life and understand the challenges of achieving goals and dreams. It will assist you in becoming a Critical Thinker and a Leader while developing the way of using Love to make a difference in your life and the world around you.

This book chronicles part of the artist's personal journey where a dream, risk, education, and planning take place. The journey involves difficult choices the artist had to make that resulted in gains as well as losses along his path towards achieving his goals and dreams. There are topics throughout the book on relatable issues around feelings and experience that everyone encounters on different levels. Some of these factors are listed on the next page.

Life will always present challenges. By understanding the experiences of others, you gain perspective, knowledge, and can uncover ways to formulate strategies in overcoming obstacles in life.

As you read through the book, do some reflection thinking on the topics that trigger thoughts or a reaction Think about the reaction/response and use the back of the book to write down your thoughts, ideas or opinions. Use the opportunity to understand your own thought patterns—known or hidden. Explore your experiences. Some of the ideas you read about may be incorporate into your current life. If so, think about how and the process. If you need assistance, open to the opportunity of reaching out to a teacher, mentor, or an adult who can help guide and assist you. These are all great opportunities for personal growth and achievements.

If you are unfamiliar with any terminology or a reference used in the book, research it to understand the full content being given. The importance of researching is to obtain a range of facts before accepting the information as truth rather than getting information form one source. This practice will help you develop critical thinking insights and skills. A trait that is useful to incorporate in all aspects of your life.

This is one of many steppingstones that will assist you in achieving and reaching the greatest potential life has to offer you. Make every opportunity count.



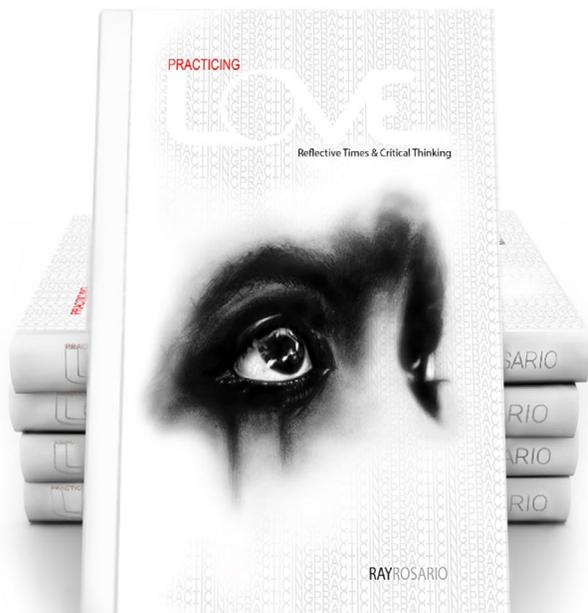
About the Book

We are at a critical time in history in which we are losing a vital connection to ourselves and humanity. Love is the grounding force that should be the basis of our thoughts, actions, and foundation. We have entered an era of wanting more than we are giving, taking more than distributing, dismantling more than building, destroying more than loving.

Practicing LOVE is about developing a framework to strengthening our capacity to love and grow in times where hope and faith are needed. It helps us work on increasing the love we have for ourselves while connecting with others in a healthy and positive manner.

There are guidelines to Practicing Love and information to digest while journaling. This book/ journal touches on how to view and understand factors such as our personal past, honesty, fear, insecurities, technology and its effects, judgment, the importance of being a great student as well a leader. These topics are part of all our lives and vital to our growth. Understanding the impact will assist us in becoming critical thinkers and an active participant in life.

Practicing LOVE is an ongoing exercise, a steppingstone in the right direction that will strengthen us in becoming grounded with humility and humanity while making a difference in the lives of others. Small steps with great impacts.



The outcome and results will benefit us and all those we extend our love too. Journal writing and sketch pages are provided at the back of the book for expression and reflection.

This book is a tool like many others too helps us expand our knowledge of life.

An Approach to Reading

There are many reasons to read, here are a few:

- it improves our creativity and imagination,
- it helps us learn and broadens our knowledge of history,
- it increases our vocabulary and conversational skills,
- improves memory and concentration,
- it increases our worldview and convictions,
- it also helps us discover our areas of interests.

With this reading we are going to approach it with a reflective reading approach. Reflective reading is a practice that uses questions to guide thoughtful reading analysis. It moves reading from entertainment to a thoughtful, intentional, spiritual practice of understanding the topic from multiple perspectives. It also challenges the way we approach reading and understanding life.

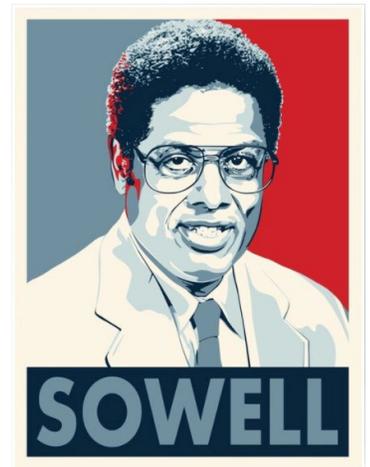
In reflective reading, we have the opportunity to think about the reading in the context of our own experiences, knowledge, and respond to it. The key component is to make sure our reflections are written down by journaling. This type of journaling is called Dialectical Journaling & Annotations.

Here are a few key reading points:

- Have a notepad or a journal, pen and highlighter in hand.
- If there is something that evokes a strong reaction from you – note what your reaction is and why, whether it's about the context or personal.
- If something confuses you, write down and then try to figure it out.
- If you come across a topic of interest, write it down along with the reason why and pursue it, research it and learn.
- If you come across a sentence or paragraph that inspires you, highlight it or write it down. You may even wish to create a notebook of all inspirational quotes you love.
- If you are a creative type, sketch it or produce it in any form you are comfortable with.

The idea is to get into the habit of questioning and learning about topics you are unfamiliar with or do not understand. order to make the best decisions possible and become a great student of life. There is no wrong way of approaching this idea or book. Simply approach it in your comfort zone.

Now it's time for the journey to begin, happy reading.



"It takes considerable knowledge just to realize the extent of your own ignorance."

- Thomas Sowell



Annotation

Underline and/or highlight text directly in the book or on Post Its. Then record your thoughts, observations, and questions next to the specific words, lines, or passages under consideration. To the right is an example.

Dialectical Journaling

The purpose of a dialectical journal is to identify significant pieces of text and explain the significance. It is another form of highlighting/annotating text and should be used to think about, digest, summarize, question, clarify, critique, and remember what is read. Below is an example of Dialectical Journaling.

This is soooo poetic (Plath go figure), and the imagery is ~~intense~~ - some of it is positive ("a sweet dream" "glittered" and "freshness") while some is nasty ("fake," "mirage-gray" and "dry, cindery dust"). It totally reminds me of NYC - glittering lights and dirty streets. The way she describes it makes it seem less than cool.

It was a queer, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York. I'm stupid about executions. The idea of being electrocuted makes me sick, and that's all there was to read about in the papers—goggle-eyed headlines staring up at me on every street corner and at the fusty, peanut-smelling mouth of every subway. It had nothing to do with me, but I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves. I thought it must be the worst thing in the world.

New York was bad enough. By nine in the morning the fake, country-wet freshness that somehow seeped in overnight evaporated like the tail end of a sweet dream. *simile* Mirage-gray at the bottom of their granite canyons, the hot streets wavered in the sun, the car tops sizzled and glittered, and the dry, cindery dust blew into my eyes and down my throat. *onomatopoeia*

I kept hearing about the Rosenbergs over the radio and at the office till I couldn't get them out of my mind. It was like the first time I saw a cadaver. For weeks afterward, the cadaver's head—or what there was left of it—floated up behind my eyes

The Bell Jar *Sylvia Plath*

Page #	Passage (quote or paraphrase)	Notes
32	"NEVER SHALL I FORGET that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky. Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes. Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never."	The diction & syntax of this passage really stand out. The repetition of "never shall I forget" reinforces the impact of his first night in camp. Using words like "murdered" instead of "killed" imply that something actively, knowingly, even intentionally killed his faith, which was obviously important to him. The use of the word "condemned" helps me to understand that his attitude toward life is that it is now a suffering/struggle to him.



Reflective Questions

Preface

- What were the determining factor that led the artist to develop his own plan? Why?
- What were some of the key elements the artist lacked in achieving quick success in his field?
- Why is a mentor important?

Introduction

- Why is self-awareness important?
- What was your takeaway from the Introduction?

Love & Our Surrounding

- What are some of the challenges the artist list we are facing in this current time?
(a) After listing a few, choose one and describe whether you agree or disagree, then state why.

Touching Base with the Past

- Why is it important to display physical touch of love during infancy stage?
- What form of art became important to human survival and why?
- Choose one of the following topics: Family Upbringing, Environment, or Past Relationships. State your reasons why you can or cannot relate to it.

Honesty

- What was the most important step the artist took to become self-aware and grounded?
- What were some of the positive gains from this step?

Insecurities

- Do you think insecurities, trust and growth are related? If yes or no, state why.
- Do you think we can grow & heal from our insecurities? If yes or no, state why.

Fear

- Can you relate to any of the fears the artist writes about? If so or not, state why.
- What are some of the good factors of overcoming fear?



Reflective Questions

The Void & Disconnect Effect

- What are some of the negative impacts of social media platforms?
- What are some of the positive outcomes of social media?
- Do you feel a disconnect with your environment? If yes or no, state why.

Future Generations

- What are some of the factors leading up to the decline in family structure?
- Do you believe you can help change the perception of your generation's behavior? If so, how? If not, why?

Student & Leadership

- Why is it important to remain open and listen to all individuals?
- When do we commence to take on a leadership role?

Unity

- Have you ever experienced the strength of unity? If so, how? If not, why?

Judging

- Why is it important not to judge?
- What are some of the negative outcomes of judging?

Practicing Guidelines

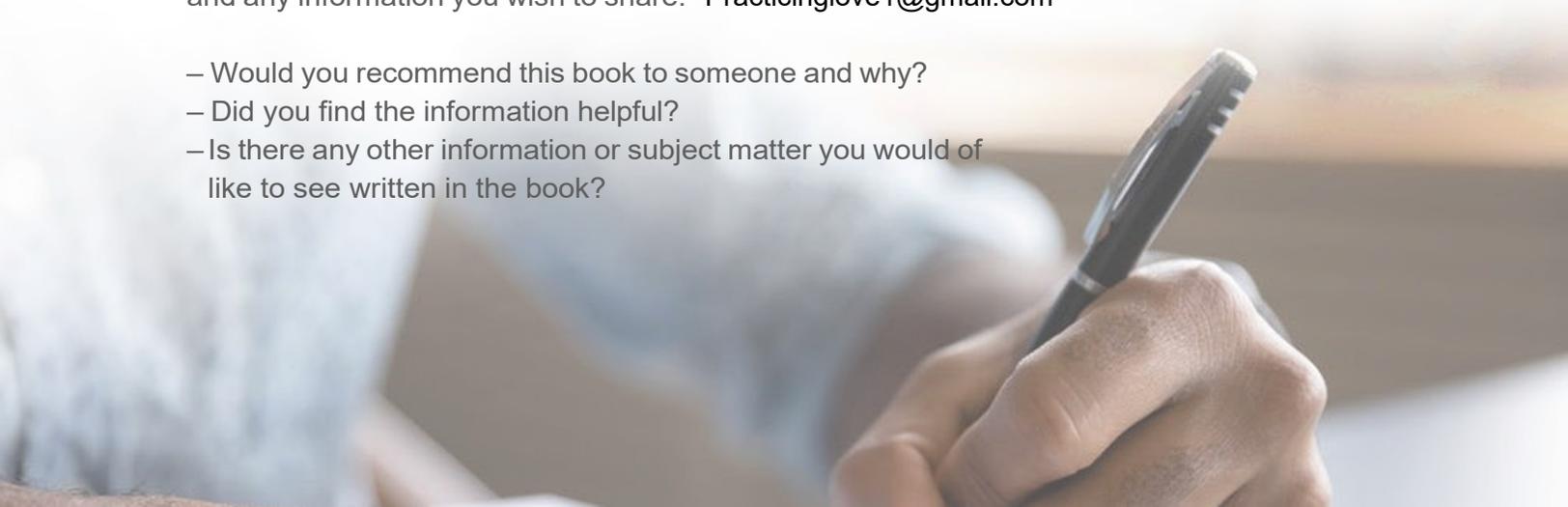
- Why are patience important?
- Who benefits from daily kind gestures and why?
- Why is it important to learn how to receive as well as give?

Results

- What are some of the positive results of Practicing Love?

The Book

Answer and email the following three questions to the author. Include the program name and any information you wish to share. Practicinglove1@gmail.com

- Would you recommend this book to someone and why?
 - Did you find the information helpful?
 - Is there any other information or subject matter you would of like to see written in the book?
- 

Journaling

By New Life Counseling - August 2020
<https://newlife-counseling.com/blog/journaling/>

Why should you consider journaling? Have you ever just felt stuck? Stuck in a feeling, emotion, situation, or decision-making process? Do you feel overwhelmed by life, anxiety, Covid19, the things that you can't control, work, relationships, and so much more?

What do you do when you feel stuck or overwhelmed? How do you process these emotions? Have you ever considered journaling?

Journaling is an extremely healthy way to process events, feelings, and thoughts.

Journaling has so many benefits: it is classically excellent for managing depression, anxiety, stress, frustration, and processing emotions, but it has also been shown to improve your physical health as well! One study showed that journaling just 15-20 min, 5 times, in a 4-month period was enough to lower blood pressure and improve liver functions. Another study showed that regular journaling increased immune system function, lessened symptoms of asthma and rheumatoid arthritis, and even improved wound healing time. Journaling can improve memory and comprehension as well as increase memory capacity; it strengthens emotional functions, increases self-confidence, helps you identify distorted thinking patterns, meet your goals, aids in recovery and trauma healing, cultivates gratitude, enhances creativity by accessing the right-side of the brain, give your perspective, and keeps a record of your life. The best part is that these benefits are shown to be long-term when a journaling habit is created.

How do you start journaling and reap all those amazing benefits?

Here are some tips and guidelines to help you get started.

Journaling Tips and guidelines

- 1. Create a private, distraction free space:** Try to find a place where you can think and journal without interruption or distraction. It's important that you feel comfortable and safe, especially if you are working through particularly difficult emotions and thoughts.
- 2. Let go of rules:** You can set a time limit or frequency if you'd like, but sometimes when you are just starting to journal it is easier if you take the pressure off. Even journaling just once per week is proven to be highly beneficial. Also remember that grammar and spelling don't matter in your journal- its only for you so let go of that perfection.
- 3. Keep your journal secure and private:** It is important that you feel safe when you journal- nobody but yourself needs to see what you write or create unless you want to share it.

4. **Check with your attorney if you are in litigation or expect to be so:** Journals may or may not be discoverable evidence in litigation- this topic is discussed in “Iowa code: scope of discovery”. (Iowa R. Civ. P. 1.503). Every state varies, so be sure to get legal guidance.

5. **Don't pressure yourself to write about a specific topic or trauma:** Journal about what feels right in the moment, use a structure or technique that feels safe. Sometimes its ok to push yourself out of your comfort zone under the care and direction of an experienced therapist, but if you are new to journaling do what feels right.

6. **Switch things up:** Try different forms/techniques of journaling or integrate 2 different forms. (See techniques below)

7. **Review your journals:** Going back to occasionally read your journals can help you see how much you have grown and can help inform your future decisions.

Use the acronym WRITE techniques to get you started.

W- what: think about what you want to write about or what is going on that you need to process. Is there anything you are avoiding? Give it a name and write it down.

R- review or reflect: take a few moments to be still, calm your breathing, and think. Start with an “I” statement like, “I feel...”, “I want...”, or “I think...” and keep them in the present tense.

I- investigate: investigate thoughts and feelings in your writing. Just keep going.

T- time: set a goal and time yourself to ensure you write a specific number of minutes. This is particularly helpful in some styles of journaling and less so in others.

E- exit: possibly the most important step is to strategically exit your journaling. Read what you wrote and take a moment to reflect. Sum it up in one or two sentences with statements like, “As I read this, I notice...”, “I am aware of...”, or “I feel...”. If you have any action items or steps you want to take next, write them down now.



15 Journaling Methods

TLC Thank-Learn-Connect. Simply write a few sentences for each heading. What are you thankful for today? (Be specific) What did you learn today? We are always learning new things, there is no restriction on this topic. And finally, what things did you connect with today (concepts, analogies, etc.) or with whom did you connect? Reflect on and summarize these connections. This technique is so simple- which is what makes it the easiest one to start with. And it's so easy to remember!

Visual Journaling is when you use art or any visual medium to represent your thoughts and feelings. This could include a mixture of words and art. Try out a variety of mixed media: pencils, paint, paper, digital art, photos, magazine cuttings, markers, etc.

Musical Journaling Any sound will do- you don't have to be musically trained to do this. Try playing a keyboard, sing, or turn just about anything into a drum- as long as you are expressing your feelings. Record yourself so you can look back and reflect on how you felt in the moment.

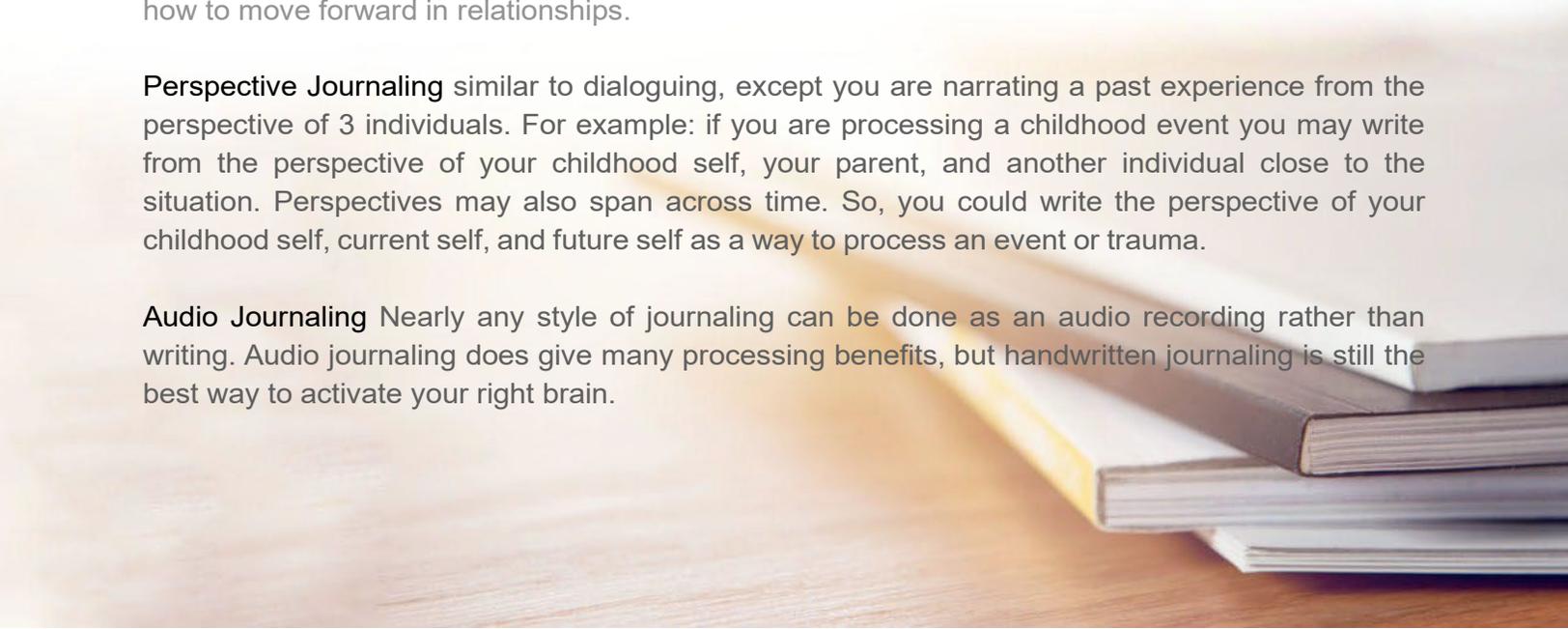
Dream Journaling This one is pretty classic. If you are a dreamer, you can leave a notebook next to your bed and write down what you remember of your dreams when you wake up. Your brain catalogues and processes your memories while you are sleeping and sometimes your dreams can help you decipher how you feel about someone or something that happened to you.

Brain Dump involves writing out all the things your mind is thinking of in a given moment, usually in bullet list form. Doing an evening brain dump can help you clear your mind so it can rest. In the morning, a brain dump can help you visually organize your daily tasks, help with time management, focus, and efficiency. So, journaling can literally save you time!

Dialoguing is a good way to process a past memory or situation with another person, or even a way to ease anxiety over a future conversation. Dialoguing is when you write out both sides of a conversation as if you were the narrator in the story. Dialoguing may feel strange at first, but it can help you connect dots, look deeper into issues and gain clarity, resolve assumptions, and address how to move forward in relationships.

Perspective Journaling similar to dialoguing, except you are narrating a past experience from the perspective of 3 individuals. For example: if you are processing a childhood event you may write from the perspective of your childhood self, your parent, and another individual close to the situation. Perspectives may also span across time. So, you could write the perspective of your childhood self, current self, and future self as a way to process an event or trauma.

Audio Journaling Nearly any style of journaling can be done as an audio recording rather than writing. Audio journaling does give many processing benefits, but handwritten journaling is still the best way to activate your right brain.



Gratitude Journaling This one is pretty simple. Write down what you are thankful for or things that make you feel happy or content. This technique is not about minimizing challenges, but rather refocusing the brain and your attention to the good. You could write down 5 things once per day, or 1 thing twice per day (morning & evening). Whatever frequency you choose, the key with this one is consistency.

What is Going Well Journaling This differs from gratitude journaling because it focuses on daily events rather than things that already exist. This can be bullet points or paragraph style, simply summarize the good things that happened that day. Focusing on the positive rather than the negative in your day helps to lift burdens and shift your attitude. You may discover that your day wasn't bad as a whole even if a few things went wrong. This is an excellent technique to combat negative filtering thought distortions.

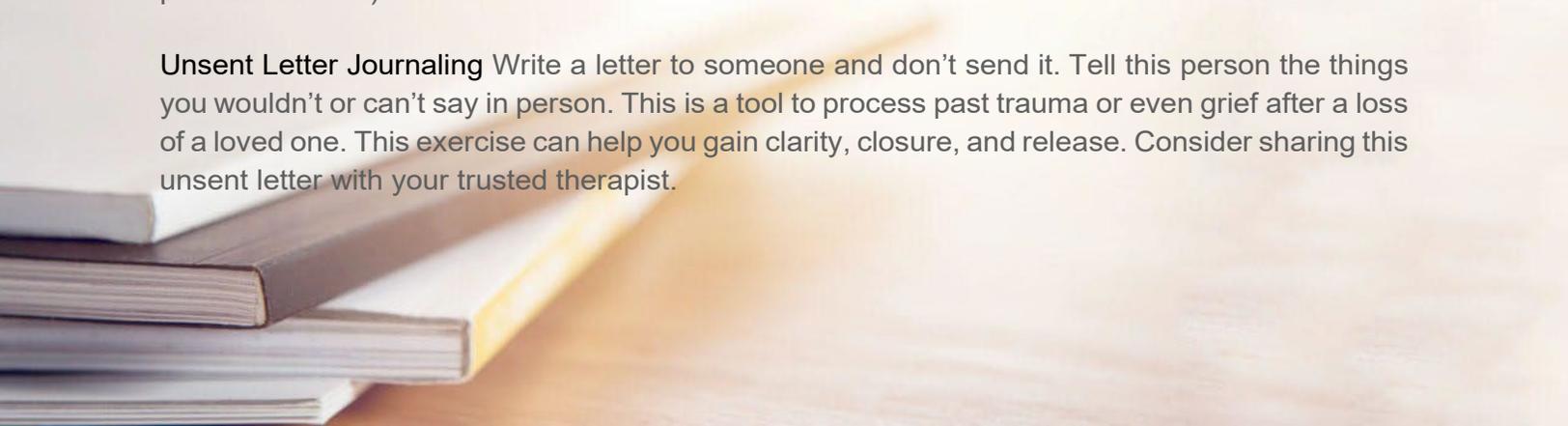
Intuition Journaling Under great stress or in abusive relationships we can get out of touch with our intuition and begin to question our every decision... sometimes it feels like being "off-kilter" or "stuck". Writing down questions and answering yourself with your gut reaction in a judgement-free space can help you get unstuck when making decisions. For example: you may ask yourself, "Is this relationship worth saving?" and your gut says, "Life is short, time to move on".

Perspective Journaling similar to dialoguing, except you are narrating a past experience from the perspective of 3 individuals. For example: if you are processing a childhood event you may write from the perspective of your childhood self, your parent, and another individual close to the situation. Perspectives may also span across time. So, you could write the perspective of your childhood self, current self, and future self as a way to process an event or trauma.

Stream of Consciousness or Free-writing Journaling This technique can be especially good for those who are overly critical of themselves or get stuck in perfectionism. Stream of consciousness writing is all about just writing anything that comes to mind- the key is not stopping. Set a timer and keep writing until the timer goes off. Write without judgement even if it turns into an illegible scrawl. While writing, remind yourself that there isn't a right or wrong- no matter how grammatically incorrect or indecipherable you think it is. Large notebooks work best for this technique in order to minimize page turning breaks.

Mentor Journaling Write about people who inspire you- either someone you know or someone you have never met. Write what inspires you and how you are taking those principles into your own life. You can even write a letter to this person and tell them how they are helping you become who you want to be. This is more future oriented (where unsent letter is more past or present focused).

Unsent Letter Journaling Write a letter to someone and don't send it. Tell this person the things you wouldn't or can't say in person. This is a tool to process past trauma or even grief after a loss of a loved one. This exercise can help you gain clarity, closure, and release. Consider sharing this unsent letter with your trusted therapist.



The Five Ws

A short lesson in the five Ws. What are they?

In investigative writing and research that requires critical thinking, the five Ws are used to gather information about a story or subject matter. In fact, most writers don't consider a story to be complete unless all five of the Ws have been addressed and used in the writing.

The five Ws are: who, what, when, where, and why. These question words allow students, writers, and researchers to understand the full scope of the topic being discussed.

This information is being shared due to its importance not just for investigators or researchers, but if you are ever writing a paper, summary, proposal, business plan, or an informative article.

You want to make sure you structure your writing format using the five Ws so your readers have all the information on the subject matter.

Understanding the five Ws:

Who is driving the story? Who is it about? Who is affected? Who benefits? Who loses?

What has happened? What are the consequences? What does this mean for the reader?

Where is this taking place (building, neighborhood, city, country)? Where should readers go to learn more?

When did it happen (time of day, day, month, year)? When was the last update? When can you expect to learn more? When will the effects be felt?

Why did this event take place? Why is this important in the big picture? Why should readers care?

Here is an example of using the five Ws in a storytelling format.

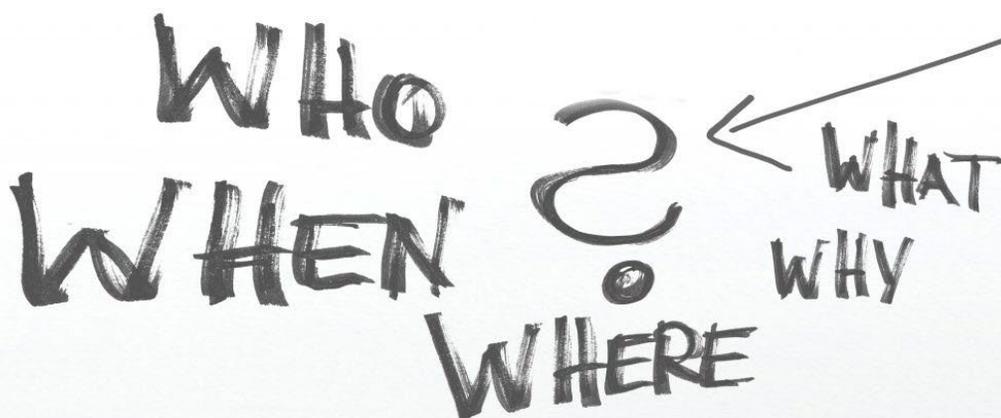
Who? Mark Roberts

What? Went Ice skating

Where? On the Root River

When? Late afternoon last winter

Why? To see how far they can get



Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking (Oxford)

1. The objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment.

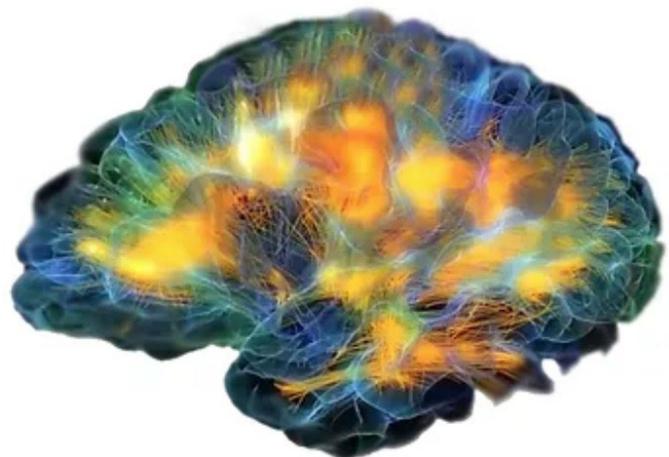
The ability to think clearly and rationally. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and

- understand the logical connections between ideas.
- identify, construct, and evaluate arguments.
- detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning.
- solve problems systematically.
- identify the relevance and importance of ideas.
- reflect on the justification of one's own beliefs and values.

Critical thinking is not just a matter of accumulating information. A person with a good memory and who knows a lot of facts is not necessarily good at critical thinking. A critical thinker is able to deduce consequences from what they know and understand how to make use of information to solve problems, and to seek relevant sources of information to inform themselves. Critical thinking should not be confused with being argumentative or being critical of other people. Although critical thinking skills can be used in exposing fallacies and bad reasoning, critical thinking can also play an important role in cooperative reasoning and constructive tasks. Critical thinking can help us acquire knowledge, improve our theories, and strengthen arguments. We can use critical thinking to enhance work processes and improve social institutions and well as structure our careers and household.

Some people believe that critical thinking hinders creativity because it requires following the rules of logic and rationality, but creativity at times, require breaking rules. This is a misconception. Critical thinking is quite compatible with thinking "out-of-the-box", challenging consensus and pursuing less popular approaches. If anything, critical thinking is an essential part of creativity because we need critical thinking to evaluate and improve our creative ideas.

Becoming well informed will allow us to make proper decisions in life on all matters. This is how we excel and become a positive contributor to society. This form of processing life will enhance our lives and make us great students as well as leaders.



Leadership

Leadership Definition (Oxford)

1. The action of leading a group of people or an organization.

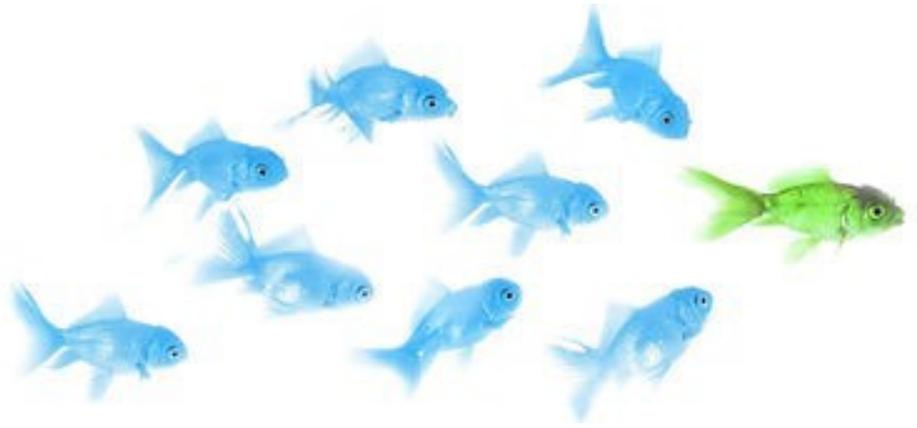
2. (Webster) The time when a person holds the position of leader. The power or ability to lead other people. A person who rules, guides, or inspires others.

You will find many definitions of leadership similar to these, leaders are not just born. The leaders I am referring to are those who lead for the greater good of humanity, not the ones that become leaders for the sake of power and greed to rule over others in order to feel great about their selfish needs and intensions. You can become a great leader in a fortune 500 company and still be grounded without letting your success get the better of you. Once you are in a position of power within the company then you have a responsibility to do what you can for others; from hiring, to developing scholarship, and mentorship opportunities for the next generation. You are the only one who can determine the definition of your success for your life.

We all need to lead as some point of our lives. For those that have families, we will need to set a great example for our children. In a household, we take turns being leaders depending on the situation. The same may apply at our work environment and in our surroundings, including our friends. They may be heading into a situation with a negative outcome, that's when we have to assist and lead them into a positive direction.

Before we become leaders of others, we will need to become leaders of ourselves. We have to be great students in academics as well as a great student of life. Leadership training also depends on the information we choose to fill our minds with and most importantly, use critical thinking process to determine what we choose to do with that information. Just because an individual gives us information, or we see in come from the media doesn't mean we should not question it or fact check to see if it is correct by doing our own research.

This type of training will limit the number of times someone or entities will take advantage of us. Our best protection will come from the knowledge we obtain. We must train ourselves to become leaders in all aspects of life so we can prosper further than our past generations. It is our right, duty, and responsibility.



Ray Rosario Artist - Author

Ray Rosario is an American artist who pursued his passion for art later in life. Transitioning from the corporate sector to the art world, Ray transformed his life based on his life experience, values, and perspectives. His world view has shaped his philosophy and passion towards humanity, which in turn impacted the way he approaches his artwork. His work infuses emotion from the darkest arenas of human nature to that of spiritual enlightenment. His writings reflect the same views and he sets an example by living his life no different than the values he holds dear and necessary for life. He has impacted many lives with his movement for humanity through art, film, sculptures, and words.

In his life, his philosophy outweighs his accomplishments. Ray lives his life wearing his heart on his sleeve with an enormous gift of love to share with all those who come in contact with him.

Artist

If you have any questions regarding the reading, please feel free to email me. I will be more than happy to provide you with as much information as I can.

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hope

There is Hope because you are the future.



dream