

## Tending Your Inner Garden®

# Journaling as a Spiritual Practice

A journal is a chance for your ideas, beliefs, dreams, fears, and the details of daily life to bubble to the surface and be captured on paper. Life moves quickly, and it's easy to lose a meaningful experience, a life lesson, unless we commit it to paper.

Journaling gives shape to nebulous thoughts. It acts as a mirror; sometimes in journaling you'll find yourself writing something that you've never thought about before, something you didn't know you knew or believed. It is a way to reflect, to pay attention, to observe, to listen, and to notice.

**REASON FOR JOURNALING** In the act of writing something down, we focus our thoughts and give birth to them. It's important to do this on a regular basis during this year of transformation, as you will be supporting your own changes and listening to guidance from within. You may find that journaling will open up doors to parts of yourself that have been closed for some time. It may help you release anxieties, understand a need to forgive, or remind you of your greatest passions.

**HOW TO JOURNAL** You can journal anywhere, either on paper or on the computer. Choose a setting that's most comfortable for you, where you can sit in quiet for at least 15 minutes. Take a few deep breaths, close your eyes and focus on the topic that you'd like to write about. Or just clear your mind and allow thoughts to come in. Then open your eyes and start writing. Keep your pen moving. Don't worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Write whatever comes to mind, even if it seem uncomfortable or as though it's coming from another voice or an unfamiliar part of you. Allow yourself to be surprised.

**JOURNAL EXERCISES AND PROMPTS** We strongly encourage you to write every day—not just during this month, but throughout the entire year. Since you're actively seeking and participating in change, it's likely that you'll have frequent insights and awarenesses to record. To help you get started, we'll post journal exercises and prompts on the web site. Here are a few Winter prompts to get you started.

- **Review your life by decade.** What of significance happened in each decade? What ended? What began? What did you learn?
- **Describe some of the changes you've made in your life.** What was your approach, your style, in making these changes? Did you make them abruptly? Did you take more time than you might have needed? Were you honest with yourself and others about the changes?
- **What are some of your greatest fears?** Journal about them and thank them for the role they play in your life. Are you able to relinquish them? Why or why not?

