



Journal Buddies

10 Positive Effects Of Journal Writing On Your Child's Self Esteem And Confidence

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Chapter 1 :

Journaling Facilitates an Internal Dialog



Journaling is much more than just sitting down and making entries onto a piece of paper, especially when we are writing about ourselves. The first sentence we write is about ourselves, even though the words might be about someone or something else. This automatically enters us in a thinking process about whom and what we are.

This thinking process includes our thoughts, feelings and actions. It also helps us define how we relate to ourselves and the outside world. This introspection, which is inherent in the journaling process, is one of the reasons why so many people habitually write in their journals. They want to know who they are.

To begin with, the journaling process evokes a conversation with ourselves. Now some may think a conversation with them selves is a nutty idea, worthy of psychological help. But the reality is that we constantly carry on an internal dialogue with ourselves throughout our daily living. We ask ourselves things about what's going on around us, for example. This internal dialogue is a very normal and human thing that we do. The disadvantage to the person who doesn't maintain a journal is that this internal dialogue can become lost within their minds and memory, often becoming a collage of undefined thought processes and emotions.





Journaling can help the pre-teen process their internal dialogue. When the pre-teen writes about the internal questions they ask themselves two things happen. First, the young person is able to free up their thinking for more immediate and pressing matters. This alone has an advantage because it can reduce stress and anxiety. Secondly, by getting our internal dialogue out and on to paper we can better see ourselves and how we think. This then can become a place of change if that is what we feel we need to do.

There is also a reading aspect to the journaling process. It's not all about writing. Many people when they sit down to spend time writing in their journal will often read the entry of the previous day or two.

This practice opens the door to review and reflection of one's previous thoughts about specific issues. When we look back from the present, especially when the past is only a day or two behind, we can more easily see the minute changes taking place in our lives.

Reading the journal entries of the days not far behind can even inspire the writing for the current day and then a progressive clarification of our insight then becomes possible.





The journaling process also helps the pre-teen to establish a personal code of ethics or a philosophy statement. As the pre-teen begins to clarify insights revealed in their journal writing, they also begin to develop values and a belief system based on those insights.

These values and belief systems develop into a way of thinking and behavior that will guide the pre-teen along their life path: the journey of discovery into being the adult that they want to be.



CHAPTER 2 :

SELF-DISCOVERY AND FINDING YOURSELF



One of the greatest benefits of journaling is self-discovery.

And self-discovery most definitely will have a positive effect on your pre-teen's confidence and self-esteem. When we write in a journal we are taking a journey into the depths of who we are. Who we are is composed of many different aspects and it is these aspects that the pre-teen is exposed to through the journaling process.

Part of self-discovery is the identification of our values. Most young people have values of one form or another, but many are not yet crystallized as life guiding principles. For the most part they know what is good and how to behave. Values, at this young age, are more of what society expects and less of a possession of their own person. Through the journaling process your pre-teen gets the opportunity to identify and solidify both cultural and personal values.

Associated with our values is the expression of unformed inner impulses. All young people have unformed impulses. Perhaps your pre-teen has unformed anger impulses. The journal can help the pre-teen discover these unformed impulses and explore appropriate ways for their expression. In fact, the journal can





become a place where your child expresses their anger, thus directing it in appropriate ways.

Our inner impulses are related to our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. If we are thinking we have been offended then we are going to feel anger and will react to that feeling in one way or another.

Part of self-discovery is identifying what we are thinking and feeling so that our behaviour reflects our values. When your pre-teen writes their thoughts into their journal they can gain the clarity of what is really going on within themselves and develop means of coping with it.

Another part of self-discovery is the revelation of how we process information. How we process our thoughts will determine how we feel and our behaviour.

If we process information in a positive way and with confidence we will feel good about ourselves and act in an energetic and optimistic manner. The journal affords your pre-teen the opportunity to observe their thought process and identify those areas that can be shaped in a new direction.

Most of us feel better about ourselves when we discover things about ourselves on our own rather than from someone else. All parents know very well how a pre-teen can react when they identify a behaviour in their child.





However, the response is completely different when a pre-teen discovers their behaviours themselves through the journaling process.

Writing in a journal shifts the pre-teen to an observer and recorder position. And because they are being objective rather than subjective they can more easily counsel themselves, again through the journaling process, and make changes if necessary.

When your pre-teen has this type of control over their lives they will develop more confidence and this will feed their self-esteem.



Chapter 3: Understanding Yourself and Your Place In The World



Once we have discovered who we are and who we want to be, we start to consider how we fit in with other people and everything that is going on around us.

Our self-concept is how we see and believe in ourselves. It is the perception we have of ourselves.

Our self-concept and self-esteem are intimately related. How we see ourselves directly determines how we feel about ourselves.

Our self-concept has more strength in bolstering our self-esteem and protecting it, than do the perceptions of those around us. This, at least, should be the way it is.

But here's the bottom line: the more solid and grounded a person's self-concept is the stronger that person's self-esteem will be. Journaling can help a young person define their self-concept which will have a positive effect on their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Our self-concept is rooted in the belief we have of ourselves.

If we have a poor belief in whom and what we are we will undoubtedly have a poor or negative self-concept.





This will translate into us not feeling good about ourselves and being insecure about who we are and how we relate to the world. The reverse of a poor self-concept is true too.

If we have a strong belief in ourselves we will have a good self-concept. How we see ourselves makes all the difference regarding our overall mental health.

Journaling can help the pre-teen develop a healthy self-concept and belief system. The journaling pre-teen should identify and write about all the qualities, talents and traits they know they have.

They should also write about what they believe and don't believe in. This activity will help them to create an internal belief system and develop a fairly accurate self-concept. A high self-esteem and confidence is the result of a good self-concept and a sound belief system.

When writing in a journal about successes, along with the thoughts and feelings related to those experiences, the pre-teen can build more confidence in themselves.

There is a tremendous and revolutionary thing that happens to us when we see, in word form, how we have successfully progressed from one event to another no matter what difficulty was involved. We begin to see where we made good decisions and our actions that led to those successes.





When we make one decision that leads to success we will make another. This is the soil from which self-esteem and confidence can grow.

In acquiring an understanding of ourselves and our place in the world a young person's self-concept is constantly challenged as its stability develops. If a pre-teen has a poor self-concept then they will be more prone to be influenced by the perceptions of those around them, especially by their peers.

The bottom line here is that the perceptions of others do mean something, but they are not what define us. We do that. We define ourselves. When a pre-teen uses a journal to define themselves their self-esteem and confidence will increase and they will be less susceptible to peer perceptions and pressure.

Journaling helps us develop our self-concept because we are providing ourselves with the privilege of getting to know ourselves. We have all entered into friendships and relationships with other people. At first we go through an introductory period. Then over time we develop a closer bond of some form or other. This same principle applies to us as we write in our journal. At first we go through an introductory phase with ourselves, writing maybe more about others than ourselves. But over time and through daily writing, we begin to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves.





As we understand ourselves more we come to love ourselves more.

Just like when we are getting to know someone, when we consistently make entries into our journal about our thoughts and feelings, we develop more understanding of ourselves. Understanding ourselves contributes to a pre-teen's self-esteem and confidence. When we have confidence, it allows us to try out new things and develop new talents.



CHAPTER 4:

DEVELOPING TALENTS AND CREATING RESULTS

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Our qualities, talents, and traits are part of what make up our self-concept. All of us have a combination of qualities and personality traits, as well as talents that we're good at. All of these are part of what make us who we are.

One person may be athletically talented while another can calculate a trigonometry problem with the greatest of ease. Approachability is an example of a quality and shyness a trait. These attributes, and many others, have a positive effect on our self-esteem and confidence.

Let's say a pre-teen has an interest in and talent for a particular sport. Your pre-teen can use journal writing as a tool to develop skills and improve overall performance. For example, in many sports, how fast you can run is very important.

The pre-teen can use a journal to monitor their daily running speeds and even write about techniques that prove either successful or unsuccessful.

In this sense the journal can become a way for the pre-teen to observe and improve them selves. And when we make successful progress at any endeavour it improves our self-esteem and confidence.



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Talented artist, book authors, and song writers not only use a journal to document their experiences but also to help them clarify lyrics, develop characters for their novels and to process creative thoughts and ideas.

If a pre-teen has a talent in the arts they may find it helpful to use a journal to express and explore their ideas.

Your pre-teen doesn't necessarily need to have an inclination for the arts to use a journal to explore their ideas. Writing our ideas in a journal grants us the opportunity to externally express them and to define ways to make them a reality.

Ideas can turn into goals. When we work toward accomplishing goals we feel good about ourselves, especially when we successfully reach them. Journaling can be an effective way for your pre-teen to identify their ideas and to plan ways to make them a reality.

School has a lot to do with the development of a pre-teen's talents, traits and qualities.

In fact, most school age children spend most of their time in school and/or school related ventures, including homework. For your pre-teen the journal can be a place where the lessons they learn in the classroom are merged with their existing knowledge and abilities.





For example, questions about a particular topic of interest can be asked and then be answered at a later time, all in the journal.

Albert Einstein maintained a journal of everything he studied and thought, developing his talent for learning thus becoming one of the most intelligent people of our time.

Journaling also develops our intelligence through the cultivation of our creativity and intuition.



CHAPTER 5 :

CULTIVATING CREATIVITY AND INTUITION



Creativity is the mental process that involves discovering new ideas or the new associations of existing ones, and is stimulated by both conscious and unconscious insights.

Intuition, on the other hand, is the ability to arrive at conclusions without the use of reason or inference. Intuition supplies us with beliefs that we may not necessarily be able to justify.

When your pre-teen begins to write in their journal they automatically, and without fail, ignite a degree of creativity. It's an unavoidable event of the writing process.

At first it may be a small glimmer of creativity, but with persistence and continual journal writing they will awaken and develop their inner voice. This inner voice, once recognized, will become the source of their creativity and much more. And the discovery of it will have a positive effect on your pre-teen's confidence and self-esteem.

As your pre-teen's inner voice develops in their journal writing they will discover new insights about themselves and the world around them.

Insight is the ability to see into a situation in an intuitive way and is intimately related to discernment.





As your pre-teen's insight develops they will be able to more effectively grasp and comprehend people and events. When your pre-teen can more clearly understand things they will become more confident in themselves and their abilities.

Intuition, or discernment, when it proves accurate, improves our trust in our mental processes. It's important to note here that we can't discern everything accurately all the time. After all we are human and are subject to error from time to time. However, as your pre-teen develops their intuition through journaling their discerning skills will improve. This will directly affect how much your pre-teen trusts their ability to see things and extract conclusions.

We have touched on how intuition influences discernment. But intuition can also direct your pre-teen's intention. Intention is our resolve to act in a determined way.

In a simple and practical way, if your pre-teen intuitively realizes the benefits of journaling they will be determined to make writing in their journal a regular practice.

As your pre-teen cultivates their creativity and intuition through the journaling process you may find them becoming more sensitive about things. This is not to imply that they will become teary-eyed and sentimental.





But part of being creative is being passionate about certain things and compassionate toward our selves and others. Moreover, as your child writes about their life experiences they develop more of an understanding of life events.

This understanding helps your pre-teen to become more sensitive toward their environment and builds confidence.

Being able to remember events and experiences also cultivates a young person's creativity and intuition. In fact, creativity and intuition rely on memory. That is, we can't expect to be creative if there is nothing in our memory to be creative with. Furthermore, we can't cultivate intuition without past experiences.

The journal is an excellent way for your pre-teen to remember the things that happen in their lives, thus giving them the material to cultivate both intuition and creativity.

Recording and learning from past events and experiences also has an empowering effect.



CHAPTER 6 :

EMPOWERING THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS



Being able to make good decisions is an important part of one's self-esteem and confidence as it allows one to make decisions that are not only right for us, without pressure from others, but also allows us to make decisions that will gain the trust of people we trust, love and admire.

The journaling process empowers the pre-teen in two ways: first by giving them opportunity to look back on past experiences and learn from them, and also by allowing them to express themselves in as lengthy and convoluted way as they need to, until they have thought something through. Often, decisions are difficult to make, especially as a pre-teen, and the journal provides a safe outlet for thinking through one's options before finally deciding on a course of action.

That develops self-reliance too, as the pre-teen learns that often the answers they seek are right there within themselves; they just have to look for them and give the solutions to their questions time to emerge.

Not only will the journaling process cultivate your pre-teen's creativity and intuition, but it will also have an empowering affect on their decision-making. We feel more in control of our lives when we make good decisions on our own.





This is the empowerment – the ability to decide for ourselves. When we are empowered in this way, we are less swayed by peer pressure and we are less likely to feel pressured into decisions we may regret later.

Actually, creativity and intuition have a great deal to do with decision making and that is why it is worth further discussion here.

Creativity, especially, affords the pre-teen with more options to choose from whenever they are making a decision, whereas intuition allows your child to make decisions without a tremendous amount of information. But they both go hand-in-hand with decision-making.

The creative mind is aware that there are multiple solutions to any given problem. When your child is confronted with a problem they can write the various solutions in their journal and then decide which one would be the best one to solve it.

They'll be able to do this from their journal entries because the problem and solutions are visually in front of them, rather than being a mix of disconnected thoughts and emotions trapped in their mind.

Being a young person is full of many different and, often, confusing thoughts and emotions. When the child experiences these they can have a hard time making appropriate decision





because of the power the emotions can have over thought processes.

In fact, confusion, especially of the emotional type, can make us more prone to react quickly, without thought, rather than thinking it through. However, the pre-teen that processes their emotions through journaling gets the chance to come to terms with the emotions before making a decision, thus they think things through rather than react.

Using a journal to make decisions has a positive effect on the development of the child's confidence and self-esteem as they develop the knowledge that they can work through their problems and confusing thoughts and find their own solutions.



CHAPTER 7:

REDUCES STRESS

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One of the by-products of confusing thoughts and emotions is stress. We can also become stressed out when we are overwhelmed by the many demands that are sometimes placed on us in our lives.

In considering pre-teens, they have an incredible amount of demands that are placed on them almost on a daily basis. There is school, friends, (along with the peer pressure), familial responsibilities and extracurricular activities to mention just a few of those things that can sometimes become overwhelming for the pre-teen.

Another positive effect journal writing can have on a pre-teen's self-esteem and confidence is that it can be a resource to release stress. When your pre-teen becomes stressed this can adversely effect how good they feel about themselves and specifically their environment. They can act in negative ways with those around them or isolate themselves, not wanting to be bothered by anyone.

A journal can be a way for your pre-teen to process stress by writing about the problems or challenges in their lives that are the source of it.





For example, your pre-teen may have a very important event that they are going to participate in. This event is so important to them that they begin to experience anxiety about it. This, in addition to life demands, can cause your child to become overwhelmed and stressed out. However, your pre-teen can use the journal to write about the event, what is expected of them in it, and how they feel about it.

As was indicated earlier, a busy schedule can be a source of stress for many pre-teens.

In this case your child can make a list, in their journal, of the things that they want to accomplish. Along with writing the list down the child can also set goals or time-frames for the completion of what they want to do.

Practicing this will definitely reduce your pre-teen's stress because they have externalized, on paper, what's on their mind and worrying them.

People who don't have established goals are generally more stressed out than those who do because there is nothing really guiding them toward what they want and what they want has not been clearly defined.





One of the best ways for your pre-teen to reduce stress is for them to set goals. Using their journal they can write about what they want to accomplish in detail.

They can then write out exactly how they plan to achieve their goals. When your pre-teen has established goals and a plan to reach them they will be less susceptible to experiencing stress as they will have thought through how to handle challenges.

They will develop a positive and confident outlook on life and feel confident in tackling whatever life throws at them.

Confident young people have the strength to dream and to go for their dreams.



CHAPTER 8 :

EXPLORING DREAMS, AMBITIONS & FANTASIES

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Exploring our dreams, fantasies, and ambitions through journaling has a positive effect on our self-esteem and confidence.

Our dreams and fantasies can tell us a lot about ourselves and also help us develop our ambitions. And our ambitions lead us to setting goals and accomplishing them.

Dreams are a sequence of images, and sometimes sounds, we experience when we are sleeping. Sleep dreams generally have an emotional basis to them.

Sometimes dreams appear for no apparent reason, while other dreams are our brain's way of processing real time events of our life experiences, especially those that are highly emotional.

A child can sometimes use their dreams as a tool for their personal development and problem solving. That is, if your pre-teen pays attention to them by writing them in their journals. The more detailed your pre-teen can be when writing out their dreams the more insight they might gain. Another type of dream that can be a useful to write in our journals is our day dreams.



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We may not understand them at first but if they are noted down in our journals we can go back and interpret them later and maybe gain some insight. Unlocking another piece of the puzzle of ourselves in this way increases our confidence.

We generally use fantasies to escape reality for one reason or another. Your child might fantasize about being the best football player, the best singer or a fireman. Everyone fantasizes about something. It's something the human being does and is one reason, really a resource, why we have advanced so much. Fantasies help us imagine the unimaginable. They help us reach beyond ourselves and think of the possibilities. Our dreams are often unimpeded by doubts and detractors, so they give us the confidence to go for what we dream.

Both dreams and fantasies, as you might conclude, are what, in part, inspire our ambitions. And it's our ambitions that lead us to setting goals for our life. Now, aside from the development of our ambitions, dream journaling, as some would call it, can be a fun and insightful way to get to know more about ourselves. It's another resource for defining who we are. The pre-teen who is interested in getting to know themselves more should record both their dreams and fantasies in their journal. Clarity of oneself will affect one's self-esteem and confidence in a positive way.





We already know that our dreams and fantasies help us create our ambitions. Our ambitions are our desire to have some object, possession, or anything else that the obtainment of moves us forward and toward it in our life journey. More specifically speaking, ambition is a strong desire. It's strong enough to move us into some form of action. If it's not strong enough to move you into some form of action then the ambition remains a dream or fantasy.

Your pre-teen's ambitions can be almost anything they might imagine.

The important thing is to encourage them to write about them in their journals and track their growth and development wherever they may go. It's not about realizing the fruition of those ambitions, but more about your pre-teen defining themselves and the direction they want their lives to go.

This is where your child will receive positive effects on their confidence and self-esteem, and have a positive relationship with themselves, feeling they have the power to guide their futures.



CHAPTER 9:

HEALING YOURSELF & YOUR RELATIONSHIPS



When we experience emotional pain we may find ourselves out of balance and harmony with ourselves and our interactions with others.

Emotional pain can even cause us to deal with life in a detached way. We may feel that no-one understands us. Because of this inaccurate perception we may keep people at arms' length and not let them know what's really going on. We might even deny, to ourselves, that something is wrong or bothering us. However, when a pre-teen uses a journal to process difficult events and their associated emotions they have a better chance of overcoming tribulation in a balanced way.

A journal can act as a counselor for the pre-teen. By writing about the events, including the thoughts and feelings related to them the pre-teen can discover things for themselves, much like what a counselor or therapist might help the young person do. In fact, most therapists encourage their pre-teen clients to write in a journal in addition to therapy. A therapist or counselor will not be available all day every day to help the pre-teen process things.

Normally a pre-teen might visit their counselor once a week. Between visits, many thoughts and emotions can arise. At the next visit the pre-teen may not be able to share with the





therapist exactly how they felt the previous week. In this sense the journal becomes a valuable tool, not only for the pre-teen's memory, but also to the counselor and the therapeutic process. Writing in a journal is like having your counselor with you around the clock.

It also may be a tool to help the pre-teen open up a discussion, for instance with a parent. That can be very difficult.

One example might be an argument that occurred. The parent might ask the pre-teen to write of it in their journal and they do the same in theirs. These journal reports of the same situation could then be shared and discussed, without recriminations, once tempers have cooled. That increase's the pre-teen's feeling of their opinions being valued, but also mirrors constructive ways to deal with confrontation and allows understanding to develop.

Journaling also helps healing in the sense that as the pre-teen writes and processes experiences they open the door to letting go of past events. An obstacle for many pre-teens is that they are unable to let go of those unfavorable things that have happened to them. They hold on to these things, allowing resentments to dictate how they act. When we write in a journal about unfavorable experiences it releases us from internal bondage because we are more able to detach ourselves and look at the situation more objectively.





The healing of relationships is another benefit of journaling. Perhaps the pre-teen has a girlfriend or boyfriend who has deeply hurt them.

The journaling pre-teen can write about that person and the hurt they were caused by them. As they write and reflect on the person and the pain they may discover, even though the act was wrong, forgiveness.

Forgiveness goes a long way in mending relationships and journaling can help a pre-teen to forgive.



CHAPTER 10:

JOURNALING SHOWS YOU HOW FAR YOU'VE COME

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Self-esteem is a reflection of one's own self evaluation and appraisal. More specifically, self-esteem is built on self-reflection and is a collection of our beliefs and feelings. Looking at ourselves and accepting who we are as we are is the foundation that our self-esteem is built upon.

As self-esteem relates to pre-teens, they are involved in the growing years of social discovery mixed with the blossoming of their own individuality. This can present internal conflicts for the pre-teen as they grow, develop, and seek the validation from others that they are valuable and going in the right direction.

Many pre-teens who are developing their identity may need another resource, in addition to those who care about them, to help them along the path of self-definition. Defining oneself is what leads one to having self-esteem, a belief in one's own value and self-worth.

Journaling can help the pre-teen do this quite effectively. And www.JournalBuddies.com is a website that specifically designed for pre-teens interested learning more about journaling.



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One of the biggest ways that journaling helps build self-esteem is that it gives the pre-teen a place to look at themselves, their problems, and their feelings. Over time the journal becomes a collection of the preteen's past thoughts and experiences to be reflected upon.

The pre-teen can then use this collection of personal information as a resource to evaluate their growth, progress, and as an inspiration to tackle more difficult challenges. We become inspired when we can visually see where we have been and how we have successfully handled life events. This helps build one's self-esteem.

A pre-teen's self-esteem can, from time to time, fluctuate depending on what challenges they are facing. One of the most damaging things that we can do to our self-esteem, when we are confronted with difficulty, is to do nothing. It is a medically proven fact, within the world of mental health, that inactivity is actually counterproductive to the maintenance of our self-esteem and can actually lead to depression.

The journal can become a place for the preteen to take a form of action upon their life, through talking about the events around them and their feelings about those events without external judgments.





External judgments are one factor that keeps many young people from talking about an issue with those around them. The fear of being seen as different or inadequate speaks directly to one's self-esteem and self-concept.

Journaling will help the pre-teen avoid feelings of inadequacy because the journal becomes, in a sense, someone to talk to. Actually the pre-teen can externalize their problems and questions in a constructive way. This action in and of itself can encourage the development of a more stable self-esteem.

We have learned that action upon one's life can help maintain one's self-esteem. We have also learned that journaling is a form of action and a way for the preteen to process life events and to help them along the path of life.

It is way for pre-teens to work through their emotions and make sense of their lives in constructive ways.

Journaling is an aid to a growing child's sense of self and helps them make decisions about their future and take action toward securing that future for themselves: all ways of reinforcing and increasing self-esteem and self confidence.

