

## Mindfulness in Action: Writing to Move Forward

Think of something that has recently made you upset or angry. Take a moment to jot down how you are feeling about this.

### Choose Self-Care

1. Check in-How am I feeling?
2. Name the emotion-be specific.
3. Ask yourself if this feeling helps support your well-being or achieve your goals.
4. Start an “upward spiral.”

# MOOD METER

How are you feeling?



## Writing to Process Difficult Experiences

*Research tells us that we need to process emotions in order to successfully move through our negative experiences.*

*James Pennebaker's 40 years of research showed that experiment groups whose task was to write about "emotionally charged episodes experienced a marked increase in their physical and mental well being."*

## Getting Started

### 1) Set a Timer

- Set a timer for a short period (10 minutes).
- Once you are comfortable with this time, add a few more minutes.
- Limit yourself to 20 minutes so that it doesn't become a chore.

### 2) Write about any and all emotional experiences.

- There is no right or wrong topic. Go where your mind takes you.
- If it impacts you emotionally, then it counts.
- If it's recent or ancient history, it counts.
- Just get it down (even if you want to do it on your phone or talk to text).

### 3) Fight your teacher instincts.

- Don't worry about grammar, punctuation, or handwriting.
- Don't revise and rewrite.
- In fact, don't even re-read it.
- You may even change your mind about how you feel about the event/emotion you are writing about; that's okay.

### 4) What's the Goal?

- There is an important place for gratitude, but this journal isn't it.
- You are not meant to re-frame the problem DURING the writing. Write to process the feelings.
- AFTER you write about the negative emotions, you may begin to feel gratitude; that's the hope, but not what we are writing about in this journal.

### **Working with Students**

Since children may not have the language to process their emotions, prompts may help them develop this:

- something they faced that was "hard" for them
- a time when they felt \_\_\_\_ (lonely, upset, scared, etc.)
- what they miss since the pandemic happened
- what they would change about recent months
- what they worry about

### **Create a Routine**

- For both yourself and your students create a routine. Start out with 1 time per week, on the same day each week (Feelings Fridays, etc.)
- Make sure you take the time to write as your students are writing.

Afterwards, share how you feel about the process (not the product).

- Let them know you are NOT going to read their work unless they want you to (if you're using notebooks and they want to share, teach them how to take a picture and send it to you).

## Write to PAUSE

Put pen to paper to plan your words

Ask yourself what you are feeling

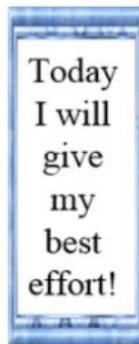
Understand why you are feeling this way

State the change needed that is aligned with your values

Express yourself using your plan

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## A place for positivity!



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*“Today, I will give my best effort! When I feel tired, I will acknowledge that my stress is real and that my commitments are many. I will not judge*

*myself for feeling this way. Instead, I will find moments that I recognize when I have given my best effort. Like this morning when my son was struggling to log on, and I helped without yelling even though I was frustrated.”*

Notice that the focus on the positive comes from a genuine place where you acknowledge your true feelings without judgement.

## **Resources**

- [Expressive writing: A Tool for Transformation](#)
- [Emotional Agility](#)
- [The Emotional Intelligence We Owe Students and Educators](#)
- [Coping with Change and Uncertainty - Educational Leadership](#)
- [Teachers Are Living in a Tinderbox of Stressful Conditions. These Scientific Approaches Can Help.](#)
- [5 Days of Mindfulness Journaling activity](#)