

Journaling exercise: Plot out a day in your new self-expressed life (part 1)

By Greta Solomon, writing coach & author, www.gretasolomon.com

Write answers to the following questions in your journal:

1. When do you find that you reach for mindless activities, such as aimlessly scrolling through social media, or snacking when you're not hungry? What are the trigger points for these?
2. What time of day do you have the MOST energy? What time of day do you have the LEAST energy?
3. If you could plot out your day, exactly as you liked free from ANY responsibilities, what time would you wake up and what time would you go to bed?
4. Assuming you had no responsibilities in the mornings, what would an ideal morning routine look like to you?
5. Similarly, assuming bed-time was whenever you liked, and free from any stress or need to wake up at a certain time, what would your bed-time routine look like?
6. What are your favourite creative activities? Dream big here and jot down anything and everything.

The idea of these questions is to begin to see when you are most naturally energised and what kinds of activities you'd do if you had all the time and space in the world. Pretty much from school days, our lives get mapped out and activities are squeezed into a nine-to-five schedule – give or take a couple of hours. We forget that we're all unique and by forcing ourselves to use our best hours doing the things that bring little joy, we're missing out on our vital energy. So, think about what time you feel most alive and see if you can create a day around having that as a sacred creative time for self-expression. There'll need to be juggling, compromises, and maybe a complete overhaul of how you view your time. But the first thing is to just become aware.

Think about the time you have *en-route* to places, at lunchtime and / or on the way home. Are you using this time to feed your self-expression? Where could you take pockets of alone time to think, and breathe and perhaps do a bit of object writing? When are you staying awake with a glass of wine, when actually an earlier bedtime would give you some sacred morning time? It's not about making massive leaps just yet, it's more about becoming aware of what you're actually doing and how you're actually living. There is no norm – it's a myth. We're all quite individual people with individual preferences and when we realise this, we see we can have a lot more choice and control over.

Taken from **Heart, Sass & Soul: Journal Your Way to Inspiration and Happiness** by Greta Solomon (Mango, 2019) [Order your copy on Amazon today](#) for more writing and journaling tips, tools and techniques.



Journaling exercise: Plot out a day in your new self-expressed life (part 2)

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So now, let's look at a current day in your life—either a weekday or a weekend – whichever you prefer. I'd like you to map out every tiny little thing that you can do for your self-expression at different parts of the day. Everything from singing a little song in the shower at 7am (or 4.30am if you're a super-early bird), to slicing banana onto your porridge. Everything from taking a walk where you do a little bit of object writing (or tapping ideas out on your phone) to setting aside an afternoon to do some crafting, photography or writing. Big or small – map out below what this perfect day would look like in hourly increments.

Use the following headings:

- Time
- Activity
- How I feel

This exercise can lead to lots of breakthroughs. As my client and friend Polina wrote, "I find it very hard to make time for anything creative or playful—and have always been this way. My only creative activity is writing, which I do daily and no longer feel 'guilty' about it. But I would love to do things like photography, mooching around museums, leisurely city walks and slow cooking. I shall make an effort to put time in my week for this! Even if it means feeling guilty at first..."

Just like Polina did, I challenge you to incorporate these activities and ideas in your days as much as possible, and keep refining what you do, so that it feels good to you.

Another client, Salma, has told her husband that she needs for him to take their daughter on Saturday afternoons so that she can go to a café and write. It sounds so simple, but she had never done this before, despite writing being so important to her. Janine is planning on taking a seven-hour solo, train ride from Oslo to Bergen to give her time and space to write. While Rosi has realised that being retired means that she needs to create boundaries and structure in order for her creativity to thrive. It's only when you look at it from a point-of-view that your self-expression is non-negotiable that life suddenly seems moveable. What once appeared to be made of glass is actually made of play dough and can be moulded to suit the needs of your heart and mind.

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