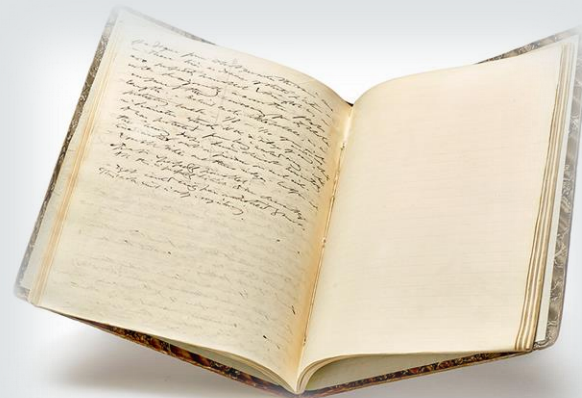


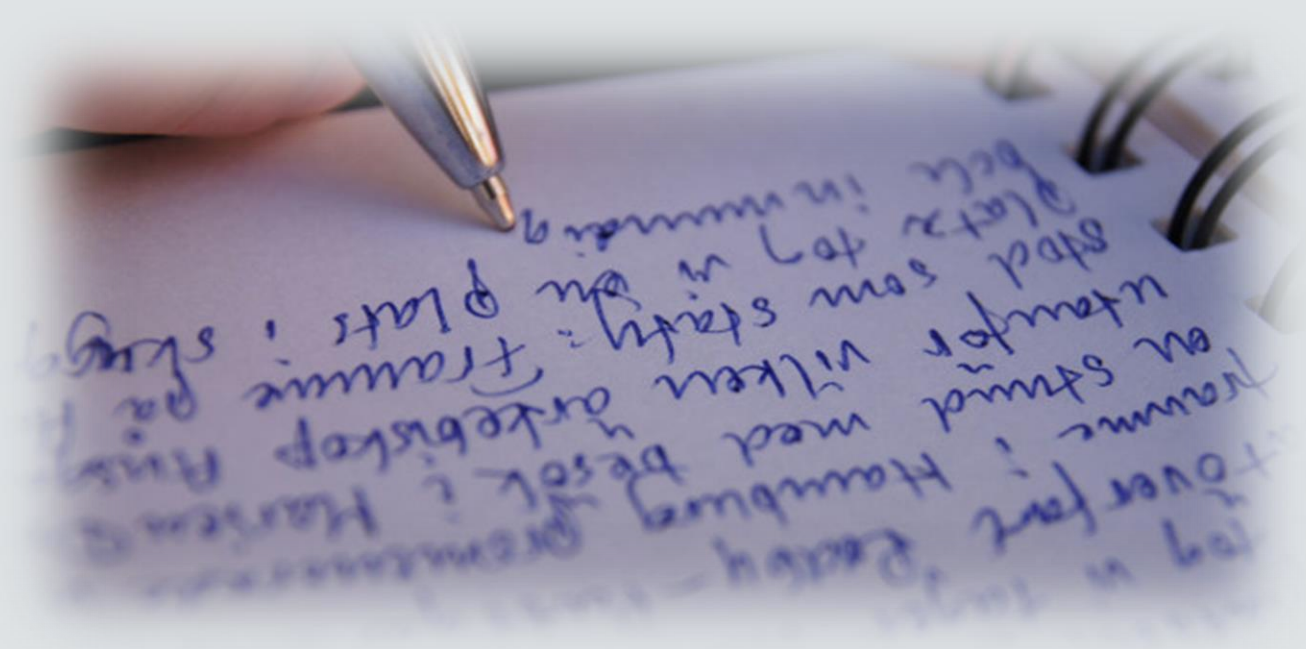
Self-Reflective Journaling:

**A Practice for Achieving Self-Understanding and Acceptance,
Overcoming Creative Resistance, and Moving Toward Ideal Self**



Let's Discuss

Have you ever kept a journal, and if so, what was your experience?



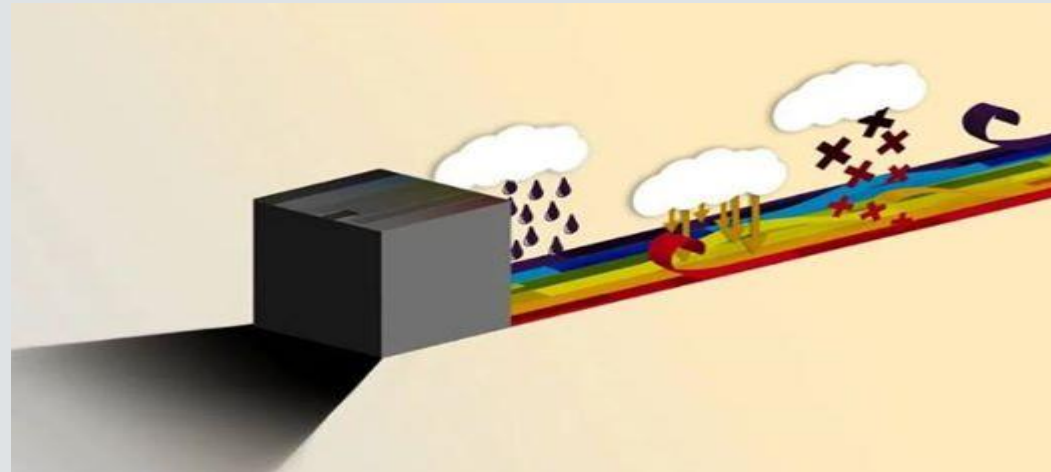
Let's Write

Activity: Make a Truth List

For six minutes, write in list format the things that are resonating as true for you in this moment. Your “truths” may start out as more obvious statements and then move toward deeper-level thoughts or emotions. Keep pushing deeper, trying to understand better the things that are coming up and what they are trying to tell you. Approach this as a conversation with yourself.

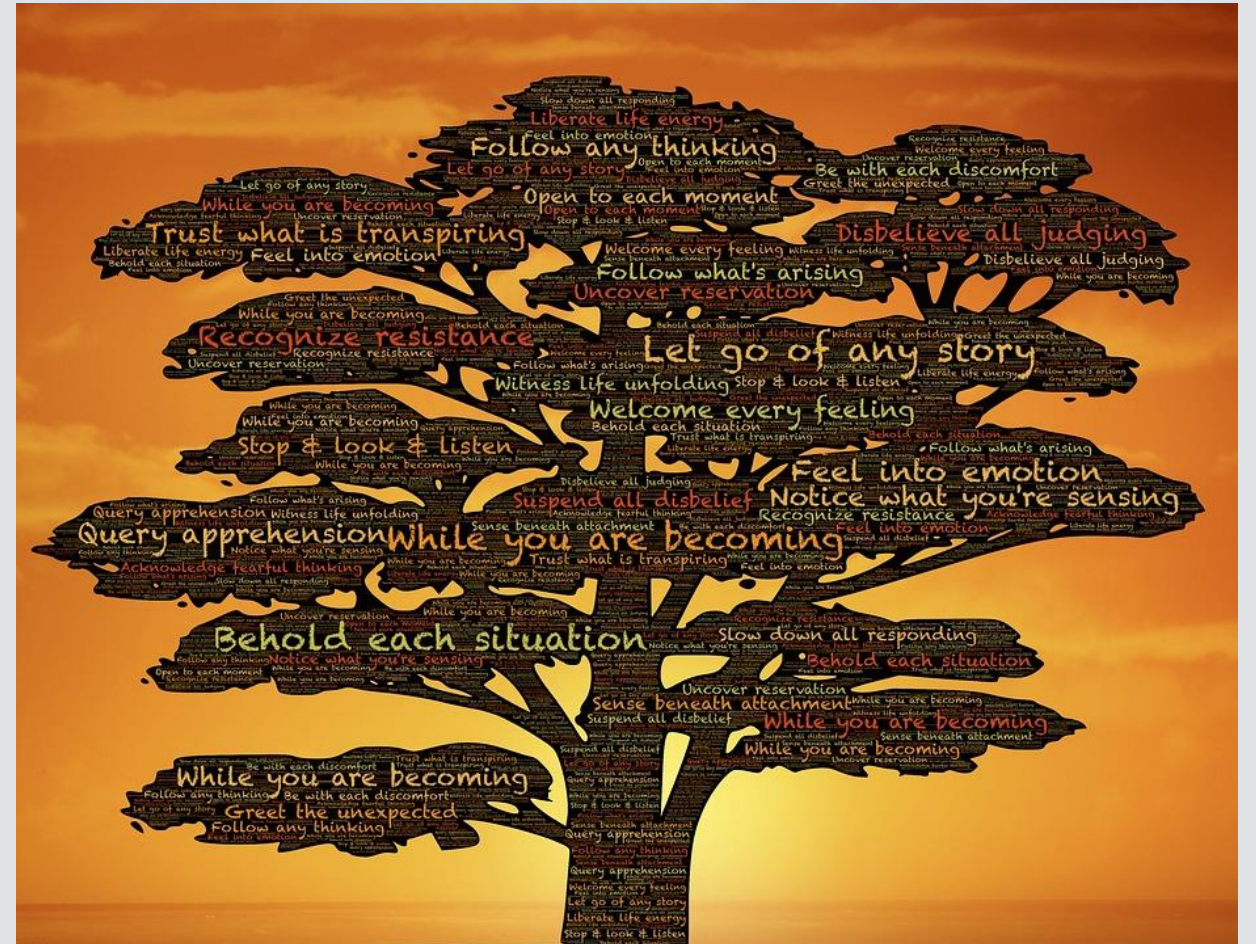
My Background

- Started a journal when I was a young teenager
- Journaling was not for writing events of my day, but for daily reflection and creative expression
- Continued journaling through present, but frequency diminished
- Wrote less over the years corresponding to certain events and circumstances in personal life
- Became resistant toward writing reflectively and creatively
- Not writing/reflecting = being unable/unwilling to face certain truths (Susan Kolodny, *The Captive Muse*)



Synthesis Goals

- Resume self-reflective journaling practice toward personal growth and rediscovery of creative flow
- Document and explain my process so that others can learn from it and potentially form their own reflective journaling practice for similar goals
- Promote a self-reflective strategy toward personal growth and creative practice



Defining “Growth”

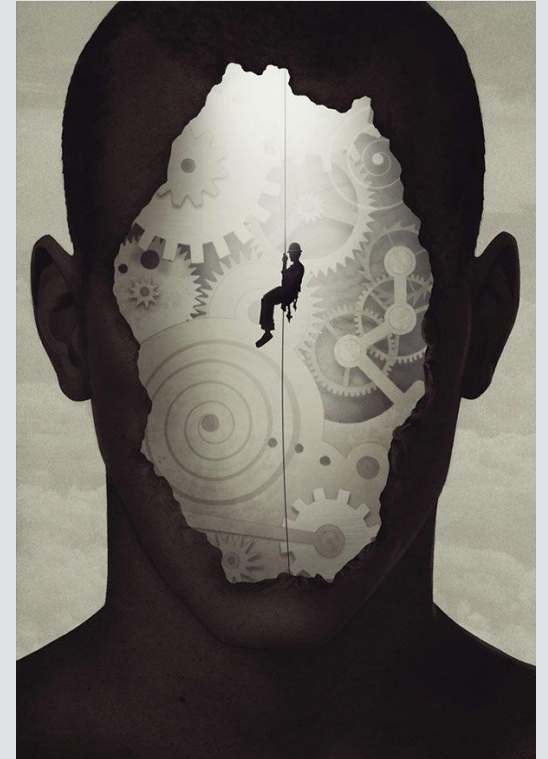
- Overcoming resistance
- Developing self-understanding
- Accepting self; taking ownership and embodying authenticity
- Recognizing flawed thinking or actions, setting goals for improvement
- Merging of “real self” and “ideal self” (Carl Rogers) toward reaching inner peace

Ideal self: Who a person would like to be, versus “self-image” or “real self,” who that person actually is in the present moment



What I've Been Doing

- Reflective writing using my definition of growth as a guide
- Going back and reading my entries from older journals
- Taking stock of what has come up in my writing (metacognitive practice)
- Using self-reflective process to rediscover creative voice



My Process

Using journal as a place to

- *understand my past experiences and how they affect the present*
- *understand and accept myself in the present moment*
- *focus toward overcoming flawed thinking and work toward ideal self*
- *open myself up creatively (result of setting this particular intention)*



Why Journaling?

- Critical thinking about the self; 'good quality' versus 'poor quality' thinking
(Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *criticalthinking.org*)
- Reflection as release, but with growth mindset
(Carol Dweck, *Mindset*)
- Dedication to the truth – 'suffering through'
(M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Travelled*)
- Formation of 'two selves' on- and off-page
(Peter Elbow, *Embracing Contraries*)
- 'Surrendering' to one's reality; mindful practice, getting present
(Eckart Tolle, *The Power of Now*)
- Opening up creative flow, e.g., 'morning pages'
(Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way*)



Self-Reflection Toward Creative Flow

- Well-known creative people who kept journals: Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sylvia Plath, Albert Einstein, Frida Kahlo, William Wordsworth
- Reflection opens us up mentally, spiritually, and creatively
- Challenges us to access our deepest truths and come to understand them
- When we bring our truths out, they exist in the outside world and not just our internal world → they can then be channeled into creative flow

“A tranquillizing spirit presses now
On my corporeal frame: so wide
appears The vacancy between me and those days,
Which yet have such self-presence in my mind
That, sometimes, when I think of them, I seem
Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
And of some other Being.”
-William Wordsworth



Why Not Journaling?

Potential negative effects:

“Makes you live too much in your head

Makes you a passive observer of your life

Makes you self-obsessed

Becomes a vehicle of blame instead of solutions

Wallows in negative things that have happened to you”

-Steven Stosny, "The Good and the Bad of Journaling"

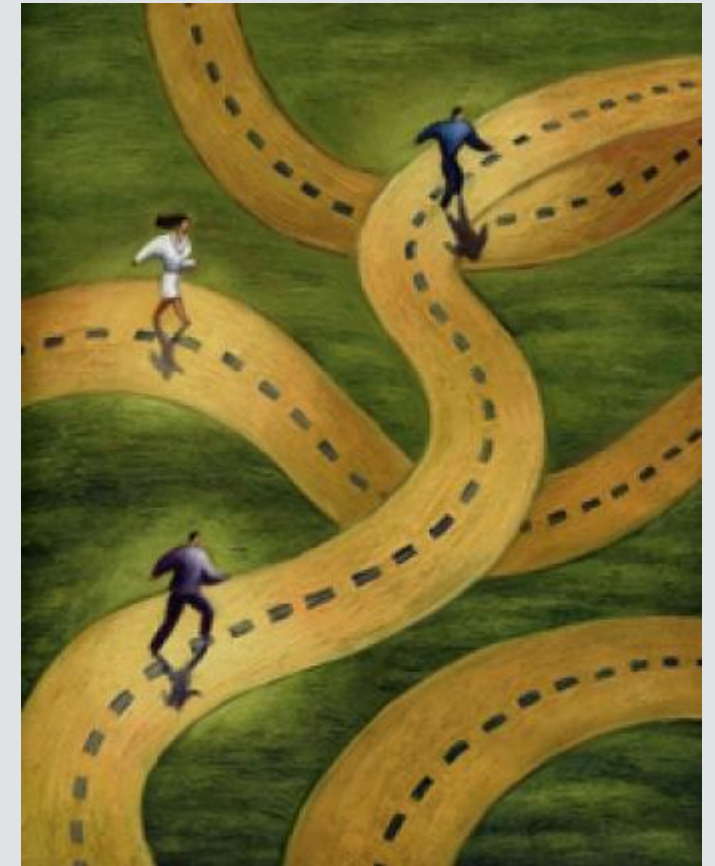


Avoiding these is dependent on setting and following intentions toward a positive outcome

What Works for One May Not Work for All

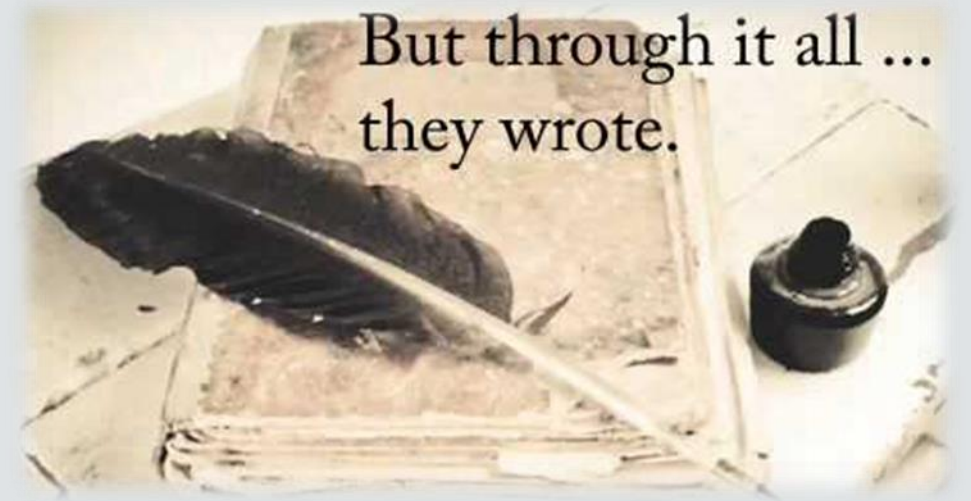
- Written self-reflection is not the only way
- Alternatives:
 - *Voice and video journaling*
 - *Sketch- or drawing-based method, or mix of text and drawing (accordion book)*
 - *Meditation and mindful practice (mindful writing)*

The method is not as important as the intention and outcome.



What's Next?

- Continuing to write reflectively and creatively
- Continuing to learn and collaborate with others
- Future plan: Start a creative writing group that promotes self-reflection as part of the creative process and functions as a sort of 'support' group for those who struggle with maintaining creative discipline



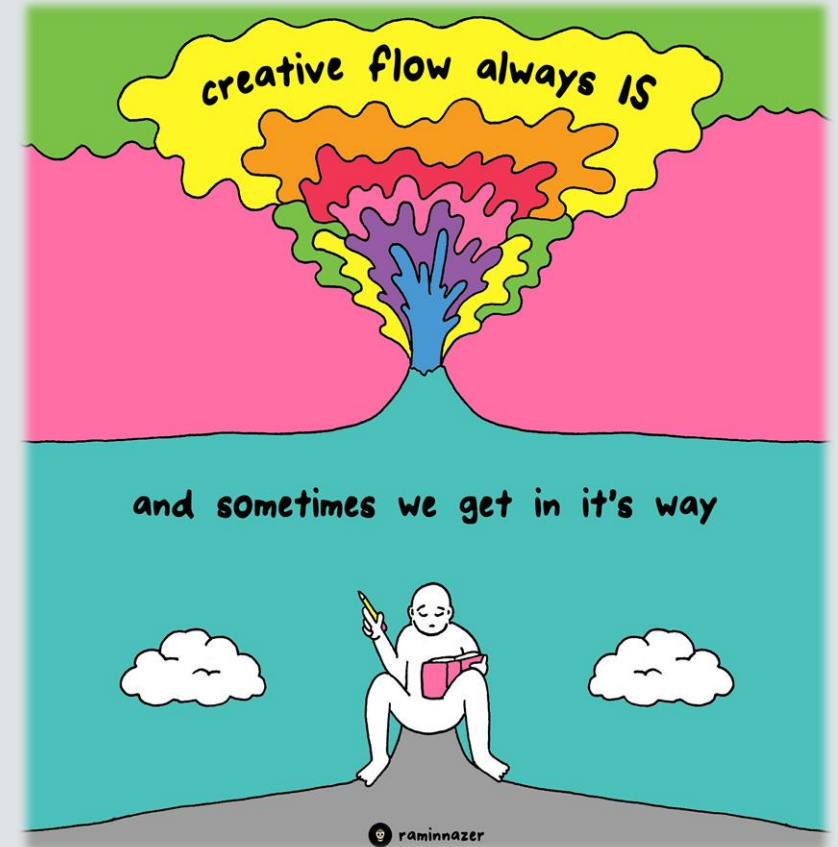
Let's Create

Activity: Self-Reflecting Toward Creativity

Take another six minutes. Begin by reading the truth list you wrote earlier in the presentation. While reading or after reading (whenever creative inspiration strikes), begin creating something, whether it's a poem, a drawing, a prose piece, a song, or anything else that comes to you.

What Happened?

- Anyone willing to share what you created?
- How did you feel about doing this activity after writing and revisiting your truth list?
- Would your creative output have been the same if you hadn't done the truth list activity?



Any final thoughts or
questions?

Thank you for listening and
participating!

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