



**INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALING
FOR FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES OF PEOPLE
WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY**

Forward from Brain Injury Canada

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

When journaling, you may visit past or current trauma, difficult memories, and complex emotions. The purpose of journaling is to connect more deeply with your emotions and experiences, and there may be parts of the journaling process that make you uncomfortable. In this discomfort, you may be able to work through and find other emotions and memories that can help you cope with trauma. While we encourage people not to shy away from prompts that may bring those experiences to the surface, we recommend that if at any point you get overwhelmed, you take a break by either stepping back or moving to another section of the workbook. If/when you are ready to revisit any prompts that may be more challenging for you, do so at a slower pace in an environment where you feel safe and secure. Your journal can be private, but if having someone with you is helpful, you should choose what is right for you.

“To name the world in your own terms, to tell your own story, is an act of authority and power. When you write, you are saying, in effect, ‘I have a voice. I have a story. This is what I have to say.’”

~ Rebecca McClanahan, *Write Your Heart Out*



Part one

Introduction

“We make our lives bigger or smaller, more expansive or more limited according to the interpretation of life that is our story.”

~ Christina Baldwin, *Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives Through the Power and Practice of Story*

The importance of telling your story

Journaling after trauma

The person who sustains an acquired brain injury is not the only person affected. The injury may not impact your life the way it impacts your loved one with the acquired brain injury, but it changes your life, nonetheless. Your life and your relationship with the individual will change, and it alters the way you interact. The literature about the effects of acquired brain injury on caregivers and family members repeatedly shows this to be true.

Typically, the most extensive burden is felt by the family member who assumes the role of primary caregiver. They may have to give up their career, their personal projects, and adjust most aspects of daily living. Primary caregivers may also suffer emotionally.

This is a difficult process to navigate—one that takes time and resources, as the process is continually changing.

The emotional and mental health of primary caregivers and families is important, and they must have resources available to them. These can be in the form of educational materials; support groups; counselling; and membership in the national, provincial, or local brain injury associations.

This journaling workbook is one resource that can be helpful to you. It is intended to help you express yourself privately and truthfully and help you to make sense of what has happened and how you are affected.

Congratulations on opening this workbook. You have taken a brave step, and it is our hope that this journal will be a valuable resource for your self-care.

As a person supporting someone with brain injury, you have been hurt, and perhaps traumatized too, in ways some people haven't experienced or can't understand. Perhaps you are now dealing with challenges you never expected or imagined.

Every trauma is as unique as the people who experience it, and you will face personal hurdles. As a caregiver or supporter, you may face explaining things to people, not being there for others whom you've been there for in the past, unexplained mood swings, experience exhaustion, develop your own health issues, and other changes you may not realize or even understand. However, no matter how many challenges and changes you experience, one thing is certain: **you have your own story to tell.**

Journaling and strong emotions

We want you to be comfortable and at ease within this workbook. However, we know telling your story may not always be easy and may, sometimes, even be upsetting, sparking strong and/or negative emotions.

Therefore, this journaling workbook strives to help you identify what causes strong emotional responses and provide you with suggested actions you can take when you do experience them.

Emotional provocations when journaling

All of our memories and experiences can spark emotion within us. While some of those emotions are positive, certain memories can have negative or traumatic feelings associated with them. This is normal, especially when we think about or are reminded (consciously or subconsciously) of past or recent trauma(s).

Simply defined, trauma refers to any deeply disturbing event: in reality, trauma has many nuanced manifestations. Native American scholar and psychotherapist Eduardo Duran calls trauma “the injury where blood does not flow.” Reminders or provocations can be in the form of people, words, opinions, smells, music, or situations, to name a few examples.

It’s important to recognize and acknowledge these provocations, and what emotions they generate. Research has shown that journaling can not only help us do that, but can also help us process our reactions so that we can let go and move on.

Identifying what causes emotional responses

Some topics or prompts in the accompanying workbook may make you feel very uncomfortable, angry, sad, guilty, or even fearful. You may experience anxiety, panic, discouragement, despair, or negative self-talk. You may also experience physical sensations such as indigestion, headaches, or body aches and pains.

Some ways that emotions can be incited include:

- > Certain words
- > A person
- > Aggressive-sounding noises
- > Ambulance sirens
- > Accessing particular feelings
- > Bright lights
- > The end of a relationship
- > Being alone
- > Being judged, criticized, or teased
- > Financial problems
- > Exposure to environmental situations that make you feel uncomfortable
- > Certain smells, tastes, or noises
- > Anything specifically related to how your brain injury happened
- > Trying to be positive

While we want you to be prepared for strong emotional experiences as you journal, we don't want to discourage you from exploring them. It's meant to be a process that explores the good, the bad, and the in-between.

If you do come up to a prompt or a part of the journal that you find particularly inciting, the following methods can help you with the journaling process.

Methods for coping with incited emotions while journaling

STOP AND BREATHE.

Stop journaling, place your hands on your lap, get comfortable, close your eyes, and just breathe. Put all your focus on your breath. Imagine breathing in feelings of calm through your nose and exhaling any bad feelings out your mouth. Repeat this until you feel ready to continue.

WRITE IN THE THIRD PERSON.

If you struggle to write any section of the accompanying workbook because the topic causes intense emotions or is overwhelming, this technique can make thinking and writing easier. Instead of writing "I," use a different pronoun that you identify with (she/her, he/him, they/them). Writing your journal entry in the third person as an observer will remove you enough from the personal reality to help you gain perspective and recall a situation.

MOVE TO ANOTHER SECTION OF THE WORKBOOK.

Don't be afraid to skip around. You can always return, when you can, to the section that was inciting strong emotions.

PUT THE WORKBOOK DOWN.

Sometimes you have to give yourself a break. There's no deadline to finish any section. However, you will gain the most benefits from doing the exercises in every section at some point.

James Pennebaker's tells us⁽²⁾ that the shift in pronouns in personal writing predict improvement in the writers' health. This shifting of pronouns demonstrates that the writers are changing the ways that are thinking about themselves relative to others.



Part two

Discovering a best friend

"I never know what I think about something until I read what I've written on it."

~ William Faulkner

About journaling

“To journal is to write about your life – it is telling your story. Life-based writing is one of the most reliable and effective ways to heal, change, and grow.”

~ Kathleen Adams, author of *Journal to the Self* and
Founder/Director of The Center for Journal Therapy

What is journaling?

- Journaling is the act of freely expressing yourself.
- A journal becomes your private record of your honest thoughts, feelings, experiences, and observations.
- Journaling is an experience of pure freedom of expression; the opportunity to be you, exactly as you are at any given time of your life.
- A journal is an empirically proven form of self-care for your mind, body, and spirit.
- A journal can be life-changing and therapeutic at almost no cost.
- A journal is an excellent form of life- and self-observation and learning.

What is the difference between a journal and a diary?

Simply put, a diary usually keeps a basic record of facts and events. A journal is much richer in content. It keeps a record of life events and facts but is more in-depth and revealing as it includes your thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. A journal also provides self-understanding and personal growth.

The rules of journaling

This may be one of the best things about journaling. There are no rules.

None.

There aren't many things in life that have no rules!

While there are no rules, there are some suggestions and tips for making the journaling experience a satisfying and rewarding one.

Is journaling for you?

The short answer? Yes!

Journaling is for everyone, and everyone can journal. You don't need to be a 'writer,' have perfect penmanship or punctuation, or know how to spell. You simply need to be who you are in the moment.

The benefits you can reap will keep you coming back to your journal again and again.

Dispelling the myths around journaling

Most people are familiar with the practice of journaling. You may already be a huge fan of journaling and do it regularly. Perhaps you have tried it a few times and want to do it more. Maybe you have never done it but want to try it.

No matter where you are with journaling, please, never relate the word 'should' with journaling—that's a guilt inducer that will ultimately stop you from using this amazing self-care tool.

No matter where you are with journaling, you may have some preconceived about the 'right' way to do it, or that journaling takes a certain kind of person. These are examples of myths surrounding journaling. Let's take this opportunity to dispel some journaling myths that may get in your way.

Never relate the word 'should' with journaling; that's a guilt inducer that will ultimately stop you from starting or continuing to journal.

1 Myth #1: Journaling must be done daily

Once you begin, journaling is completely under your control. When and how often you want or need to journal is your choice. There are many techniques to help you journal for anywhere for five minutes or for hours. A few of those techniques are used in the accompanying workbook.

2 Myth #2: There's a proper way to journal

You read earlier in this introduction that there are no rules to journaling, which dispels this myth. When it comes to journaling, it's "your journal, your way."

You don't have to be a writer: in fact, you don't need to write at all. Typing them into a Word doc is fine, as is using an app, or you can even dictate using a speech-to-text program. You can also doodle, sketch, or paste in collage materials because scrapbooking can be a form of journaling if you like recording your impressions visually rather than verbally.

You don't need to care about spelling, grammar, or messy handwriting, either. Use shorthand or codes if you want. Try to block out the advice of your grammar teachers!

Myth #3: You can only record deep thoughts while journaling

You don't need to wait until you have something important or profound to say. First, please know that *anything you include in your journal about your life – no matter how seemingly mundane – is important because **it's your life.***

Next, the act of expressive writing (journaling vs diary) about anything in your life can be therapeutic as well as relaxing and anxiety-reducing.

To get the most benefits from journaling, it's important that you don't censor your thoughts by only writing the ones that are conventionally "poetic and meaningful." When you open up and freely express whatever is within your mind, body, and spirit, you'll find that thoughts shape themselves.

Myth #4: Journaling is being self-obsessed

We're so happy to dispel this one. Journaling is not selfish. The fact is, the better you know yourself, the more self-compassion you can learn to have during all of life's ups and downs. Then, the more compassionate and understanding you will be with others. So, journaling is the opposite of being self-obsessed.

**"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."
~ Aristotle**

Myth #5: Journaling takes too much time

Yes, journaling takes time. But it also gifts you with time. How often do you take the time to let some steam out of your teapot or to take a bird's eye view of your life? To change your perspective on something that is difficult or bothering you? Journaling gifts you that time and all the benefits that come with it.

Plus, you'll be shocked at how much you can write in even five minutes.

Remember, you don't have to write to journal

You can type on a computer, use an app, do a voice or video recording and you can doodle, draw, make lists, and even scrapbook as a means of visual journaling.

It's not for an audience; it's for you. It's something just for you and you alone. Now THAT feels good.

A few reasons to journal

There are several reasons to journal. We have divided them into categories, so you can explore them.

Self Care

When using a journal for self-care, it can:

- > Clear your mind
- > Release emotions
- > Relieve stress and anxiety
- > Improve mental and physical health and well-being
- > Unravel confusion
- > Make sense of your thoughts & feelings
- > Illuminate and recall lessons you've learned
- > Change your perspective
- > Learn more and more about your self
- > Develop gratitude for the smallest things
- > Illustrate progress and changes throughout stages of your life
- > Help develop a better appreciation for what you've gone through
- > Remind you why you acted a certain way
- > Help you purposely discover happiness within
- > Builds self-confidence and self-love
- > Practices positivity
- > Help you learn to trust yourself
- > Help you learn what is important and what isn't
- > Record ideas and inspirations
- > Unload secrets
- > Give you a trusted confidant
- > Help you recall how you experienced your life
- > Record facts from your perspective
- > Capture detailed memories
- > Experience the relief of being 100% honest

Family & Friends

Journaling can help you:

- > Become a better parent, spouse, sibling, and friend
- > Record details of important events & stories
- > Help future generations know you and the times in which you lived
- > Record the lives of your children & grandchildren
- > Remember what's important to your loved ones

Problem Solving

Journaling can help you:

- > Vent!
- > Look at both (or more) sides
- > Foresee issues before they occur
- > Improve relations by describing what you appreciate about people
- > Prepare for confrontation

Daily Life

Journaling can help you:

- > Remember events before you forget them
- > Learn how to notice the little things
- > Have a guaranteed moment of reflection
- > Separate fact from fiction
- > Learn/remember from past entries

Trust the experts

“This pouring thoughts out on paper has relieved me. I feel better and full of confidence and resolution.”

~ Diet Eman, *Things We Couldn't Say*

Journaling has become more popular in part due to extensive research being done on the benefits of the practice. A vast amount of information exists to help guide you in your journaling purposes or goals.

Journaling after trauma: Research on the therapeutic benefits

For several decades, an increasing number of studies have proven that when a person writes about emotional and traumatic experiences, they may experience significant physical, mental health, and behavioural improvements as a result.

One of the first researchers to empirically prove the scientific benefits of journaling (expressive writing) is Dr. James Pennebaker, Ph.D., an American social psychologist and lead researcher on Expressive Writing at the University of Texas. He has authored many studies and publications, including *Writing to Heal: A Guided Journal for Recovering from Trauma and Emotional Upheaval* ⁽²⁾. He conducted his original work on expressive writing and trauma in 1986.

In Pennebaker's original research ⁽³⁾, he assigned healthy undergraduate students to one of four groups: three groups wrote about personally traumatic life events for 15 minutes for four nights in a row, while the fourth group wrote about unimportant topics. The researchers tracked the participants' visits to the university health center over the next six months. They found that writing about traumatic events was associated with fewer visits to the health center.

The study showed people's health and productivity improved when they wrote about traumatic experiences or uncertainty—particularly if they constructed causal accounts or plans. Pennebaker found that translating our experiences into our own written language makes the experience more understandable. Pennebaker says, “Emotional upheavals touch every part of our lives. These things affect all aspects of who we are — our financial situation, our relationships with others, our views of ourselves and writing helps us focus and organize the experience.”

Since the initial experiment, the concept has been utilized in many studies of physical health and biological outcomes after journaling. Analyses of these studies confirmed the original finding: *expressive writing is generally associated with better health.*

The act of converting emotions and images into words changes the way you think and organize thoughts.

Studies by those in the forefront of this research-- James Pennebaker and Joshua Smyth, PhD, of Syracuse University suggest a similar pattern among HIV/AIDS patients. Patients who wrote about life experiences measured higher immune functioning than the control group. This suggested journaling reduced their stress by releasing their illness-related anxiety. "By writing, you put some structure and organization to those anxious feelings," he explains. "It helps you to get past them."

The article, *Emotional and Physical Health Benefits of Expressive Writing* offers the following about outcomes of expressive writing.

Immediate and longer-term effects of expressive writing

The immediate impact of expressive writing is usually a short-term increase in distress, negative mood and physical symptoms. However, at longer-term follow-up, many studies have continued to find evidence of health benefits in terms of objectively assessed outcomes, self-reported physical health outcomes, and self-reported emotional health outcomes.

"By writing, you put some structure and organization to those anxious feelings which helps you to get past them."

Long-term effects of expressive writing

Health outcomes

- Fewer stress-related visits to the doctor
- Improved immune system functioning
- Reduced blood pressure
- Improved lung function
- Improved liver function
- Fewer days in the hospital
- Improved mood/affect
- A feeling of greater psychological well-being
- Reduced depressive symptoms before examinations
- Fewer post-traumatic intrusion and avoidance symptoms

Social and behavioural outcomes

- Reduced absenteeism from work
- Quicker re-employment after job loss
- Improved working memory
- Improved sporting performance
- Higher students' grade point average
- Altered social and linguistic behaviour

Why does journaling work?

Perhaps the main reason so many benefits can be derived from journaling is the value of expressing oneself and the act and relief that comes from disclosure that is as honest as possible.

Another explanation is that the act of converting emotions and images into words changes the way you think and organize thoughts. Therefore, once an experience has structure and meaning, it would follow that the emotional effects of that experience are more manageable, giving us greater control over our lives.

"Emotional upheavals touch every part of our lives. These things affect all aspects of who we are — our financial situation, our relationships with others, our views of ourselves and journaling helps us focus and organize the experience."

Journaling and privacy

Suggestions to protect your privacy:

- Please get in the habit of storing your journal in its own special place where others aren't tempted to read it.
- If need be, you can use a password for a digital journal, a notebook with a lock and key, or store your journal in a private place to which only you have access.
- On the first page of your journal, write your name and phone number and this: *This is my personal journal. Please don't read it without my knowledge and permission. Thank you for respecting my privacy.*
- Encourage others living with you to begin journaling, too. Once they understand the need for privacy a journal requires, they will be less tempted to read anyone else's.
- Other clever ways to protect your privacy when you are expressing something sensitive is by changing names, using use of code words, abbreviations, or shorthand in your journal.



Methods for journaling

“One of the greatest powers of journal writing is that over time it helps us notice, influence, and change the conversation the mind is having with itself.”

~ Christina Baldwin

There are many ways to journal. But the question I get the most is: should I handwrite my journal? The short answer: not necessarily. But journal therapists and professionals suggest that writing by hand offers benefits you don't get with other journaling methods. It forces you to slow down just by having to form the words on paper, and this helps organize your thoughts. It's also more tactile and, somehow, visceral. Julia Camaron, the author of *The Artist's Way*, says that you'll go flying past important events if you don't write by hand. Journaling by hand is also more versatile, as you can comfortably do it almost anywhere.

However, this doesn't mean you **have** to journal by hand. Some people do not have the luxury of writing by hand or simply don't like to write using pen and paper. Don't let that stop you from journaling— it's not necessary to achieve meaningful, satisfying journaling! ***Other ways to journal include:***

USING A COMPUTER.

There are benefits of handwriting in journals, but some like to use a computer. Fingers can almost keep up with thoughts, so you may be able to capture more. Also, with a computer, you can easily insert photos, icons, and more into your journal entries. It can help you express both verbally and visually. (You can do that in a written journal by pasting in things that are expressive and appealing to you.)

APPS.

Many apps are available for your phone or pads that help you journal and keep you organized. You can find them easily, along with reviews with a Google search.

VOICE-RECORDING.

This is a brilliant way to journal if you don't like to or cannot write. Some computers will record your voice and store your voice journal on your computer. There are software and apps that will transcribe your voice, so you can store a written version of your voice journal too.

VIDEO RECORDING.

This method is excellent for people who are not able to use more conventional journaling tools or want to leave a 'living journal' for others. There may come a time when you want to share parts of your life story and allowing future generations to see you and listen to you will be a privilege. Smart phones can film easily and in good quality. You can use a special phone stand or prop it up against some books – then all you need to do is press record. You can also record yourself using video applications on your computer.

Tips for satisfying journaling

There are no set rules for keeping a journal. How often you write, how much time you spend, and whether you keep a regular journaling schedule are personal choices — and circumstance matters. So it is important to find what works for you.

The following general guidelines may help you set up journaling as a regular and important habit.

DATE EVERY ENTRY: If you only establish one habit in your journal, let it be this one. This allows you to reconstruct your life chronologically, and it also helps you observe cycles, trends and patterns.

CREATE A COMFORTABLE JOURNALING ENVIRONMENT: Connecting journaling with other pleasurable things helps strengthen your routine and create an atmosphere of self-care. When you're ready to journal, pour your favourite drink, play relaxing music, light candles, sit in a comfy spot. Most of all, take a moment to stop and consciously breathe before you journal.

START WRITING, KEEP WRITING: Begin. Just begin. Once you've started, keep going. And don't go back to correct your spontaneous mistakes in word usage as they can be revealing in and of themselves.

LOSE THE GUILT: Whether you write once a day, once a month, or once a year, congratulate yourself for writing.

KEEP WHAT YOU WRITE: This lets you learn from your experiences, see what's changed, see how you've grown, and recognize patterns in yourself and others. You can also see associations between your stress levels and your health, see what helped your general mood improve, and use the objectivity of time to review your life from a different perspective than you had when you wrote the journal entries.

TELL YOURSELF THE TRUTH: Your own truth is not your enemy. Don't try to talk yourself out of knowing what you know or feeling what you feel. You'll get the best results in your journal if you give yourself permission to write your own truth.

WRITE WITHOUT YOUR INTERNAL CRITIC: Your internal critic is that 'voice' that tells you what you're journaling is bad or even wrong; that you're putting down unspeakable or ridiculous thoughts and feelings. Those things are simply not possible while journaling – so tell your inner critic to “take a hike” while you write!

HAVE FUN: Journal writing can truly be a satisfying experience if we allow it to be. Enjoy the process of sharing your heart and soul. This isn't a chore. Think of it as a luxury. Joy and clarity often will be found.

Dangers in journaling

“It is not always possible to do away with negative thinking, but with persistence and practice, one can gain mastery over them so that they do not take the upper hand.”

~ Stephen Richards, *The Ultimate Power of Positive Thinking*

Getting Stuck

Simply put, the biggest danger in journaling is allowing yourself to get stuck in the negative.

It's crucial to your overall well-being to safely express your whole truth and release negative thoughts and feelings—and your journal is the absolute perfect place to do that. But it's also crucial to recognize when you start to 'hibernate' or become mired inside negativity.

To make sure you get the biggest benefit from journaling, it is vital that you journal your way out of a negativity loop and grow into a more positive way of thinking about your situation. We can all find a positive aspect of even the worst scenarios.

Getting unstuck

Deborah Ross, a psychotherapist, journal therapist, and expert in brain neuroplasticity, is the co-author (along with Kathleen Adams) of the book, *Your Brain On Ink*. Ross assures us that there is a way to overwrite negativity in our brains by “...seeking a positive outcome of the experience—a life lesson learned, a positive quality developed—and holding that in the foreground while the negative experience is moved to the background.” In this way, we give more focus to the positive than we do the negative.

Ross continues, “When...the process of writing and reflecting is over, the negative material leaves awareness and returns to our memory stores. But it will take with it some facets of the positive! When this negative experience is recalled again at a future time, it will likely bring with it those positive facets that wired while the two were held together.”

REFLECTION JOURNALING:

This is a good practice to get into every time you make a new journal entry. After you journal, take a couple of minutes and reread what you just wrote. While doing that, notice any words that give you a little twinge or jump out (or repeat) and circle them. Then, write a reflection on your journal entry – just a couple of lines that could include a more positive perspective on what you wrote; say what you need to write more about; or highlight a good life lesson.

USE REPETITION:

The brain loves repetition: it helps make the positive stickier, so don't be afraid of journaling about positive lessons and outcomes as much—if not more—as you journal about your negative ones.

GRATITUDE:

We encourage everyone to use this practice at the end of every journaling session. Write *at least* one thing for which you are grateful. That will always flip the negative hobgoblin off its high horse.

CREATE A POSITIVE FEEDBACK LOOP:

Practice. Practice. Practice. As you continue to use your journal as a tool to be with and learn about yourself (and about others and life) and practice lifting yourself out of what is unconstructive, negative thinking & perspectives, incredible things will happen. You will find that the practice gains momentum of its own, setting up a positive feedback loop between your conscious and unconscious mind.

So, you're skeptical about positivity?

"Positive thinking isn't about expecting the best to happen every time, it is about accepting that whatever happens is the best for that moment."

~ Anon

That can be understandable. We've all known and experienced sugar-coated versions of the truth. But positivity doesn't always have to translate into sunshine and lollipops. Positivity can be realistic and based on awareness, learning, and choice.

Consider what Deborah Ross says: negativity and positivity can co-exist. The trick is to prioritize what can make your life better over what won't. Just learning from experience is positive in and of itself.

If you feel a strong need to hold on to your negativity, we invite you to explore why.

- > **What does negativity give you?**
- > **Do you like or dislike your negativity, and why?**
- > **Does your negativity make you feel good (or better), and why?**
- > **When you're being negative, what other emotions do you feel at the same time?**
- > **How does your negativity affect people you love (because it does)?**
- > **Why are you skeptical of being positive? Is it related to a past event?**
- > **What would make you willing to explore finding the positive in yourself and your life experiences?**

You're ready for the next step!

Thank you for completing this introduction to journaling. You are now ready for the journaling workbook. You can find the workbook on braininjurycanada.ca. Please remember that you can use this book as a guide for future journaling as many times as you want.



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About Brain Injury Canada

Brain Injury Canada is a non-profit organization established in 2004 to support the brain injury community on a national level. ***Our mission is to advance awareness, education, opportunities, and support by:***

- Advocating at a national level on issues important to the brain injury community
- Establishing meaningful connections and collaborations with stakeholders
- Educating and empowering people living with acquired brain injury, families/caregivers, healthcare workers, researchers, and the public

Our vision is for a better quality of life for all people affected by acquired brain injury in Canada.

You can find more resources at the following websites:

- www.braininjurycanada.ca – our brain injury resource website
- www.braininjurycanadaconnect.ca – a growing directory of services and supports for the brain injury community

About the author

Jill Grumbache founded Holistic Journaling Ink (HJI) in 2012 to help champion & share the self-enlightening & healing properties of Journaling.

Jill is a long-life Journaler & award-winning writer. Before founding HJI, she had focused her previous career on Communications in its many forms. When ready to make the leap to living her true passions, she enrolled in the Center for Journal Therapy in Denver, Colorado. There she attained certification as a Journaling Facilitator (CJF). At CJT, she was taught & mentored by its founder, pioneer, author, & primary Journal therapy theorist Kathleen Adams, LPC.

First trained & certified to teach Kay's Journal to the Self & Leia Francisco's Journaling Through Transitions, Jill has since developed several original courses exclusive to Holistic Journaling Ink. These include the much loved and lauded Hallelujah! Letting Go! and what's been called the Ph.D. of Journaling, SelfSIght. Jill facilitates HJI's group courses, workshops, and private classes and does public speaking.

Jill is also an artist, writer, editor, and student of Buddhism. She has two grown & glorious daughters & one awesome son-in-law, and one astounding granddaughter. She resides in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

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