

August 2006

Issue #3



Journaling Life

Writing to bring wisdom, clarity & truth to your life

How can I live a more simple life without so much technology?

Part One: Themes for Journaling



I like to write about culture and life, but my greatest interest is in how culture develops, and the things that impact the way societies change. For example, the impact of technology on our society has been a long running interest of mine. This subject makes for great journal entry material, and opens many doors for any style of writing be it axe grinding, pontificating, or just plain analyzing. To finish the point (I think there is one) I'd like to say that technology has made our society function more proficiently on many fronts, yet it's also helped to make many of us into spoiled, dependant, lazy couch potatoes.

It's not enough to merely gripe and moan about these things, and heaven knows my journals are filled with a whole lot of cynical observations and complaints, but how do we really take our thoughts to heart and change things? In reality the things we change are within us, and not necessarily in society. I suppose if enough people make positive changes within, it can have a positive effect upon a society. I use the journal to constantly analyze what it is I am really trying to find in this life. All in all I think what I'm after is a more simple life on as many fronts as I can name. I do not crave a one room log cabin in the Montana wilderness, but merely a life that is not so dependant on forms of technology that robs me of the opportunity and pleasure of my own creativity.

Journal Entry ---- September 30, 2004

The journey to Cherokee, NC was fun, and the kids are having a blast exploring the mountain upon which cousin Brenda lives. This afternoon Vonnice and I went hiking on the mountainside, and we came across an old cemetery with a number of headstones for slaves. As we walked from stone to stone reading the names, prayers, and dates, there was a strange silence (almost eerie) and som-

Continued on Page 2

"Writing is the miracle of making the invisible, visible."

- DAVID L. RUSSELL

With contentment comes peace of mind,
and with peace of mind clarity of thought.

ber feeling magnified even more by the intense silence between Vonnie and I. I could tell her little mind was reflecting on it all. Afterwards we sat up on a rocky ridge looking down on the cemetery when out of nowhere two land surveyors with GPS equipment, laptop computers, and obnoxiously loud Nextel two way radios bellowing out a distorted, fuzzy voice, "Charley can you see the property line stake?" All I could think of was that I can't even escape this intrusive technology in the most remote part of the mountains. No place is sacred anymore, and it seems as though the almighty god of technology finds its way into places only to remind us that post-modern life has been reduced to the click of a mouse and the push of a button. Like Zebra Mussels and black mold technology seems to find a way into everything. God help us!

For as much as I rail against modern technology I am in no way a leftist or some kind of neo-Luddite looking to destroy progress. On the contrary I love progress and I am very grateful for the increase in the standard of life because of some technology. My beef is in the kind of technology that eliminates the need for human creativity and imagination. The funniest part of it all is that the creators of the technology use their own creative skills and imaginations to invent all kinds of things that in turn become enablers for any kind of self-sufficiency. I get a big kick out of the infomercials (one of the reasons I watch less and less TV) that parade before us a new device to chop onions, carrots, and other kinds of veggies (meats included for the carnivores). Granted, people love this kind of technology (very simple technology compared to computer related products) and perhaps it does save time, but therein lies the rub. Why are we in such a hurry in the first place? Everything to merely save a few minutes, and the ability to actually DO something is eliminated. There are even more inane inventions that the infomercial peddlers try to sell such as the belt you can where that sends out an electrical pulse that will get rid of the spare tire around you waist line, and

presto-chango you've got a ripped six pack to die for. Why would someone actually want to spend time doing sit-ups and crunches? After all doing that may actually be uncomfortable and painful, c'mon.

What would happen to if our economy crashed (it has happened before) and people were forced to do without all the modern conveniences? Would most of even know how to live more simply? I fear not. Could it be that simplifying one's life would actually result in a little more contentment and family closeness? It's interesting that most of the technology we have today is for out convenience.

The definition of "convenience" is very interesting.

The quality of being suitable to one's comfort, purposes, or needs: the convenience of living near shops, schools, and libraries. Personal comfort or advantage: services that promote the customer's convenience. Something that increases comfort or saves work: household conveniences such as a washing machine, an electric can opener, and disposable diapers
(www.dictionary.com)

Should I conclude that not having a library or mall nearby is really an inconvenience? If so, I must ask to what end am I really being inconvenienced? Oh, I forgot, I need to save time so I can catch American Idol on the tube.

The one room cabin in Montana is out of the question and simply not necessary (go for it if you can do it, however), learning to do for ourselves a little more is not out of the question. Most of us fall into the trap of over complicating our lives by filling it up with an insane amount of busyness, and then we find a need for modern conveniences. The result is that we have little time for creativity, self-sufficiency, and most importantly contentment. With contentment comes peace of mind, and with peace of mind clarity of thought.

David L. Russell

*Any intelligent fool
can make things
bigger, more
complex, and
more violent.*

*It takes a touch of
genius - and a lot
of courage -
to move in the
opposite direction.*

- E.F. Schumacke

Journaling Links

www.simpleliving.net

Wow, this is the motherlode of simple ah, living. This is the most comprehensive site out there to help with your journey to a more simple and contented life.

www.simpleliving.org

This is a great website as well, and a little more hip and trendy with blogs and chat on the bulletin board and all that. It's really a great resource for people looking to learn how to achieve contentment with life in small steps, or large ones too! Check out both of these sites for some insight into the simple life.

August Journaling Prompts

Three great journaling prompts for the month to help you get writing!

How do you define simplicity? Detail your thoughts on what makes a simple life for you and how you might be able to strive for more simplicity and contentment in your life.

Compare simplicity now and say, in the time of your grandparents. Do you think they appreciated their simple way of life or did they look to progress with excitement and wonder? Do you think it is a sign of our times that we seek a kinder and gentler life, or it is always the thing that people have sought?

Detail your perfect simple life. What would it be like? Whom would share your paradise? Daydream and wonder how it might be. Yet, also, how might you begin to achieve some of these "daydreams" of simplicity? What a wonderful thing to write about!



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www.JournalingLife.com

The best in information about
all kinds of journaling!



Dave's Bookshelf

Books that will help you to love life and journal with wisdom and clarity.

Simplify Your Life

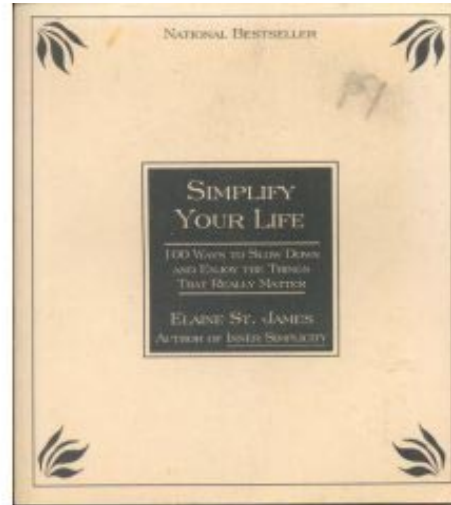
by Elaine St. James

Paperback: 238 pages
Publisher: Hyperion; 1st ed edition (May 1, 1994)
ISBN: 0786880007

Way back oh, nearly ten years ago, I stumbled upon this little book. It was a hardcover and it's small size and just simple look was very appealing. Soon it was in my home and I read it cover to cover. It was eye opening and really made me think about my life in general, not just the clutter on the kitchen counters, but all over my life!

Elaine St. James was not the first to write about simplicity, after all, even Thoreau wandered out into the woods to seek the life of simple means and contemplative thought. But the one thing about Ms. St. James book that was very attractive was the way she addressed 100 points that you could do now, and begin to lessen the "do it now" and "have much more" mentality that was the 90's.

I remember one of the first things that struck me in the book. Pack away a box of clutter and date it. If you don't want anything in it after a year, pitch it. It seemed almost taboo, yet, it was so true. Aside from heirlooms



and such, which I adore, just packing up some of the counter or cabinet clutter and setting it aside really started the ball rolling for me. By the time about 5 years and a major life change, I was MUCH simpler and contented in my life and it was all because of this book!

One of the great things is that you can find this very popular book in used book stores for very little! But don't let that stop you, this is one great starting point for seeking contentment in a simple life.

Would you like to share your love for Journaling with others?

We are working on a publishing project and are looking for several guest writers...

If you are interested in writing a brief essay about WHY you are a journaler and also submit 3 samples of your journaling entries, we might be picking you for a book that Dave Russell is compiling and editing.

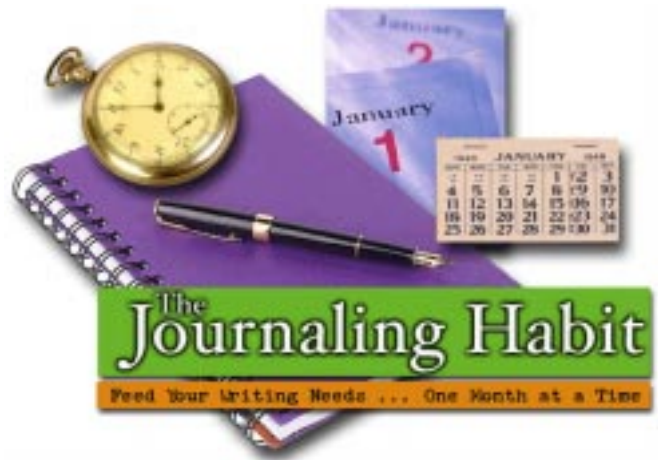
All interested journalers, please email your request to: Dave@Westvon.com



Are you tired of journaling prompt books where you get 365+ prompts, each different and unrelated?

Does it bother you to wade through prompts that ask about your "favorite food" or "what would you say to a space alien?" instead of really reaching deep, meaningful, thought provoking writing?

Sometimes, we need to focus on an area of our life that needs special handling.



New Books Coming SOON!
Please consider visiting the site to learn more about our Journaling Habit E-Books.

Our Journaling Habit e-books do just that. Each book is designed for a whole month of indepth journaling about an area of your life that you'd like to explore and gain insight and wisdom through in your writing.

31 days of prompts, all focusing on a specific topic.

We're certain you will find these writing prompts to be intelligent, truly thought provoking and helpful to your life's situation, whether you are battling an illness, striving to improve your career or developing a healthy lifestyle.

Life is a journey and we believe that one of the best ways to gain wisdom and insight on that journey is through cultivating your thoughts through writing. Taking our invisible thoughts and making them visible helps us to see what is in our minds and hearts. Writing is a tool that helps us keep track of the thoughts and ideas that often stay locked in our subconscious minds.

We hope you enjoy our series, and use it as a tool to grow in wisdom and strength in the days ahead.

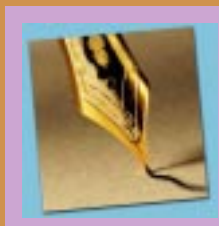
www.TheJournalingHabit.com



David L. Russell Ph.D
is a watchful observers of life, seeker of wisdom, clarity and whatever else he may find on the journey. He's a lifelong

journaler, a writer, a musician and a wonderful father. He's also the editor of the Bluegrass Journal as well as CEO of Westvon Publishing, providing educational materials for the homeschooling family.

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Journaling Life

Writing to bring wisdom, clarity & truth to your life

Visit our website:

www.JournalingLife.com

for information on all types of personal journaling and writing. Guides to get you started with ideas and prompts to keep you writing!

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