

PROCESS WRITING

Anger/Frustration/Resentment Processing

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this process writing practice is to give voice to accumulated negative emotions (mental debris) that haven't been cleaned out and/or to process raw, painful feelings that you may rarely express. This allows these emotions to begin to dissolve.

Many people need to take even a few minutes to do at least the "Level 1" process writing below on a heated topic before they can even have an effective conversation with their spouse. This allows them to take the raw edge off of their emotions before they do any damage to the relationship. Like one client said, "I've come to learn that if I don't write it down on paper, I'll say it to my spouse and end up causing damage to our relationship."

Your thoughts create your feelings, which create your words and actions, so getting your thoughts straight by processing them out on paper is vital in changing your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. This process list is not necessarily for sharing but to allow you to remove a layer of "mental sludge" from your psyche and be free of the emotional weight it induces. You are welcome to simply shred your process writing as a way to let it go.

TYPES: Three of the most common ways to use process writing include:

1. *Anger/Stress/Frustration Lists* (like the sample given here)
2. *Free Writing* (to just let out any thoughts as they come to mind with no filtering, judgement, or punctuation)
3. *Written Conversations with God* (to process in conversational form what you are feeling and what you think He may say to you in return)

LEVELS: There are three levels of process writing, so just focus on level 1 to start. You may need to do multiple rounds of level 1 process writing until you can genuinely move on to level 2 or 3.

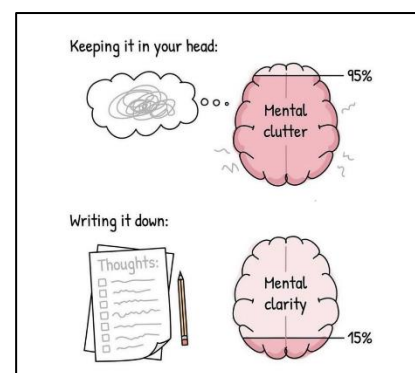
- Level 1 – "I hate..." (processing raw negative emotions)
- Level 2 – "I accept and make peace with..." (accepting the reality of the experience and the resulting emotions and making peace with it even though you can't change anything that's already happened)
- Level 3 – "I forgive..." (letting go of negative attachment to the experiences and emotions so that YOU can be free)

DIRECTIONS: To begin the therapeutic process of releasing stuffed, negative emotions create a list of at least 50 items that begin with something like the following sentence stems using whatever emotions best fit your situation. This allows you to "vomit out" the mental sludge occupying your mind. Be sure to write out the full "I..." statement as that is where the power is for the mind. You can also do this in smaller batches like 5 or 10 items per day.

1. *I am angry that...*
2. *I hate that...*
3. *I am frustrated that...*
4. *I resent...*

You can either do just the first column of negative processing or if you are able to do the next step of accepting your current reality then complete the second column as well. Move on to the 3rd column when you can. It may take some time to work through this process.

You can use this as a worksheet and write directly into the table below or just use this as a template and write in a notebook instead. (You can shred or destroy your lists after writing them since the objective is simply to "identify," "process" and "let go.")



BENEFITS OF PROCESS WRITING

(Taken from “Live From Love” Podcast -- [Episode #111 - Mindful Sex](#))

For a long time, I thought I could just do a “thought download” in my head. That I didn’t need to actually write anything down. But I was listening to something with Tony Robbins and he said that when we don’t write it down, we really can’t get a handle on it. We go into thought loops, which really isn’t helpful. Here are 8 powerful benefits of writing things down:

1. **Writing things down helps you record everything that has your attention.** We can’t remember everything we have to do these days. We have information overload. By writing down all the things we need to remember, we are actually able to think much more clearly. Our brains were designed for having ideas, not storing all of them. So, write down things that go on your calendar, on your to-do list, your grocery list, your work and kids assignments. That will definitely help calm the chatter in your brain.
2. **Writing things down helps clear your mind.** Once you write things down, you’ll notice a sense of relief. Even if you haven’t done a single thing on your list, your brain will go from chaos and calm because it has less to think about.
3. **Writing things down helps clarify your goals, priorities, and intentions.** When you keep everything up in your head, your brain gets confused on what you need to do first. So, of course you feel overwhelmed with everything. But when you write things down you can literally see and evaluate each thing and make sense of them. You can more easily decide what needs to happen first, what needs more exploration, and what doesn’t need to happen at all.
4. **Writing things down helps keep you motivated.** Do you ever notice how sometimes you feel really motivated and sometimes you wonder where that motivation went? Motivation is a feeling, that comes from our thoughts. When you want to stay motivated, you need to think thoughts that help you feel that way. Writing down what you want to accomplish, and why, can help you remember why you are doing what you are doing and help keep you motivated.
5. **Writing things down encourages daily progress.** When I am actively working on changing thoughts and believing new things, I love to save my “thought downloads” so that I can look back and see how far I’ve come. Sometimes we forget what things were like “back then” and we don’t see the progress we’ve actually made. By writing down our thoughts and feelings along the way, we can see the progress we’ve made.
6. *** Writing things down helps you recognize and process your thoughts and emotions.** Ok, this is a big one and really what it’s all about. Oftentimes we don’t even see the sneaky little thoughts that our brain is offering to us that really don’t serve us and get in our way of making the progress we want in our lives. When you sit down and write, you are able to see those thoughts for what they are...a thought that is optional, and gain power over it. You can’t change what you aren’t aware of.
7. **Writing things down enables a higher level of thinking, and therefore, more focused action.** When your brain isn’t busy remembering everything, your brain can then process anything! It’s when your brain isn’t overwhelmed that you become free to analyze and ask it important questions. You’ll be able to process your thoughts and feelings on a much deeper level than simply thinking about it when you have things down on paper.
8. **Writing things down develops your sense of gratitude.** A gratitude practice is one of my favorite ways to help clients see the goodness in their life when things seem otherwise bleak. I love having them write down things they are grateful for in themselves, their spouse, and their life. It helps them turn their thoughts from the negative to the positive. It helps them connect with the things that are truly important in their life.