

LEADING OURSELVES BACK TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

By Miriah Ikemiyashiro

Reading my old journal taught me about the importance of recording spiritual impressions.

I have always been an avid journal keeper. I have diligently written the comings and goings of my days since I was 13 years old. I knew that Church leaders had encouraged us to keep a journal, but every once in a while I wondered why I was doing it. My life was so simple and common compared with the glamorous and impressive lives of those I usually read about. I didn't really see how my words and thoughts could ever inspire or be of interest to anyone. However, writing has always been my outlet, a time to ponder and articulate my thoughts and feelings, so despite my doubts about their significance, I continued to write.

Then life became hectic with marriage, a move across the country, schooling, and a new baby. I didn't have much time to ponder or write in my journal. Every day seemed like a struggle I didn't have energy for. I felt like I had somehow lost my spirituality and could no longer hear or feel the Holy Ghost regularly, even though I was reading the scriptures and attending my Church meetings.

One night I dug through a closet, looking for an old journal that had my patriarchal blessing folded up inside of it, hoping that it would give me some answers. I found the journal I was looking for and reread my patriarchal blessing. I also read through my journal entries and some miscellaneous papers included with the journal, remembering the things I'd recorded, reliving moments of pain and joy, of utter confusion, and some of complete clarity.

As I read of my past, I found answers to the present. I realized that nearly every entry included a scripture or spiritual thought, along with the daily happenings of my life. I was sorry to realize that my more recent journals had large gaps between entries, and nearly all of them were about people and events but didn't go any deeper. The core of my existence, why I choose to do the things I do, was missing. The Lord was missing from my journal and thus, to a point, from my life. Reading my past journal entries redirected my perspective and brought about a change of heart.

Even though I was attending church and reading the scriptures, my journal entries showed that my heart was not centered on the right things. I desired to return to being the woman I used to be when I wrote in those earlier journals. I made a goal to start writing in my journal regularly again and to make sure to include any spiritual impressions or thoughts that came to me. In only a week's time I could feel a significant difference in my demeanor and in my home. I began to feel more often an atmosphere of peace and guidance.

Sometimes the changes we make are so slow and subtle that we don't even recognize what we're losing until it's gone. I am grateful to have written diligently in my journal, not knowing why or how it would ever help. It turns out that it did help. I helped my future self bring the spirit of Christ back into my life and home.

I have a testimony that our simple thoughts and lives do matter, that our recorded words can make a difference. By small and simple means, great things can come to pass (see Alma 37:6). Sometimes we are our own greatest example. ■







The author lives in Utah, USA.




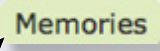



MAKE A GOAL TO KEEP A JOURNAL

Do you want to keep a journal but don't know where to start? Consider one or more of the following ways to document your life and testimony:

-  • Keep a traditional written journal.
-  • Use a journal app.
-  • Keep an audio journal with a digital recorder.
-  • Keep a gratitude journal.
-  • Make a photo journal, complete with captions.
-  • Use your social media account to document your experiences.

AS APPROPRIATE, SHARE YOUR JOURNAL (OR AN ANCESTOR'S JOURNAL) ONLINE:

 **Go to [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) and click "Memories."** 

 **Upload your journal or one written by an ancestor.**

FOR ADDITIONAL IDEAS, SEE:

- Tara Walker, "Keeping a Journal Your Way," *Ensign*, July 2014, 22–25.
- Ellen Bahr, "How One Man Writes His Personal History—Three Words at a Time," [lds.org/go/wordsE617](https://www.lds.org/go/wordsE617).
- "Share #52Stories from Your Personal History This Year," [lds.org/go/storiesE617](https://www.lds.org/go/storiesE617).



PRESERVE THE MEMORIES

"Tonight, and tomorrow night, you might pray and ponder, asking the questions: Did God send a

message that was just for me? Did I see His hand in my life or the lives of my children? I will do that. And then I will find a way to preserve that memory for the day that I, and those that I love, will need to remember how much God loves us and how much we need Him."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "O Remember, Remember," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 69.