

Journey to Journaling

Telling a good story can be fun

There is nothing better than hearing a good story or telling one. Tell your own spectacular story and embrace journaling. Yes, journaling, the J-Word. You either love it or you hate it. As much as you may grit your teeth at the notion, without it your scrapbooks are just pages of pretty pictures. This article will give you some ideas and perspectives to use in your journaling.

What prevents you from journaling? Most likely it is a combination of not making the time, remembering details from an event that occurred months or years ago, and a critical concern about your handwriting. Regardless why, it is important to preserve memories, record family trips, and describe traits of loved ones. Write what you love and it will never feel like a chore.

Stories—and therefore journaling—can be short and to the point. If you include a bulleted list of just that, it is better than nothing. But where and whenever possible, make journaling powerful and expand beyond the obvious to involve your senses, emotions and observations.

Sound overwhelming? Think about an event you scrapbooked, say a trip to the beach, and a friend or your child asked you about it. You would probably launch into an energetic story about the traffic, smelling the salty air as you find the perfect parking spot, forgetting the sunscreen, eating the sweetest funnel cake ever, building a super sandcastle, pulling little Jimmy out of water at the end of the day and him kicking sand in the car because he was pouting, and eating burgers on the way home because you got a flat tire and fast food places were the only places open. That is a story. What often ends up on a page is “We went to the beach. Jimmy played in the sand and water. By the end of the day, we were tired but we had fun.” Allow some of your personality and passion to come through your journaling.

In my Las Vegas layout, I wrote about the sights, my impressions and my opinions in seven sentences. It is not an all-inclusive detailed account; it is a story: random, conversational and not intimidating to read or write.

You can play with words and memories even if your frozen stare is glazing over a treasured picture. If you are focusing on an event, turn to your senses. Is there a sound or smell present in the photo? What about a taste or texture? Be specific with your word choice. Instead of eating “ice cream,” describe it as “ice cream from X, our favorite store” or

Think outside the box when you journal!

- Make a Top 5 list; Top 10 lists can be intimidating.
- Print Facebook posts or Twitter messages.
- Write out or take pictures of text messages (using the macro setting on your camera).
- Print blog entries.
- Share pictures on a Girls' Night Out. As you talk about the photos, it will become obvious what is important to journal.

“Death By Chocolate ice cream.” With that little extra effort, your journaling jumps out.

If you are writing about people, what emotions do you feel looking at the photo? Use that as a starting point. Look for action in the photo, even facial expressions or body language. Do you notice squinting eyes, pursed lips, deep smiles or snarls? You observe that all the time; now you are just putting that into words.

People and events are not exclusive; often journaling is a seamless combination of the two. In the layout of my father, I wrote about the place (Atlantic City), the people (me and Dad), why we were there (childhood memory), and his reaction.

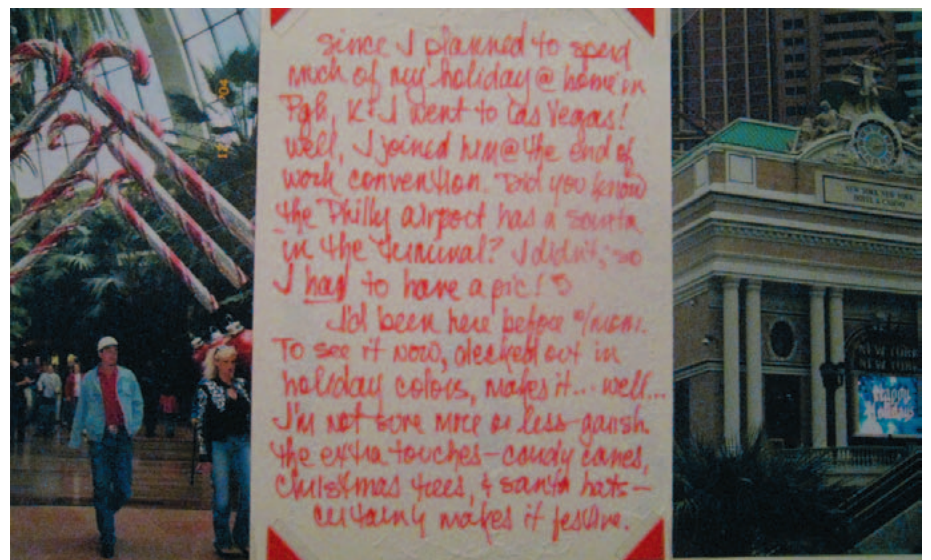
If you still cannot think of something to write, describe who took the picture and why. Consider the background story on the significance of the embellishments you chose. Be creative. There are no rules.

How do you become comfortable with this journey? One idea is to keep a notebook with you. It can be something as simple as a dollar store notepad or several pieces of 6 by 6 cardstock stapled together. If it is small enough to carry anywhere, then you are more likely to use it. Do not feel self-conscious about writing in public places. Your loved ones have gotten used to you whipping out your camera; they will get used to this as well.

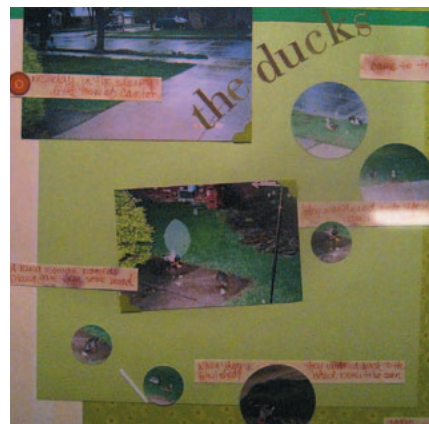
Finally, you need to embrace your handwriting and love each and every inconsistency you think you have. Think about it: do you type your signature on legal documents? Do you type “Happy Birthday” on your child’s birthday card? Do you think your mother was self-conscious of her handwriting? No one will know how you feel about your handwriting, so do not deny your loved ones this part of



DIANA HIRSCH



Combine thoughts about vacations or day trips with sights and sounds that strike you as being memorable or unique.



I combined the title of my layout *The Ducks* into the journaling. The first sentence reads: “One day in the sleepy little town of Canton, the ducks came to town.”

you. They will look at that handwriting and see you in your beautiful, crooked letters and swirls and slants.

You love the people in these photos; the trips and events in your life are special. With small changes and slight refocusing, you will capture an exciting, detailed, priceless story—one that others can share in.



I recorded who, what and where along with the event’s background and my reaction in 4 sentences.

Diana Hirsch is a Certified Zentangle Teacher and an award-winning writer. To inquire about classes or writing availability, she can be reached at diwolf@aol.com or through her blog at www.wolfhowlings.wordpress.com.

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