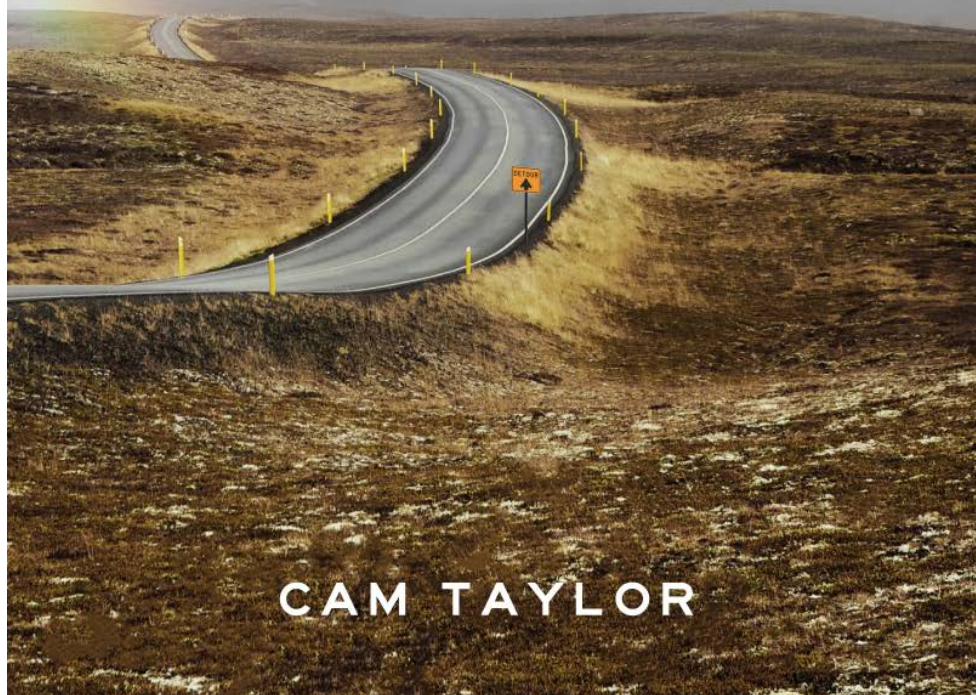


DETOUR JOURNAL

A NOTEBOOK FOR WHEN LIFE GETS REROUTED



CAM TAYLOR

DETOUR JOURNAL

A Notebook For When Life Gets Rerouted

Cam Taylor

Detour Journal

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“Writing is medicine. It is an appropriate antidote to injury. It is an appropriate companion for any difficult change.”

-- Julia Cameron

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“Journal writing is a voyage to the interior.”
– Christina Baldwin

“I don’t want to live in a hand-me-down world of others’ experiences. I want to write about me, my discoveries, my fears, my feelings, about me.” – Helen Keller

Introduction

Chances are, you are already convinced that journaling has some value. But in case you have your doubts, or need a deeper “why,” I want to strengthen the case for journaling — especially if you are on a detour of some kind.

I have journaled for many years and see tremendous value from the practice. When the road I was traveling on ended because of a serious motorcycle accident, I used journaling as an important structure to process what was going on in my life. That story is told in the book, *Detour: A Roadmap For When Life Gets Rerouted*.

The journal you are reading now is designed as a companion resource to go with the book. The value, benefits, and tips for effective journaling are explained in the next few pages.

To purchase a copy of *Detour: A Roadmap For When Life Gets Rerouted* in paperback or as an ebook, check out my website (www.camtaylor.net) for several ways to secure your copy.

In the next few pages, I describe the value of journaling, what it is and isn't, the benefits, a strategy on how to journal, and a list of journal prompts you can use to make your journaling experience engaging and life changing.

Your detour companion,

Cam



The Value of Journaling

Journaling is a tool you can use to support your growth and enhance your life. It is used in many different arenas but has particular value and benefit for those going through a detour experience.

What journaling is and isn't

Journaling is a place to see and track the progress you are making. It's a place to state your daily activities so they line up with your longer range goals and dreams.

Journaling is a way to check in with yourself at the end of the day so you can see if you succeeded or not. It's a structure to help you gain momentum and a positive impact from the progress you made. It's a place to capture your personal story.

Journaling isn't limited to pen and paper. It can be done electronically by typing or speaking your words. It isn't a publicly shared record but a conversation you have with yourself and even God.

Journaling is a place to write down what happened, what you felt, what you did, what you experienced, and what you learned. It isn't just about writing ordinary sentences but a place to draw pictures, diagrams, write poetry, or draw mind maps.

20 Benefits to Journaling

1. It provides future encouragement
2. It improves physical health, especially after you have had a traumatic experience
3. It enhances psychological healing and growth
4. It releases pent-up emotions
5. It counters anger and frustration

6. It helps you reduce and overcome stress
7. It helps detach from past events in order to let them go
8. It is a place to articulate and clarify your thinking
9. It facilitates healthy self-talk and neutralizes self-sabotaging conversations
10. It reinforces learning and increases retention of anything heard or read
11. It identifies values and provides opportunity to more powerfully align with them
12. It helps you see options which empower action
13. It promotes honesty and cuts through denial and self-deception
14. It gives a place to listen to the voice of wisdom and God's direction
15. It provides a place to discover purpose and an answer to "What's next?"
16. It promotes freedom of expression
17. It develops the writer within you
18. It gives a way to track improvement and visualize personal progress
19. It provides a fun, yet safe place to express wild and crazy ideas
20. It assists you in the process of brainstorming and problem solving

Final thoughts

The key to journaling is to make the process your own. You can glean ideas from others and learn from those who have been down the road ahead of you, but ultimately, this practice is for you. Journaling will enhance your life, strengthen your character, and help you on your journey.

Strategies for Effective Journaling

There are many different ways to journal. The key is not to find the one right way, according to the experts, but to find the right way for you. What follows is a number of strategies that have worked for others and may work for you.

If you are new to journaling, or would like to consider some fresh ideas to improve the practice of journaling you already have, you will find this section helpful. The goal is to take baby steps that build momentum and make journaling a habit. If you're just getting started, it's normal for a new practice to feel awkward at first, but over time become natural and comfortable.

A road map for the practice of journaling

These are the steps to go from "I do not journal," to "I love journaling!" These steps do not happen precisely in this order but are the ingredients in a recipe. When are mixed together, they provide a tasty meal of nourishment and growth.

1. Select the journal of choice

The *Detour Journal* comes in two formats – paper and a fillable pdf document. The way to begin is to choose the method you will use. If you're unsure, try one approach for a while, then the other. After experimenting with both, choose the one that better serves you.

The size of the paper journal is designed to be small enough to take with you but big enough to hold enough content to make it worthwhile. A key question: Which journal type will you choose?

2. Determine the focus of your journal

If you are going through a detour, the focus of your writing might be on random thoughts, feelings, and reflections. If you are using the journal for personal development, you might use the pages to

record ideas and thoughts you don't want to lose. If you are using the journal as a tool for spiritual growth, you might write down Bible verses, impressions you have, and a place to record your prayers. A key question: What will the focus of your journal be?

3. Set up a regular place and time – free from distractions

For journaling to become a practice that facilitates deeper change, it needs to be regular. Find a time and place to practice it five to seven days per week.

Pick the time of day when you won't fall asleep but be alert in mind and heart. Find a place that supports reflection and deeper thinking. Turn off your phone, eliminate unnecessary noise, and go where interruptions are unlikely. Three options could be a restaurant, a secluded place in the house, or alone in your car. A key question: Where and when will you journal each day?

4. Integrate journaling into other activities for maximum impact

Journaling is a great compliment to activities like reading, listening to music, watching movies, meditation, problem solving, blogging, and conversations with friends and family. The practice gives you a structure and place to capture insights that hit you while "doing life."

When your thoughts, ideas, questions, memorable quotes, insights, or random information are written down, you have something to go back to later. A key question: What activities could you integrate with your journaling?

5. Use the structure and prompts to facilitate your writing

When you sit down with a blank page in front of you, it's sometimes hard to know where to start. That's why this journal provides prompts, quotes, and structure to help you. The prompts make the writing process easier to start and maintain.

When you sit down to journal, start with the date for later reference, then say thanks, record feelings, thoughts, ideas, and lessons you've been learning. Add your own categories as you

become more comfortable with the practice. A key question: What journaling prompt do you find most helpful?

6. Write from the heart with honesty, creativity, and openness

For journaling to have the greatest impact, you need to show up with honesty and a willingness to write down the full range of emotion, thought, and questioning. The more honest and open you are, the more it will open the door to greater self-awareness, deep change, and growth.

When journaling, tap into your heart, use various writing styles such as lists, poetry, free association, mind mapping, and art work. A key question: On a scale of 1 (low in honesty) to 10 (high in honesty), how honest are you willing to be in your journaling?

7. Share key insights with close friends and family

One way to deepen your personal learning and strengthen your growth is to share what you're learning with others. Start by picking the people carefully – find supportive people who have your best interest in mind.

Once you have your people, share your learning and insights. In return, let them provide valuable feedback and encouragement. When we open up our lives to the right “others,” growth, comfort, strength, and deeper learning often results. A key question: Who are the safe people in your life?

8. Read over what you've written

One of the reasons to journal is to have a record of your life on any given day. As things change, you forget the details of your earlier days and experiences.

If you are journaling during a detour, going back and reading your rambling thoughts and feelings can encourage you by seeing the progress you've made. Looking back can also give you insight into the growth that still remains. A key question: What value does remembering history have in your life?

9. Keep writing and don't give up

Wisdom says it takes three weeks to form a new habit and three more weeks for that habit to become comfortable. It's important to remember you need to be patient with yourself and not give up when the going gets tough. Stick to the practice for at least six weeks before evaluating.

When journaling, if you need a break for a day or two, take it and don't beat yourself up. But once you've had your day or two break, keep going and trust the process. A key question: Why is it worthwhile for you to keep journaling?

Journal Prompts

This journal is designed to be used as a free flowing process – not as a rigid formula to follow. However, it’s nice to have some guidance especially as you begin the practice and are asking, “What exactly do I write?”

On the bottom of every other page is a set of journaling prompts. These are designed to give you categories and topic areas to journal about. Below are questions you can ask as you learn the prompts and cultivate your journaling practice.



Thanks – What am I thankful for?

Feelings – What am I experiencing emotionally? What’s my mood or heart condition?

Insights – What am I learning, reading, and thinking about? What new idea is coming to me?

Questions – What questions am I asking? What am I curious about? What is unresolved?

Prayer – What do I want to say to God? What is he saying to me?

Change – What do I need to work on or change in my life? Where do I need to grow?

Action – What action do I need to take or plan do I need to make?

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

– Socrates

“My journal is a storehouse, a treasury for everything in my daily life: the stories I hear, the people I meet, the quotations I like, and even the subtle signs and symbols I encounter that speak to me indirectly.” – Dorothy U. Seyler

“Just write every day of your life. Then see what happens.”
- Ray Bradbury

