Annette Robinson: Journaling Advice to other Women EXEMPLAR
I would explain journaling in the context of Svadhyaya (self-study) one of the Niyamas and
encourage women to adopt a journaling practice as a means of self-reflection. I would
incorporate journaling into workshops and homework activities as a strategy that may support
women throughout the menopause.
I would briefly share my own experience of journaling, which has been positive and I am an
advocate of the practice. The benefits that I have personally experienced include:
- Increased my self-awareness,
- I am better able to articulate and make sense of issues that were bothering me, I.e.
calm my inner voice,
- I appreciate and feel grateful for everything I have,
- Learning from situations that I feel I didn’t handle well and are praying on my mind,
- Reduced stress and feelings of anxiety
- Reflect on the day or plan for the day ahead
In addition, research studies have been conducted including a study by Baikie & Wilhelm,
2005 where clients reported a wide range of physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits from
journaling including:
- Lowered blood pressure,
- Improved lung and liver function,
- Less time spent in hospital,
- Better moods,
- Improved psychological wellbeing,
- Fewer depressive and avoidance symptoms,
- Reduced stress-related visits to the doctor,
- Less work absenteeism,
- Less time out of work following job loss,
- Higher student grade averages.
Research into gratitude journaling, Fredrickson, 2010, relieves that “study participants who
regularly drew their attention to aspects of their lives that made them feel blessed increased
their positivity”.
Advice on How to Journal
There is no right or wrong way to journal and I would encourage women to experiment with
different approaches to find something that suits them. I would encourage them to find a
consistent time of the day, either early morning or at the end of the day, as this helps to form a
habit and embed the practice.
Different approaches to experiment with include:

- Daily logs or trackers that record what you eat and drink and when, exercise,
menopause symptoms, emotions, sleep patterns etc.
- Using journalling questions to aid reflection on past life, including what has given them
most happiness, what has given you a sense of purpose, what they are ‘holding on to’
that no longer serves them, what have you done for yourself today / this week / month?
etc.
- Questions to plan the future (planning can include the short, medium and long term).
Examples include: if you were to fast forward 5 – 10 years where will you be living, what
will you have done / achieved, what will a typical day look like, how will you be feeling,
what advice would you give your younger self? If you are to achieve this what do you
need to start, stop or continue doing now?
- Shorter term forward planning maybe around goal setting for the month and/or year
ahead, e.g. setting 3 goals for the month ahead including what needs to happen to
ensure success and how might you overcome any setbacks.
- Reflective journaling involves reflecting on what has happened, what your thoughts
and emotions have been. Prompts include: what has gone well that I am proud of, how
have I felt today, did I do / say / think / feel emotions that did not serve me? Why did I
behave / think / feel this – what were the triggers? What might I do differently if this
were to happen in the future?
- Gratitude Journaling - (a favorite of mine) involves writing 1 or more (I opt for 3) things
that you are grateful for, this can include something you did for someone today or
someone did for you, something you are proud of, or simply things that you have
appreciated about the day / week.
- Intentions – what are your intentions today, what will bring you happiness today?
- Free writing – this can supported by a few prompts or not. I would suggest taking a few
minutes of meditation or breathwork to calm the mind and body before starting and
allow yourself to write about whatever comes to mind. What and how you write is not
important, it is purely a way of expressing yourself, creating self-awareness and
expression.
Incorporating Journaling
In a workshop setting I would include journaling questions following the practice and (time
permitting) beforehand and also provide prompt questions to take away. I would also include
a handout on journaling with links to sources of information and guidanc