



People, Passion, Performance

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*See the wood for the trees:
Journalling helps create distance and
reveal new insights*

Spotlight on: Journalling

Simply writing out our frustrations and challenges takes them out of our heads, and creates distance and new perspectives

Journalling is one of those rare spaces where we can take time out to reflect on the events, places and people in our life in a completely uncensored way. We can say everything that is on our mind, without fear of reprisal or offence. This is a safe space to reflect, vent, explore and vision. It is our private world where we are safe to be who we truly are: the best and the not-so-great.

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“The Fringe Benefits of Failure”

We seldom consider the benefits of failure. In fact, most of us spend our lives running away from failure, fearing that it will somehow make us less than we are. But what if failure is actually a success? What if it means that we have dared to dream, and attempted to make that dream a reality? That we have been true to ourselves? That we have, like Edison, eliminated another way that does not work?

What if, as JK Rowling suggests, failure brings us the awareness of who we are, when we strip away success? In this speech, presented at this year's Harvard Graduation, she presents an alternative view of failure. She told the graduates that the greatest piece of wisdom she could give them was: failure is a process of stripping away all that is superfluous.

Failure can bring profound self-awareness: the knowledge that we can survive life's challenges. Failure can provide us with an opportunity to understand ourselves and others more deeply. And the resilience to cope with 'failure' - to bounce back again - is one of the characteristics of truly great human beings.

Sometimes, it is worth taking a measured, considered risk in order to live up to our highest potential. A risk that will hurt no-one other than ourselves can inspire us. These risks keep us fresh and challenge us to reach new levels of performance. And if we fail, there are still fringe benefits available!

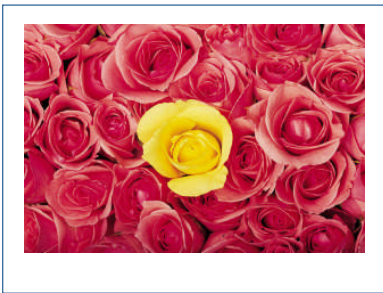
[Click here to read JK Rowling's full speech](#)

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Spotlight on: Journalling

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Taking a considered risk in pursuit of our dreams can bring new insights, even if, on the surface, it appears unsuccessful.

The act of writing down our thoughts and feelings puts them outside our mind physically. It allows us to distance ourselves from their intensity. By writing things down we can look at them in a slightly different way. And even though it is only a small space, its impact can be huge.

One client found herself swamped by personal and professional worries. There was just too much going on in her life. She felt overwhelmed. She chose to experiment with journalling. Over the course of a week, she wrote three A4 sheets every day.

By the end of the week, she had found that this one tool gave her a wider perspective. It allowed her to vent her fury, confusion and pain safely, with no impact on others.

She also found that through writing she developed clarity about the events, people and situations over which she had no control and those where she did have control. This allowed her to make clear decisions about where she could take action and have an impact and, conversely, where events were beyond her sphere of influence and she could consciously let them go.

Journalling is a deceptively simple tool with profound effects.

Share your wisdom: Life's Letters

Through the very act of living, we have gained wisdom and understanding. We know things that others do not know. But most of the time, we don't even know how wise we are!

What if you had to write a letter to a young child you know, to be opened when they turned 18? What would you want this young adult to know? What wisdom and experience could you share that would help them navigate through life with greater ease? What do you wish you had known when you were 18?

As we focus on journalling, risks and failures, we are inviting you to contribute to small collection: *Life's Letters*. It is a compendium of letters from our readers to the children they love, sharing their life's wisdom.

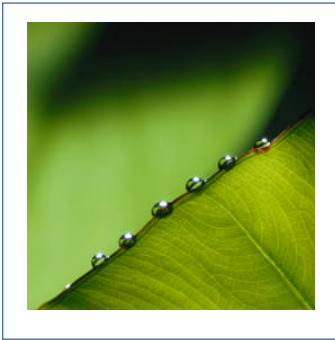
The closing date for the letters is August 31st 2008. Please email your letter to Jennifer:

jennifer.hurley@lamontassociates.com

All contributors will receive a free copy of this unique collection.

"It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well have not lived at all – in which case, you fail by default."

JK Rowling



Ideas to try: Journalling

Journalling can also help us access our deeper wisdom. Write freely without stopping for 45 minutes on an issue. Keep writing, non-stop, until you have three full A4 pages written.

If you get stuck, just write “I am stuck” until your thoughts move on again. The first few pages are likely to be uninspired ramblings from your conscious mind. However, towards the end, the mind moves into a deeper level of awareness and reveals new insights.

Try this technique whenever you are struggling for clarity. The insights can be quite surprising!

Story – The Invitation

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.

I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.

I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool, for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon...

I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shrivelled and closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it, or fade it or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own; if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true.

I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself.

If you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.

If you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see Beauty, even when it is not pretty, every day.

And if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand at the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, “Yes.”

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have.

I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here.

I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.

I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself

and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

Oriah Mountain Dreamer, May 1994

www.oriahmountaindreamer.com