

Journal writing

Wisdom and Inspiration · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

Regarding writing a journal. I NEVER encourage my students to spend time on journal writing. This writing time would be better spent writing saleable articles. Journals are merely private thoughts. A written form of talking to yourself. A diary. Journals are usually never shown to anyone. A few famous people publish edited versions of their journals in later years. But by and large, journals are intensely private recordings. The writing of a journal has nothing to do with writing saleable articles. You need no discipline, no research, no work ethic to write a journal. If you don't do it for a month, no one knows. If you use wrong grammar and poor spelling, no one can point out such mistakes. If your writing is sloppy, maudlin, cruel, libellous, self-indulgent or even silly and childish, who knows? Many journal writers write lies: they are in fact writing what they'd like their lives to be, rather than writing about the truth of their own lives. In writing saleable journalistic articles:

- You need to be disciplined about time
- You must do good research
- You need to get other people's cooperation to produce FRESH quotes said to you
- You must write for your target publication in order to get published

And then your writing is out there for the world to see, and maybe to criticise. I can't see how keeping a journal makes any student of mine a better freelance journalist. But the main reason I discourage journal writing is simply this: every moment you spend on your private journal is a moment you could spend on putting together a saleable article. That's money in the bank!! Think about it. If you disagree, tell me.

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