



## The Value of Keeping a Leadership Journal

**Reflective writing “fires-up” critical thinking** – There have been various studies showing reflective writing as a learning method, which promotes critical thinking skills.

**Promotes deeper exploration of ideas** – I use journaling as an opportunity to ask myself questions to probe deeper into my thoughts and ideas on leadership. (e.g., *Why is this important? Who are others who have done this before me? What did they do differently? What is another way to think about this?* etc..)

**Facilitates “complete” thinking** – writing down thoughts into words, forces me to think through and process my thoughts fully. When I write, I have the ability to go back, re-read, re-process, add, delete, modify or just take the time to think more about what’s been written. By writing down my ideas, I have the benefit of capturing my initial thoughts on paper, along with the benefit of taking time to think about what I’ve recorded in order to fully complete my thoughts.

**Writing gives “ownership” to thoughts** – Reflective writing solidifies my understanding of my beliefs on the topics I’m writing about. I internalize my thoughts to be my “own,” which in turn becomes my experience.

**A chronicle of ideas** – A journal is the ultimate repository of thoughts and ideas. These thoughts can be put into action now, or put on the “back stove” to simmer until another day.

### Final Thoughts

1. I have to admit, when I first thought about keeping a leadership journal, I was a bit embarrassed. I had visions of a “dear diary” entry sharing my inner feelings on “foofy” leadership hocus-pocus. I also held the belief; I had to do an entry every day. Finally, I felt my journal had to be filled with well written thoughts (i.e. good handwriting, no typos, etc.).
2. The truth is I use my leadership journal as a notebook of ideas, questions, thoughts, goals, etc. It’s somewhere in the middle of a classroom notebook and whiteboard of random ideas. Sometimes I capture my thoughts multiple times a day. Sometimes I don’t have any updates for a few days. My writing resembles chicken-scratch (*mom said I should have been a doctor with my handwriting*), and I often cross things out and have arrows pulling different thoughts together. It’s not pretty, but it works for me.
3. I started my leadership journal a few months ago. In the short time I’ve been capturing my thoughts, I’ve already found I’m learning and retaining more information in these areas. And while I may not be the perfect manager, I’ve built better awareness of my philosophies and thoughts, as well as a nice collection of best practices on areas I’ve researched along the way.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hebert, C. Vice President, Professional Services, Taleo. California, USA. Posted online 11-02-04 at <http://management411.net/about-2> Date of last access 12-12-22