

Explore Day to Day

www.ERICAMIDKIFF.com

THE INTENTIONAL WRITING PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

I'm so glad you're here! I truly believe that writing (the behind-the-scenes kind you do for yourself) can help when you're struggling through a tough day, wrestling with an idea that just won't come together, dealing with a difficult season, or simply feeling your mind race with thoughts and ideas and *all the things*.

But finding a way into this kind of writing isn't always easy. So I created this short (but powerful!) guide to remove many of the barriers. In it, you'll find:

- **A simple process to use each time you write.** If you follow the same process each time, you'll be more likely to do this kind of writing as it becomes more automatic.
- **Prompts to use for multiple scenarios.** When you have a lot on your mind, you're not always able to pull back far enough to see what would help you in that moment. These prompts take the guesswork out of getting started.
- **Ideas for how to use what you wrote.** Sometimes just getting it out of you is enough. But if you feel there's something valuable buried in what you wrote, this will help you uncover it!
- **Worksheets to help you capture ideas.** This kind of work often gives me lots of ideas, so I'm giving you space to capture yours!
- **The next step in your intentional writing journey.** I've created a 31-day writing experience that to help you keep going!

THE SIMPLE WRITING PROCESS

Often, we don't do the things we know will help us (like this kind of writing) because we feel like they'll take a lot of effort. If you follow this simple process each time you do this kind of writing, you'll eventually create a habit that makes this sort of writing feel much easier and more accessible!

1. **Make space.** Turn off any distracting noises, clear a little space around your keyboard or notebook, and make sure you're comfortable.
2. **Create cues.** Light the same candle, use the same pen and notebook, or turn on the same playlist—whatever you choose, make sure you do it each time, as a signal to your mind that it's time to focus.

3. **Set a timer.** I can't truly let go if I'm worried about how much time has passed. Using a timer gives me freedom to truly sink into the writing without worrying I've gone on too long—and means I won't get distracted by my computer or phone as I check the time! Experiment to see what amount of time works best for you. Start with five minutes—you can get a lot out of your head in that time!
4. **Write continuously.** Your only real rule: You can't stop writing for the entire time. If you get stuck, write about being stuck. If you get distracted, write about being distracted! Just keep going until the timer goes off—and if you're still in the flow when it does, just reset that timer and keep going!

ONCE YOU'RE DONE WRITING

Follow these steps once you've finished writing to make the most of the time you just invested in yourself.

1. **See how you feel.** Sometimes the act of writing is enough—you've found the answer, cleared your mind, realized there's nothing to worry about. If you don't need to do anything else to feel better, great! Walk away feeling refreshed. But if you want to untangle all you just wrote, move to the next step.
2. **Take space.** Walk away, even if it's just for five minutes. Think about something else; get your focus away from what you just wrote. Then return to your writing with new eyes.
3. **Look for patterns and clues.** You can use highlighters, you can mind map or make groups of words on a new piece of paper, you can circle and underline and add exclamation points—whatever method you choose, the point is to review what you're written while noticing things that you've repeated, ideas that connect in ways you hadn't thought of, and other aha moments.
4. **Take action!** Look at all that you noticed. What do you need to do with this information? Save it for later? Start a project? Take a few action steps? Create a new habit? Whatever it is, make sure you take action.

THAT'S IT!

Yes, it's really that simple. This kind of writing has to be—otherwise, we wouldn't do it! Think of this guide as a big old permission slip to keep the process of writing for yourself simple and I think you'll see greater results.

Now, on to the fun part: the prompts!

THE INTENTIONAL WRITING PROMPTS

If you're working through a big idea, start with:

I'm so excited about...

This can help you get everything down on paper before you sort through and look for connections and make big decisions.

If you're trying to come up with content, start with:

I wish everyone knew (or believed, did, understood, acted on, etc.)...

This can help you pull out ideas you weren't entirely conscious of, and write content that holds meaning for both you and your audience.

If you're trying to work through a difficult time or emotion, start with

I'm feeling...

This can help you look closely at what you're truly struggling with and possibly even find some answers.

If your mind is simply feeling full and jumbled, start with:

Right now, I'm thinking about...

This can help you relieve your mind of all the things it's trying to hold, clearing the space you need.

If you're finding it hard to focus on the task at hand, start with:

I can't stop thinking about...

This gives your mind a little space to play with your ideas before you get back to work.

If you feel like your day has been chaotic, start with:

Today, I noticed beauty in...

This can help you hit pause and focus on a small moment or thing (sunlight on the wall, the good fortune of no traffic lights on the way home, the sun peeking through the clouds) and calm your mind.

If you're feeling comparison, start with:

Here's what I know to be true about myself...

This pulls you back to your own world and what's right for you!

THE WORKSHEETS

If you've been around me long, you know I'm a fool for a worksheet. I find that when I do this kind of writing, and as I move through my life, ideas and plans inevitably surface. If I don't write them down, I lose them! So I've created a way to capture them, and wanted to share that with you.

At the end of this guide, you'll find three worksheets:

- **Ideas to Consider.** This is for recording ideas that come up as you write. There is space to number those ideas (so if you need to keep scribbling on the back of the page, you can use the numbers to stay organized) as well as room for the type of idea (*new offering, Instagram post, home project, etc.*), details, and the decision you make (*act now, collaborate, wait until February, or whatever!*).
- **Action Steps.** Just as you'll come up with ideas, you'll come up with things you *know* you want to do. It's way too easy to think, *Oh, I'll remember to do that*—but I find I rarely remember, and you may feel the same. So use this worksheet to capture your ideas, whether for a project like *start a newsletter* (make sure you break it down into smaller steps later!) or a specific task like *change the font color in my newsletter header*, so you don't have to worry about remembering a thing! I've left room for a deadline and an estimate of how much time that action step will take on each line, but feel free to use those spaces any way you like.
- **Notes + Connections.** This final worksheet is for all other notes, observations, and connections. You may have your own notebook or system for this, and that's totally fine—but I love having all my materials match, so if you want to use this page, go for it.

You'll find these at the very end of this guide. I hope you enjoy them!

THE NEXT STEP

I hope you're able to use these prompts to slow down a bit and make sure there's space in your mind for all the different things you have going on!

If you enjoy doing this kind of writing and want to experiment with making it an everyday habit, I made something for you:

Explore: 31 Days of Intentional Writing

Here's the thing. Starting a new habit, or fully committing to trying out something new, is tough these days.

There are a lot of things pulling at our time, energy, and attention...and no matter how well-meaning we are, a lot of times the practices that could truly help us (like writing, or meditation, or deep breathing) are easy to forget in the moment.

I created Explore as a way to really *commit* to this kind of writing, to experiment with what it could do for you.

If you're up for the challenge, here's what you'll get when you sign up for Explore:

- **Daily prompts.** Each day for 31 days, you'll get a meaningful prompt in your inbox. These will be a bit more open-ended than the ones you found in this guide; for example, a prompt might be *Write about a tough choice you had to make*. I then give you some clarifying information about the prompt and some starter lines (like I provided in this guide) to help you start writing.
- **A welcome guide.** What you get out of Explore is totally up to you, but the more you prepare, the more you'll get. This guide will help you set a clear intention for the 31 days and prepare both your mind and your space for what's to come!
- **Weekly encouragement.** Each week, in one of the prompt emails, you'll find some encouragement tailored to where you are in the process. It's easy to start strong with something like this, but lots of things can get in the way. These encouragement emails will nudge you back in the right direction.
- **A weekly reminder to check in with your intention.** The intention you set at the beginning of Explore is a big part of the experience, so it's important that you check in with it regularly, both celebrating your progress and adjusting

course as needed. Each week, in one of your prompt emails, you'll get a reminder to do just that!

- **A wrap-up guide.** The last prompt is not the end of Explore. After you do the writing, after you build the momentum, it's time to decide what to *do* with those things. This guide will help you sort through all you wrote, find connections and patterns, make decisions, and even set a new intention to try for the next 31 days (whether it be writing or painting or something else entirely!).
- **A real chance to create a habit that could make a big difference in your life.** I really believe in this kind of writing, and signing up for a program like Explore can help you make it a part of your everyday life.

If you're ready to invest in yourself, ready to make space in your mind and in your everyday life, I'd love to have you!

ericamidkiff.com/explorewriting

I wish you all the best of luck in your writing endeavors!

With much love,
Erica

IDEAS TO CONSIDER

IDEA NO.

TYPE

DECISION

DETAILS

IDEA NO.

TYPE

DECISION

DETAILS

IDEA NO.

TYPE

DECISION

DETAILS

NOTES + CONNECTIONS



Lined area for notes and connections, consisting of 30 horizontal lines.