



Keyword: Learning Journal

Learn More, and Faster, with a Learning Journal

by Kevin Eikenberry

When I worked in Corporate America many people carried steno pads with them everywhere they went, writing their notes from meetings, decisions made, and more. I frequently saw these people reviewing these notes, looking for ideas, clues from conversations, agreements and more. One of the organizations I am currently consulting with has a similar habit.

I'm guessing that in these two technical, engineering-driven organizations there are very few people who say that they "use a journal." After all, in my experience, people think that journals are kept mostly by artists and writers and teenage girls.

However, these corporate citizens really are journaling, and so are the artists, writers and teenage girls for that matter. What they are not doing (or at least most of them anyway) is writing a **learning journal**.

A Learning Journal is a special type of journal used to help accelerate learning. It works because it helps us reflect on and gain the lessons available to us from our daily experiences.

Form and Format

Your learning journal is uniquely yours so your guide to the form should be whatever works for you. It could be a steno pad; a fancy, leather-bound journal; a three ring binder with loose leaf paper; a special file in your pc; on a blog; extra pages in your planner; a legal pad or whatever else works for you. The most important part of the 'form' is that it must work for you.

I encourage you to consider your working patterns - what will be easily accessible for you to use at any time, and what format will allow you to save these journals into the future. One of the great values of this tool is being able to look back at entries days, months or even years later.

Having said that, in our increasingly digital world, I do find that there is value in writing, as opposed to always typing. So, if your first inclination is to do this on your pc, I encourage you to at least try another approach - you might be surprised how valuable it is (even for someone who is handwriting-challenged like me!).



Learn More, and Faster, with a Learning Journal (continued)

What to Write

Like what you may consider a 'normal' journal, your learning journal should be a place to capture things that are happening in your day, ideas you have, decisions you have made and more. Many people use their learning journals to record their goals as well. I personally have a separate goal journal, but that is personal preference only – again you should make your learning journal uniquely yours.

People who are already using notepads in their work are heading down the right path. Everything that they are writing is great; it just isn't everything they need to write. Creating the learning portion of your learning journal requires one more component – questions.

Asking yourself the right questions – and answering them – creates the lessons and insights; writing them down in your journal solidifies them and makes them yours forever.

Ask yourself questions like:

- What happened?
- Why?
- What is the lesson?
- How can I apply this to another situation?
- What could I do differently next time?
- How could this problem/challenge/issue be solved/removed?

Of course, there are as many questions as there are learning opportunities, but this very short list should at least get you started.

These questions are designed to help you reflect on your daily events and happenings to use as fodder for your own development and progress. Asking and answering them regularly will make a big difference in your results.

When to Write

When do you learn something new? That is the time to write in your learning journal.

Here's a hint – that probably means every day. You can put the dates on your entries or not (again, personal preference), but for a learning journal to be of greatest value to you it needs to be written in and reviewed regularly/daily.



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The discipline that will be required to get into this habit will be quickly repaid. Personally, I find when I haven't written in my journal for several days, I can tell the difference in my attitude, energy level and productivity. Daily discipline pays!

Recognize that this new habit doesn't mean 30 minutes less sleep each day – it just means making time to stop and think, and record those thoughts as you have them.

Keeping a learning journal is one of the most underutilized tools in our personal and professional development tool kits today. As you begin keeping a learning journal you will see how valuable it can be to you. It can be very low cost and not require much time, yet the rewards are huge.

Start today and you'll see results and benefits within two to three days. And those benefits will multiply exponentially into the future.

So, if you learned something reading this article, right now could be the best time to start.

What are you waiting for?



Kevin Eikenberry is a bestselling author, consultant, trainer, speaker, coach, leader, learner, husband and father. He is the Chief Potential Officer of the Kevin Eikenberry Group (www.KevinEikenberry.com) and the Creator of the Remarkable Leadership Learning System (www.Remarkable-Leadership.com), both of which are dedicated to life-long learning and helping Clients unleash their remarkable potential. Interested in becoming the remarkable leader you were born to be? Go to www.Remarkable-Leadership.com today!
