



## **Journaling as a Simple Tool to Augment Theophostic Ministry**

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People often ask us about tools they can use and/or homework they can do to help increase the fruitfulness of Theophostic ministry they receive. One simple tool that can augment the effectiveness of Theophostic ministry is journaling. This essay includes a few specific thoughts and examples that will hopefully encourage others to use this simple tool. We are also hoping that Theophostic therapists/ministers will find this essay useful as something they can hand out to people for whom they think journaling might be helpful.

I'm sure there are many helpful thoughts about journaling that we have not included here, but this can at least be a start.

### **Journaling “whatever comes into my mind” as a simple way to augment self-Theophostic:**

As I have gotten more healing through others ministering to me, especially addressing lies regarding the character of God, I have been experiencing increasingly better results with self-Theophostic. However, there are still two problems that I often encounter when doing self Theophostic: 1) I don't recognize the importance and/or meaning of thoughts/emotions/images/memories/etc. when they are only inside my head, and 2) My mind often wanders/gets distracted.

I have found that writing down the thoughts/emotions/images/etc. that come into my mind can function in much the same way as speaking them out loud, as I would do in a session where someone is ministering to me. Just as with getting thoughts/emotions/images/etc. “into the light” by speaking them out loud, somehow it is easier to recognize the importance and/or meaning of my mental content when I get it out of my head and into the light by writing it down. This simple step of writing things down has also been very helpful in preventing distraction or mental wandering.

My experience is that journaling with self-Theophostic is about “half way” between self-Theophostic and having someone else minister Theophostic to me. It's not as effective as having another person to help deal with blind spots and to help resolve clutter, but it's better than self-Theophostic alone.

It obviously takes time to journal in this way, so the flow of your self-Theophostic will go faster if you don't need to journal. However, if you are having trouble getting stuck, distracted, etc., I would recommend trying this journaling technique as a simple way to augment your self-Theophostic.

**Journaling as “homework” that can augment the Theophostic process:** The “writing down everything that comes into my mind,” as I am actually in the process of self-Theophostic, is a very specific way to use journaling. In response to the above material about journaling and self-Theophostic, we received a number of notes that described other ways in which journaling can be used as a simple kind of “homework” that one can do to augment the Theophostic process, whether self-Theophostic or Theophostic ministry facilitated by someone else. I am including

two of these notes here, as they provide some additional specific examples of how journaling can be used as a helpful tool:

“Often times, especially when alters have appeared on the scene during Theophostic ministry, I JOURNAL MY HEART OUT after I get home, and often for several days following. I start with what just transpired during the ministry session, by noticing a painful emotion, or by noticing some trigger that is bothering me. I then ask the Lord what He wants to show me, and write down whatever comes. Writing has also been a wonderful tool to use when I have hurtful thoughts and judgments. I write them out and ask for forgiveness, and then ask the Lord for anything else He wants to show me and write down whatever comes. As I write, additional material will be exposed – more and more just flows out of my heart/mind. As this happens, I receive additional clarity from the Lord, and then I go again for more ministry.” (Linda)

Journaling on the computer: “When I type, I can somehow dissociate in a way that allows my parts freedom to talk. I was told not to tell secrets. They didn't tell me not to write or draw. So I carry on some pretty interesting dialogues with my parts on the computer and find out more details than I would in most conversations. They just go on and on.... What I do is type in my question, then start a new line and type in their answer. I let them say ANYTHING they want (including if they hate me, God, or strong language to express their hatred or rage). If they want it in caps, bolded, or in a larger font, I do that. Before I'm finished I put my questions in one font and theirs in another so I can read it later more easily. I save all these by date and with the name of the part for later reference.” (Wanda)

**Caveat – Minimal results with journaling alone:** In my experience with many years of journaling, journaling *alone* has been relatively ineffective in producing deep, lasting changes. Journaling *alone* helped me think about my issues, verbalize my issues, and cognitively understand my issues, but it did not result in the deep, lasting changes that I experience with Theophostic ministry. I remember once looking at my journaling entries from 10 years earlier, and realizing that the content was pretty much the same stuff I was still journaling about – ten years later, and I was still journaling about the same triggers and the same “stuck” issues. Journaling *has* been very valuable in producing deep and lasting changes *in combination with Theophostic ministry, as an augmenting tool.*