

Write away

We all go through times of real upset, and wonder how we can find a way through. Talking to friends and family can help; but for some of us, or at certain times, that doesn't feel like a real option.

Did you know that writing can be very helpful for our physical and emotional health, at these times?

Dr Pennebaker, from Texas, looked into this. He asked the people in his research to spend 15 minutes a day, for 3 to 5 days, writing about some emotional upheaval in their life at the moment. (For comparison, some other people were asked to write facts about neutral things like the day's events.)

Fascinating results! Those writing about their feelings all experienced measurable health benefits from daily writing – lower blood pressure, better sleep, stronger immune systems, raised mood, better working memory, and fewer visits to the doctor.

When we can't find a good and trusted listener, a blank page can help us to get our feelings untangled. By writing we can unpack the confusion in our heart and mind.

Somehow, by getting how we feel about a problem 'out there', it stops having such a grip on us and we can then think and deal with whatever it is more effectively. We are more attentive, to listen for our inner sense of direction.

Get a notebook, and keep it confidential. You can shred it after, if you want – it's the writing, not the keeping, which is most helpful. Though sometimes it is interesting to look back on what you've written later, and see what's changed.

Give it a try yourself for a while, and see the difference it makes!



-- *Christine Rigden*
Insights for Change