



**Journaling for
Emotional Sobriety:**
Facing Painful or Uncomfortable Emotions
By Lynne Cobb

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Painful and difficult emotions are hard to face. That is why journaling is an important part of a healing journey. The opportunity to connect the dots in your life's story makes journaling a powerful exercise.

Hiding from – or burying – unwanted emotions seems to be a good way to protect ourselves. By doing so, we don't experience the pain negative emotions bring.

However, hiding from unwanted emotions has the opposite affect. By not looking into the source of triggers, we don't see the wound, validate its existence, nor do we have the opportunity to heal it.

Negative emotions have a way of “coming out sideways,” hurting ourselves and/or others.

Learning to understand the root of the pain is the first step to emotional sobriety.

The prompts I use in this E-book, which I found on PsychCentral,* have been adapted and/or borrowed to help you

gain the emotional sobriety needed to live a healthy and emotionally sober life.

Additionally, the workbook, [*Maintaining Emotional Sobriety During COVID-19—Transforming Trauma into Post-Traumatic Growth*](#),** by Tian Dayton, PhD, TEP, has been a fantastic resource for me, as I work through trauma from childhood as well as adulthood.

Take your time. Breathe. Reflect. There is no rush to working these prompts. In fact, it may be a good idea to start to get into a journaling practice before attempting the self-reflection needed for these deeper, self-reflective and possibly triggering prompts. A triggering response can make you feel anxious, panicky, or you may feel like you are reacting more than a situation may warrant.

I applaud you for wanting to do the hard work of growing into the best version of you, and I wish you well on your healing journey. To your healthier self!!



*Note: The [PsychCentral article](#) where I found these prompts, written by Crystal Raypole, were medically reviewed by [Jacquelyn Johnson, PsyD](#). Dr. Jacquelyn Johnson is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in California.

** See Resources on page 10

Prompts for Getting in Touch with Uncomfortable and Difficult Emotions

What difficult thoughts come up most frequently for you?

What difficult emotions come up most frequently for you?

Which emotions do you find hardest to accept (guilt, anger, disappointment, etc.)? How do you handle these emotions?

Describe a choice you made that you regret. What did you learn from it?

What parts of daily life cause stress, frustration, or sadness?
What can you do to change those experiences?

What are three things that can instantly disrupt a good mood and bring you down? What strategies do you use to counter these effects?

- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____

Prompts for Getting in Touch with Uncomfortable and Difficult Emotions

What are three self-defeating thoughts that show up in your self-talk? How can you reframe them to encourage yourself instead?

What “go to” coping strategies help you get through moments of emotional or physical pain?

Who do you trust with your most painful and upsetting feelings? How can you connect with that person (or a pet) when feeling low? What connection works best for you?

What do you fear most? Have your fears changed throughout life?

Prompts for Getting in Touch with Uncomfortable and Difficult Emotions

When you think of a current event that triggered you, sit back for a moment. How old do you feel? Can you match up what you are currently feeling to a particular age?

What emotions come up with the above prompt? Where do you feel it in your body?

What is the truth about the event? What “lies” do you hear? Do you hear that you aren’t safe, or good enough? Do you feel unworthy or unlovable?

Are you safe in the moment? Are you lovable? What words can you tell your younger self to comfort him or her?

What can you do to care for yourself?

The last journal prompt is a great way to end this Ebook. *What can you do to care for yourself?* It is truly where we want to get to when we are emotionally overwhelmed. We want to acknowledge the emotion(s) and what message(s) it is trying to tell us. However, we don't want to get stuck in a negative place.

When I feel overwhelmed or stuck in a negative place, I try to do "the next right thing for me." Self-care on this journey is very important, and I will be publishing an Ebook to explain that component of this healing process.

There may be times that some of the wounds and trauma we want to heal need the guidance of a trauma therapist or coach. Never feel ashamed to ask for help. It is the best self-care you can do for yourself on this journey of healing and life.

My late granddaughter has reminded me throughout my journey: "Mema, you are stronger than you know." Believe her words. *You, dear reader, are stronger than you know.*

About the Author

Lynne is a writer and journalist, with over 30 years of experience covering feature stories and human interests. Research is one of her hobbies, which has served her well as she navigates a healing journey, learning about emotions, trauma and original wounds.

Her mid-life lifestyle blog is a place where she muses about a bit of everything – from opinions to family to humor to travel. Of recent, she has added a series on grief and trauma entitled, “Love, Loss and...”

A metro-Detroiter, Lynne’s print media journey as a “real writer” started when she became a regular contributor for her community’s weekly newspaper. The editor of the *Mirror Newspapers* took a chance on a column written for [Christmas](#). His generosity led her to other fantastic writing opportunities. Before budget cuts ended a wonderful opportunity in yet another local, weekly publication, Lynne’s readers could find her articles in the pages of the *Detroit Free Press – Twist* magazine.

Lynne has had op-eds published in major dailies, a series of columns published in *Military Spouse Magazine* and held positions as an assistant editor for a local newspaper and associate editor of *MetroParent* magazine. She spent some time as a reporter and writer for the hyper-local *Royal Oak Patch*. Lynne has had articles published in Guideposts’ [Angels on Earth](#), the *Easter Ideals 2015* and [Michigan Prime Magazine](#). She is also a contributing author in the anthology, [Feisty after 45](#). Several of her blog posts have been featured on Erma Bombeck’s Writing Workshop page, Midlife Boulevard, BlogHer, Vibrant Nation and HuffPost50. She is also a member of [Detroit Working Writers](#) and the [National Society of Newspaper Columnists](#). Lynne has her Bachelor of Arts/Journalism Studies from UWW-UMass-Amherst.

As Lynne has embarked on a healing journey, kicked off by what she calls her “Dark Night of the Soul,” she has an essay published in [What I Do to Get Through](#), with proceeds going to support mental health care in Scotland—from where some of her ancestors emigrated. Currently, she is facilitating workshops that encourage others to do a deep-dive into healing trauma and wounds through journaling.

To contact Lynne via email: lynne@lynnecobb.com

For more information on workshops, visit: lynnecobb.com

Resources:

[Maintaining Emotional Sobriety During COVID-19](#)

(*Amazon affiliate link. Thank you for your purchase, as it helps me to offer free Ebooks!)

[Psych Central](#)

[Feelings Wheel](#)

[Love, Loss and...](#)

Additional Notes:



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