



A Year in the Life: Journaling for Self-Discovery

By Sheila Bender

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Using a masterful blend of guidance, idea prompts and self-evaluation advice, Bender nurtures readers through one year of soul searching through journal writing.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

It's a pity this book is presented solely as a tool for greater self-knowledge. Don't get us wrong: there's nothing wrong with introspection, and *A Year in the Life* helps train your gaze to far greater reaches than your navel. But there are so many fine writing exercises here, taking their cues from so many wonderful sources, that it would be a pity for the subtitle ("Journaling for Self-Discovery") to scare off any writer in search of a good workout. Author Sheila Bender's premise is that "journaling can help you emotionally, spiritually, and physically, as well as with your writing." Bender offers 52 journaling exercises, one for each week of the year. Each exercise is accompanied with a series of six "extensions," for those writers ambitious enough to take their pens for a daily jog. (At the back of the book are a generous handful of exercises geared toward specific holidays and life events.) One week, we are asked to write about the secrets we are keeping. Another has us consider a question we were asked that hurt or offended us. In still another, we are invited to recall a game from childhood.

Some of the most enticing exercises are those inspired by the writings of others. Frank O'Hara wrote a poem in which the sun conversed with him--you can, too. Gary Snyder wrote a poem called "Things to Do Around a Lookout"; you can pick your own place to write about in similar fashion. And try writing, as Frances Mayes does in *Under the Tuscan Sun*, about a time when you were "a guest at a table of people you didn't know." --Jane Steinberg

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