

# **Writing for Emotional Healing:**

## **A Guided Journal Using Reflective Writing Therapy<sup>sm</sup>**

BY CHAUNDRA MCGILL

## SPECIAL THANKS

To those who have supported me through my journey, I cannot express the depth of my gratitude. Every day you've helped to reaffirm my dream. Your collective blessings are my continued motivation.

Chaundra  
McGill

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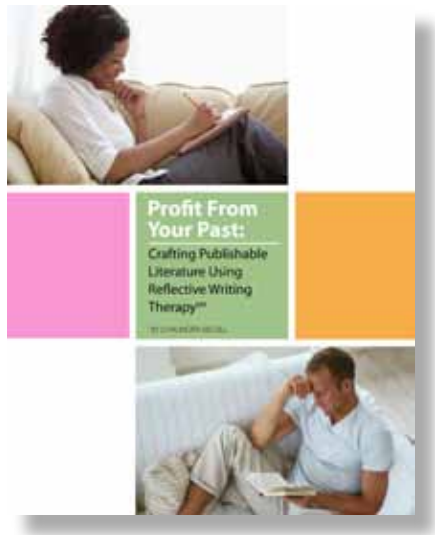
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Everyone wants to be happy. We spend a lifetime chasing this elusive feeling, getting glimpses of elation when the sun shines perfectly on a given day. And even though we can't be happy all of the time, we certainly try.

The promise of happiness convinces people that money is the key, causes them to seek their fifteen minutes of fame, and entices them to locate that fountain of youth.

Even if we have not gone so far as to brave the plastic surgeon's knife, tried out for a reality show, or fell victim to a get-rich-quick scheme, we have all, at one time or another, tried to find happiness in our relationships, jobs, or possessions.

But why does it seem like the harder we try to find happiness, the deeper it becomes buried in disappointment? This is because the key to happiness is actually not happiness at all. In fact, our pursuit should not be happiness, but emotional well-being. However, before we can be emotionally well, we must first emotionally heal.

This e-book will aide you on your journey of emotional healing using Reflective Writing Therapy. This guided journal will take you step-by-step through the process of dealing with your emotional pain and establishing a foundation for emotional well-being.

# Introduction

Many people instantly equate emotional well-being to happiness. Thinking of happiness as a destination on life's map, the endpoint where all is right in our universe and the stars align in a constellation spelling contentment. How many times have you said to yourself once I get this (job/mate/house) I will be happy? And what happened?

On the opposite end of the spectrum is sadness, the feeling of sorrow that rattles our very being. Sadness is not normally equated with emotional well-being, but rather viewed as a dreaded road block, we try to avoid it all together. So we do what we can to bypass the pain and speed back to our perceived road toward happiness. When we are in pain, we plead to have this feeling go away. And in this pleading, we don't so much ask for happiness, as much as we ask for the pain to simply subside.

But what so few of us fail to realize is that perpetual happiness or sadness is purely an illusion. Human beings are not designed to experience one emotional state forever. By its very nature, emotions are temporary and evolving.

*"The greatest happiness you can have is knowing that you do not necessarily require happiness." – William Saroyan*

For many years I chased happiness. It felt just outside of my grasp like a butterfly, accessible, yet elusive. I would run full speed just to have it abruptly change direction, elevating so high that I would eventually jump in vain. And a lot of jumping I did.

Jumping into bed with men, taking leaps of blind faith that their love would fill me up, so I would never have to crave love again. Jumping on the bandwagon of reckless drinking and partying, to not only fit in, but to block the pain of my discontent. And jumping through warped hoops for demanding bosses to remain in their good graces, hoping it would pay off later. The only place I didn't jump was off of a ledge, but each failed pursuit of happiness was inching me closer and the view was dizzying.

The only elixir for my vertigo was a dose of cold, harsh, unavoidable reality. And this reality meant that I could no longer base my happiness on the approval of others nor wash down the pain with vodka. This reality meant that I needed to be willing to accept the pain as much as I was willing to chase happiness.

Striving for perpetual happiness absent of pain is an unnatural endeavor that causes more harm than good. Granted looking for happiness in all the wrong places will lead to disappointment, but the disservice goes deeper than the temporary disappointment. I had made the foolish assumption that my pursuit of happiness could not include the acknowledgement of pain; I rationalized that pain and happiness are polar opposites and therefore could not occupy the same space.

But what I didn't realize was that all of my unchecked pain was not only compounding, but was the driving force propelling my race to happiness and coloring my perspective of what I needed to make me happy. I needed to find a way to make this pain go away, so I was looking for anything to soothe it. So, all of my actions were the manifestations of misguided motivations.

We all have a natural inclination to heal ourselves. We want to find the medicine to cure our ailments. If you have a headache, you would take an aspirin. If you have an upset stomach, you take Pepto Bismol. But would you ever take Pepto Bismol for a headache? Of course not, you first have to properly assess the ailment before rendering a cure. This is the same for emotional healing. First, you must sit down with yourself and process your pain, getting to the root of your emotional hurt and turmoil. But many people have a hard time with doing so, and avoid it all cost. Not evaluating your emotional wounds, yet trying to find a remedy is like going to a podiatrist for chest pains. You must first get to the heart of the matter.

My emotional avoidance and misguided pursuit was at the expense of something more important than happiness: emotional well-being. Little did I know that emotional well-being is a state that trumps any temporary feelings you experience because being emotionally well is more powerful than any fleeting feelings of happiness or sadness.



### **About the Author**

Chaundra McGill is the founder of Writing Reflections, which is dedicated to developing tools that help people use writing as not only a means for emotional healing through journaling, but to craft dynamic publishable literature.

Chaundra has authored several e-books, such as *\$1 Therapy: Achieving Emotional Well-Being Through Reflective Writing Therapy* and *Profit from Your Past: Crafting Publishable Literature Using Reflective Writing Therapy*. She also conducts writing workshops and seminars exploring topics like journaling, self-discovery, creating dynamic characters in literature, finding your writing voice, etc.

Chaundra has dedicated her career to the power of words. She served as Editor-In-Chief of the national online publication TheUrbanFlavor and has provided editorial services for publications and companies, such as Metro Exposure Magazine, HowStuffWorks, Road & Travel Magazine, the Mirror Newspapers, RSM McGladrey, The Children's Center and Grade Check.

For more information on Chaundra McGill, please visit [www.WritingReflections.com](http://www.WritingReflections.com).

