

Description of Service



I discovered my INTRApersonal Journaling™ service accidentally. Working with remote clients in Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, it is very difficult to schedule times that will work for both of us. I decided to try something that would make it possible for both the client and me to do our respective parts on our own schedule.

I had previously attempted to do something along these lines via email but found that to be difficult to keep up with in the mix of all the other email I was receiving and sending. Plus, while there seemingly is always some inherent risk to privacy when communicating online, email was definitely not the most secure way to communicate.

So, for each client, I create a Word Document in Google Drive so that only my client and I can access it. That Word Doc would become our conversation, the client's interactional journal. When my client makes an entry, they let me know, usually via text. When I respond to what they have written, I let them know.

What I have discovered is that doing this is not at all a substitute for face-to-face consultations. Instead, it is a very different method for supporting and challenging clients in their self-discovery.

If you find it helpful to write as a part of your recovery/self-discovery, this service might be of interest to you. I asked clients with whom I have been doing Interactional Journaling to offer their perspectives:

- *As someone who is already in the habit of journaling, this Journaling with Thom has helped me create and reinforce a stronger compassionate recovery voice in my daily writing. For me, when I journal by myself, it is often the same thought pattern over-and-over again. It is very nice to have negative thought patterns interrupted by someone who supports me in recovery. Because journaling is something I do on a regular basis, adding a new, helpful voice has really helped to change my thinking.*
- *Unlike my Zoom sessions with Thom (which are also helpful) journaling can take place when I am feeling more distress, because I can write whenever I choose. A lot of times in therapy I forget how I felt when I was really needing help, when I was extremely miserable, anxious, sad, guilty. In writing I can express what I need to say in that moment.*
- *Writing alone can feel lonely. At first it was scary to include someone else but it has really been worth the risk. Interactional Journaling moves me to have a more problem-solving mindset when I know that I am sharing my writing with someone else.*

If you would like to create your own INTRApersonal Journal with Thom, please read the next page carefully to be sure you understand and agree to what is described. Of course, if you have questions, let us know. You can do so by emailing thomrutledgeauthor@gmail.com with **INTRA QUESTION** in the subject line. All caps is not rude in this case; it helps us to quickly identify the nature of your email.

If you do understand and agree with everything on the Client Contract, sign, and date that page and return it via the same email address with **JOURNAL CONTRACT** in the subject line.

THIS IS A CONTRACT. PLEASE BE SURE YOU READ & UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING HERE BEFORE SIGNING .

Client Contract for INTRApersonal Journaling

INTRApersonal Journaling *clients understand that...*

1. This service is not psychotherapy or professional counseling, nor is it a substitute for care from a mental health professional. This is an educational service provided by Thom Rutledge as an author of self-help material.
2. This service is not for anyone who is experiencing or likely to be experiencing emergency and/or crisis situations in response to the co-journaling process. By contracting for this service, clients accept full responsibility to have a plan for contacting mental health and/or health professionals locally to respond to needs that may arise.
3. All content from clients of the co-journaling process is held in confidence and will not be shared with anyone without the client's expressed written consent. There are two (2) exceptions to this confidentiality contract. Confidentiality is not applicable if client shares information that a child is being physically or sexually abused or if client presents an immediate danger to self or another person.
4. Clients of this co-journaling process understand that while the provider of this service offers the confidentiality as described above, there remains an inherent risk of content exposure when communicating online that is beyond the control of either service provider or client.
5. Since this service involves writing, it is important for clients to know that Thom retains ownership and copyrights to everything he writes in response to clients, excepting, of course, names or any other information that would compromise confidentiality. Thom does not have any copyright claim to clients' entries in the Journal.
6. Thom reserves the right to discontinue the journaling service if he believes there might be adverse effects for a client. If he does discontinue the service, he will communicate clearly why he is doing this and make specific recommendations to the client about seeking further help.
7. The fee for this service is \$250 per month, to be billed by email, unless specifically arranged otherwise.

I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO THE TERMS OF THE SEVEN (7) ITEMS ABOVE.

Signature

Date

Print Name

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS FOR YOUR RECORDS AND SIGN/DATE AND RETURN TO THOMRUTLEDGEAUTHOR@GMAIL.COM

Getting Started



Once you have read and understood the information above and have signed the client contract and returned it to thomrutledgeauthor@gmail.com or faxed it to 615-413-5486, I will email you a link (URL) to your Journal Page. Only you and I will have access to this page.

To make the communication easy to navigate, choose a font and font color that you want to use and I will use font/font color that contrasts enough so that it is clear to distinguish between our entries. You will be able to add to your journal anytime. Some people do this as a regular daily practice and others are more spontaneous with making entries. There is no wrong way to do that.

I appreciate your letting me know when you have made an entry, either with a separate email or text to me.

A note about texting: So that we can communicate via text regarding when we have each added to the journal, I prefer that we use WhatsApp (available free wherever you get your apps). I value the added encryption that WhatsApp provides. To connect with me on WhatsApp, please use the app to send a message to 615-308-0235. We will then be connected there. If you prefer to not use WhatsApp, a direct text is fine.

When you let me know you have added to your journal, I may or may not respond in the journal right away. This depends on my schedule, how much content you have added at any given time and on my less-than-organized mind. I want you to feel free to add as much to your journal as you want but when entries are long, it will take me a longer time to respond in most cases. However, regardless of response time during the course of any given week, I do schedule time on Mondays to respond to anything I have not responded to previously. So there will never be a wait longer than one week for my responses.

At the risk of wearing you down with repetition, as we begin this co-journaling process, I cannot over-emphasize the importance of self-responsibility. If you are seeing a therapist/counselor on a regular basis, please be sure you have discussed this with them. That is not a matter of asking permission but just practicing rigorous honesty with treatment team.

When you are ready to get started, please read, sign, and return the client contract above and I will send you the link to your INTRApersonal Journal page: thomrutledgeauthor@gmail.com

Peace,

A handwritten signature of the name "Thom Rutledge" in black ink. Below the signature, the text "PSYCHOTHERAPIST | AUTHOR" is printed in a smaller, sans-serif font.