

Description of Service



I discovered my Self-Help 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 I 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 self-help 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 new service might be of interest to you. I asked a client with whom I have been doing Self-Help Journaling to offer her perspective:

As someone who is already in the habit of journaling, this Self-Help 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 Skype 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. Self-Help 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 Self-Help 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 **SHJ 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 **SHJ CONTRACT** in the subject line.

Client Contract for Self-Help Journaling

Self-Help 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 respond to client, excepting, of course, names or any other information that would compromise confidentiality. Thom does not have any copyright claim to clients' entries in the Self-Help 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.

I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO THE TERMS OF THE SIX (6) ITEMS ABOVE.

Signature

Date

Print Name

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

