

Psychotherapy Guidebook

**THE
INTENSIVE
JOURNAL**

Felix Morrow

The Intensive Journal

Felix Morrow

e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *The Psychotherapy Guidebook* edited by Richie Herink and Paul R. Herink

All Rights Reserved

Created in the United States of America

Copyright © 2012 by Richie Herink and Paul Richard Herink

Table of Contents

[DEFINITION](#)

[HISTORY](#)

[TECHNIQUE](#)

[APPLICATIONS](#)

The Intensive Journal

Felix Morrow

DEFINITION

The Intensive Journal process is a method of personal and spiritual growth in which the individual primarily works by himself in his Intensive Journal workbook. The person learns the principles and techniques involved by attending a basic Intensive Journal workshop conducted by Dr. Ira Progoff or a Journal Consultant authorized by Dialogue House; or one can begin by reading Progoff's *At a Journal Workshop* (1975), which contains a complete Intensive Journal experience. Those who sustain work in this method are likely to attend a workshop from time to time as they feel the need, read and reread the key books dealing with the process, and perhaps occasionally see a Journal Consultant in a one-to-one meeting. Their main effort, however, is working by themselves in the Intensive Journal workbook.

HISTORY

Progoff's work began with his doctoral thesis, *Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning* (1953). In *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology* (1956), *Depth Psychology and Modern Man* (1959), and *The Symbolic and the Real* (1963),

Progoff set forth his ideas on depth psychology, which is a synthesis of the later work of Freud, Jung, Adler, and Rank. In it depth psychology leaves behind its medical and analytic origins and, indeed, goes beyond psychotherapy to a conception of man as a growing and spiritual being. In 1957 Progoff began to use a journal as an adjunct to psychotherapy in his private practice. He asked people to keep notebooks in which they recorded the events of their inner life. A great deal that was therapeutic was achieved by working with this psychological journal. Progoff observed, however, that the affirmative effects of using this unstructured workbook were too closely connected with the questions he raised or the way he raised them. The results for the individual were at that point, then, very closely linked to Progoff's personal style in conducting the therapeutic consultations and the way he led the group sessions.

The next and most decisive step, therefore, was to structure a journal capable of mirroring the inner process of the psyche of each individual without falsification of any kind and without the intrusion of special doctrines or authorities. This next step was the creation of the Intensive Journal workbook, which, after a series of provisional attempts, took its present form in 1966. Progoff was able to create the Intensive Journal workbook by applying to it what he had learned from a decade of study of the lives of creative persons. He had done this work as director of the Institute for Research in Depth Psychology at the Graduate School of Drew University

(1959- 1971), where he and his students had systematically collected the life histories of persons for a comparative study.

TECHNIQUE

In the workshop, in an initiation into the varied techniques for using the Intensive Journal workbook, the beginner learns a nonjudgmental, nonanalytic, nondiagnostic means of working out a broad answer to the question: Where am I now in the movement of my life? There are twenty sections to the workbook. Sixteen of these are the Intensive Journal categories, the other four are for the related discipline of process meditation. The workbook enables a person to write down in various logs the inner and outer experience of his life and then in a series of exercises called “Journal Feedback,” draw his life into focus, enlarge his capacities, clarify where he now is, determine his resources, decide on new directions in the face of transitions or crossroads. It is important to understand that in this work the therapeutic and integrative results are not directly sought. They are, as it were, an indirect outcome of the energies generated by the process of Journal Feedback. Another way of saying this is that working with these exercises enables each of us to understand the meaning of our lives and go on to fulfill that meaning.

It should perhaps be emphasized that a central image of this process is

that each of us “goes down his own well” in privacy With the aid of “twilight imagery,” process meditation, and working with our dreams, we go down into our depths in a unique way. It is in those depths and not on the upper, superficial levels that we do the exercises of Journal Feedback. Hence we have access to much that we do not know consciously but that we know nevertheless. Nor is what we know merely personal. For in going down the well we go beyond the personal into the transpersonal, the shared humanity.

Progoff’s is a holistic depth psychology. The discipline of this working on oneself is designed to further wholeness and reconstructing one’s life. Its therapeutic effects are brought about not by striving toward therapy but by providing the active techniques that enable an individual to draw upon his inherent resources for becoming a whole person. It establishes a person’s sense of his own being by enriching his inner life with new experiences of a creative and spiritual quality by means of the Journal Feedback exercises. Since these experiences happen to him and are recorded by him while they are actually taking place, each person accumulates a tangible and factual validation of his personal growth as it is in process.

Progoff refers to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s conception of self-reliance as one way of understanding the results achieved by the Intensive Journal process. For Emerson, self-reliance is the basis for human growth and dignity. Emerson says in his essay *Self-Reliance*, “Nothing can bring you peace but

yourself.” When our reliance is upon things or people outside of ourselves, we are not drawing upon the strengths that are inherent within us, and what is more important, we are not developing our strengths further. The Intensive Journal process provides a practical method by which each individual, at whatever his present level and condition, can experience the active power of self-reliance as an available capacity.

APPLICATIONS

In the decade since the creation of the Intensive Journal workbook in 1966, some fifty thousand persons were introduced to this method by workshops and the first printings of *At a Journal Workshop*. But implicit from the first was the idea of the Intensive Journal program as one of very broad social outreach, able to serve a great public of all levels of income, age, and education. In 1977 a major step in this direction was taken with the beginning of the National Intensive Journal Program. Responsible local organizations throughout the country have been invited to become sponsors of ongoing Intensive Journal programs in their communities. Protestant and Catholic churches and retreat centers have been particularly responsive as sponsors in the first months of the expanded program.

The Intensive Journal program is taught in a growing number of colleges and universities in both workshops and term courses. Among the

applications are its use in college counseling and pastoral counseling. There was a notably successful project in New York State in using the Intensive Journal process in a job-training program in the ghetto. A Women's Institute in the Midwest reports great success in introducing the Intensive Journal program to substantial groups of women convicts in the prisons. In the creative arts there have been successful uses of the process as part of the training of classes of dancers and potters. These examples are indicative of the wide range of applications that are possible.