

Reducing Stress: Writing, Sorting and Clarifying

You might begin with a challenging question, a seemingly unresolvable problem, a reaction to a co-worker or client, or whatever else is distressing you.

Timed entries

Write for a short, prescribed period of time. Five to seven minutes works well. Set a timer. Stop writing when the time is up, even if you are in the middle of a sentence.

Flow writing

Write in a stream of consciousness, learning that words will come. Pick a tangible object from your surroundings, e.g. a current market report, and use it as the opening image in your entry. Let your mind free-associate from one thought to the next. Write until you have finished.

Dialogue writing

Open with a leading question. Take a breath, pause, listen, write down your first response. Write in the style of question/answer. The thoughts do not have to be equally represented. If you get stuck and do not know where to go next, you may need to include an "over voice" that comments on how the dialogue is developing and allows you to see the next step.

Unsent letters

Be clear that, although this is a entry addressed to someone in particular, it is not a writing where you need to take the recipient's feelings or thoughts into account. You need not to know everything you are going to say. Allow the letter to develop in your own style. This is not a letter to plan to send.