

## THE WRITER'S JOURNAL

The writer's journal or notebook is a vital piece of equipment for a writer. It can help you in your pursuit to write with relevance and freshness. For many writers, the journal is an essential tool that produces deeper thinking. The journal is a place for you to find your voice, to experiment and play, and to be alone with yourself.

The purpose of keeping a journal is to help you become an astute observer and to heighten your curiosity. In addition, it helps develop your thought process and enlarge your sense of wonder. You'll get into the habit of writing down your ideas, questions, thoughts, and reactions. Ideas (conscious or sub-conscious) are not useful unless you record them while they're fresh.

### **Guidelines**

- ▶ Use a notebook that doesn't restrict your writing. A loose-leaf binder is excellent because you can insert pages, magazine articles, letters, newspaper clippings – and even notes made on a napkin or back of an envelope.
- ▶ Date your entries. Read aloud what you've written, but keep your journal private.
- ▶ The JOURNAL will enable you to:
  - 1) Capture feelings on paper -- events, people, things seen, felt, heard, touched, smelled.
  - 2) Give a precise, clear description of something.
  - 3) Record snatches of conversation.
  - 4) Capture moods, smells, sounds, texture, colors, and appearances.
  - 5) Enter important questions you've asked, someone else has asked, or your child has asked.

### **Ideas to Stimulate and Enrich Your JOURNAL Writing:**

1. Tell the truth -- even if you have to write in code.
2. Write your entries quickly so you don't know what's coming next. Quick entries reduce the possibility of the censor in the brain to edit thought.
3. Turn off the left brain censor in your head.
4. Learn (practice) being observant. Write down 6 things you've noticed here at Kikotén.
5. Try writing from different points of view -- it broadens your sympathies.

6. Collect quotations that inspire you -- jot down some notes on why the quote inspired.
7. Set goals and keep track of your progress.
8. Record your dreams.
9. Use your journal as a non-judgmental friend to listen to your angry or confused thoughts.
10. Make a list of the things you love. Note how often you make time for them.
11. When words won't come, draw something -- anything.
12. Dedicate an entry to a person you admire.
13. Don't worry about being nice, fair, or objective. Be selfish and biased; give your side of the story from the heart.
14. Write even what frightens you, especially what frightens you. It is the thought denied that is dangerous.
15. Don't worry about being consistent.

Not only does your journal help you understand what is currently going on in your life, it offers perspective on the past. As you dig through your journals, you rediscover buried feelings, old friends, past events, forgotten details, joys, and triumphs. Your journal becomes a seed bed of ideas both for fiction and non-fiction.