

## Book Reviews

### ABOUT JOURNALS & JOURNAL WRITING

- (1) ADAMS, Kathleen. (1990)  
*Journal to the self: 22 paths to personal growth.*  
Grand Central Publishing, New York.

An easy to read very useful book, describing journaling techniques to help you work through problems, heal relationships, access your subconscious. With separate chapters designed to achieve specific results.

- (2) RAINER, Tristine (1978)  
*The new diary: how to use a journal for self guidance and expanded creativity.*  
New York, Tarcher/Penguin Putnam.

There's one chapter on journaling techniques, but this book offers much more: Transforming personal problems, Dreamwork, Writers' block, Discovering joy and eroticism in your diary. With a useful 10 page booklist.

- (3) SIMONS, Judy (1990)  
*Diaries and journals of literary women from Fanny Burney to Virginia Woolf.*  
London Macmillan.

"Investigates the part played by their personal writings in the lives of eight literary women" (cover). An original book on a topic not previously explored.

## SELF-DISCOVERY BOOKS

- (1) DYER, Wayne W. (2009)  
*Stop the excuses! how to change lifelong thoughts.*  
UK, Hay House.

Dr Dyer, shows us how to stop saying 'I can't' which he calls making excuses, and tap into the inner resources that we do have; we all have the power to do whatever and act however we want. A book to inspire and hold you.

- (2) GAWAIN, Shakti (2002)  
*Creative visualisation: use the power of your imagination to create what you want in your life.*  
U.S., New World Library.

Describing the art of using mental imagery and affirmation to produce positive changes in your life, with meditations, exercises and techniques to change negative patterns, improve self-esteem and develop Creativity.

- (3) GILBERT, Elizabeth (2007)  
*Eat pray love: one woman's search for everything.*  
London, Bloomsbury.

The true story of Elizabeth's quest for meaning in her life, which takes her away from her apparently settled married life first to Rome and then on through India and ending up in Bali. A truly inspiring, intelligent and sometimes humorous account.

- (4) NORWOOD, Robin (2004)  
*Women who love too much.*

This is equally relevant for men as for women if you tend to be attracted to people who need looking after! A life-changing book, still in print in several different editions since it's first in 1985.

- (5) ROWE, Dorothy (1988)  
*The successful self: freeing our hidden inner strengths.*  
London, Collins.

The author aims to show us how we can live more comfortably and Creatively within ourselves, developing the social and personal skills we lack and learning to accept and value ourselves.

- (6) TOLLE, Eckhart (1999)  
*The power of Now: a guide to spiritual enlightenment.*  
London, Hodder & Stoughton

The power of now is dealing with the past on the level of the present. The more attention you give to the past (to your failures, problems, worries), the more you energise them and make a 'self' out of them. Live in the now and you will find yourself. A truly fascinating book.

**We enjoy other peoples' diaries and read extracts in our group. So, we thought we should share some of these. We'll be adding to this list in the future - please send us your suggestions!**

- (1) LEWIS, C.S. (1962)  
*A grief observed.*  
London, Faber & Faber

Not written in the usual dated form of a journal, this 60 page book is nonetheless a regularly kept record by C.S.Lewis of his feelings and thoughts following the death of his much loved wife who he'd met late in life and known only for 8 short years.

- (2) FORSTER, Margaret. (2004)  
*Diary of an ordinary woman 1914-1995*  
London, Vintage.

The 'edited' diary of Millicent King, a very ordinary woman whose life spans the twentieth century. The book cover shows photos of her and her family and facsimiles of documents of the period. I was well into 1917 before noticing in small print in the corner, the words "A novel"! It was quite a shock as the very convincing Introduction had described how Forster had come into possession of the diaries and had edited them for publication. Although a complete fiction it is a very good example of how a diary can reflect the age one lives in as well as one's personal journey.

- (3) SPENDER, Stephen. (1985)  
*Journals 1939-1983*, edited by John Goldsmith.  
 Faber & Faber.

Born 1909, Spender has been keeping journals for 50 years. They are full of observations of his politically committed days of the 1930s, plus memories of people, drafts of his poems, plays and stories and vivid travel notes from all over the world. Here are the accumulated impressions of a lifetime devoted to literature and ideas.

- (4) WILLIAMS, Kenneth. (1993)  
*The Kenneth Williams Diaries*, edited by Russell Davies.  
 HarperCollins.

Forty years of diaries which Kenneth Williams kept completely private whilst he was alive, though friends knew of them and he even used to threaten people with possible future revelations! He is devastatingly honest about himself, but also uses his waspish sense of humour on others. Malicious, hilarious, uninhibited and harrowing and also revealing the darker, lonelier side of this famous performer.

- (5) WORDSWORTH, Dorothy. (1971)  
*Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth: The Alfoxden Journal 1798 and The Grasmere Journals 1800-1803*, 2nd edition edited by Mary Moorman.  
 Oxford University Press.

Dorothy was the treasured sister of William and was the close companion of him and Coleridge whilst they were composing the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. She is quite a poet in prose herself and this new edition includes some of her own poems and 33 shorter ones of Wordsworth which are mentioned in the journals.

- (6) TURNEY, Jon, editor (2003)  
*Science, not art: ten scientists' diaries*.  
 Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Rather an unusual book in that the Foundation actually asked the 10 scientists, all from the younger generation, to keep personal diaries with a view to demonstrating to us, the public, just what they do in their work on a day-to-day basis. They make interesting reading. It's a bit disappointing that they seem to spend a lot of time trying to get funding and that they have to be very competitive, but there are some real insights for us as they are all frank and honest. There is a companion volume, *Art not chance: nine artists' diaries*.

- (7) TAYLOR, Irene and Alan (2000)  
*The Assassin's cloak: an anthology of the world's greatest diarists.*  
Canongate Books

A gargantuan book, 684 pages, almost A4 size, arranged by days of the year, of quotes from the published (some now out of print) diaries of around 170 people. There is an interesting 12 page introduction examining why people write diaries and giving a brief history of diary writing. The only clue to the criteria for inclusion is a short paragraph stating that Kierkegaard's and Gissing have been omitted "because they are dull" (obviously a personal view!), some others because they are not dated (e.g Dostoevsky) or because they are too much of a complete entity for selective quoting (e.g. Anne Frank). You will find most of the ones you'd expect to find and some names you won't have heard of. There's an index to the diarists and brief biographical descriptions.

- (8) PEPYS, Samuel [1932]  
*Samuel Pepys' diary*, edited by Willis L. Parker; illus by Randolph Adler.  
Cameo Classics series. Grosset & Dunlap, N.Y.

Oh no! Not Samuel Pepys! We all know this one don't we? However, this is a gem of an edition, "to be read and enjoyed by the person with limited leisure" it proclaims. Only 198 pages of those lovely fluffy 1930's (cheap?) paper with stylish black and white (lino-cut?) illustrations and a good index; my copy came in a cardboard slip-case. The editor claims to have "concentrated and emphasised the points of high interest" from the original 8 volumes, because "if we must eat crumbs it would be pleasant to have them served as a banquet is served" A very neat introduction which I think will tempt you to read further, more comprehensive editions.

(Copies available for purchase for £3.50 to £6, on [www.abebooks.co.uk](http://www.abebooks.co.uk) and [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) today: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2010)