

# **JOURNALING THROUGH PAIN & TRAUMA: WRITING ABOUT A PAST TRAUMA EXPERIENCE**

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**A COMPANION PIECE TO**

***Women and Pain:*** Taking Control and Finding Relief



- *Journaling is a self-care technique that can help you heal, grow and thrive.*
- *Journaling helps bring order to your deepest thoughts and fears. It creates order out of chaos.*
- *Journaling acts as free therapy. It helps you have a conversation with the person who knows you best: you.*
- *You can go back and track your progress. Read what you've written and see how much progress you've made on your journey.*
- *Some find joy in knowing their words help others, so they share their healing. But whether or not you share your work is up to you.*

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**Writing prompts developed by therapeutic writing expert  
Sarah Saffian, LMSW, MFA**

**Download companion piece at  
[drwaynejonas.com/women](http://drwaynejonas.com/women)**



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## CREATIVE LICENSE

Write about something that actually happened, but that you don't have a full, first-hand account of, or have limited information about — either because you weren't there for it, or you were there, but can't remember/ your memory is spotty. This isn't fabrication or fiction, because you're drawing from factual information that you do have, extrapolating from that to imagine the rest. Often when we have limited information, it's hard to reach a place of understanding, healing, and peace; so this exercise in filling in those gaps can help with that, and can help you move on.

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## PAST/PRESENT

Write two versions of the traumatic event, one in the past tense (remembering it from your current perspective), the other in the present tense (entering back into the immediate moment). Ideally take time in between the versions, and don't look at the past tense version when you begin writing the present tense one; the point here is not to have two identical versions with the verb tenses changed, but rather, to examine and learn from the differences in how you remember, and how to transform that memory: Do you reflect more in the past tense? Do you have greater access to physical and emotional details in the present tense? Do you cover more ground in the past tense version, and go deeper and narrower in the present tense? Is your narrative voice different in the two versions (this may come up especially if the moment is in childhood)?

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