



THE GROWING FORWARD JOURNAL

*Your companion during challenging times,
with daily exercises to help you mindfully
build resilience and grow through anything.*

Written by
STACY THOMAS
Ph.D., C.Psych

*We are all stars
Who fell from the heavens,
Shining so bright.*

*Who at some point decided
To dim the light.*

*To get along, to fit in,
We let the darkness of doubt win.*

Then spend a lifetime

Searching

*For the light
That is our birthright*

So we can return home.

- Dr. Stacy Thomas



Dr. Stacy Thomas is a Clinical Psychologist whose private practice in Toronto was inspired by her desire to assist those ready to truly Design their Lives.

With close to 20 years of experience helping people navigate significant life challenges, Dr. Thomas' strength is in her ability to recognize resilience and teach people how to apply proven psychological strategies in order to move past mere survival and thrive in the face of adversity.

As a health psychologist, she has worked in several multidisciplinary rehabilitation and health care teams in the treatment of trauma survivors, as well as with people with chronic and serious physical illnesses. Her passion for using psychological tools to further human potential also inspired her training in Sport and Performance Psychology and her work with a range of professionals and performers who have sought her out to learn how to achieve their best performance when it counts.

Her optimism and activism to make this world a better place is fuelled by her belief in the power of the human spirit. This journal was inspired by a desire to make effective psychological tools accessible. Because when people are better, they do better, and we all benefit. She hopes you use it well.

“Every challenge we face
has the potential to elevate us
into a higher version of our
being.”

Dr. Stacy

HELLO & WELCOME

The GROWING FORWARD journal you have purchased was inspired by people just like you. People faced with a significant life challenge, who are stronger than they realize and have a tremendous capacity to adapt.

They, like you, could not fully appreciate their strength because they were so focused on the struggle. But trust me, as a witness to thousands of journeys through significant challenges, the resilience of the human spirit is tremendous. I see it all the time, and it never ceases to amaze and astound me.

All that I have seen and learned as a result of decades of clinical practice and the research on post traumatic growth has led me to understand one important and simple truth:

This life is for us.

This journal was designed with the intention of helping you GROW FORWARD on this noble journey. Inside, you will find space to express your feelings authentically as well as questions and suggested practices to support and increase your awareness to your process of growth and healing.

Everything in this journal has been informed by decades of research on resilience, positive psychology, and post traumatic growth.

My hope is that you will make space in your life, to engage with this journal as often as you need in order to get full benefit from it. I hope that you will regard the pages that you fill with your voice, as your special place. A place of acceptance and understanding; a place where you can just be.

I hope that as you engage in this practice of journaling that you will also learn to

cherish your own voice as the most important guiding voice in your life. Because the answer for what you need to do, to heal and grow ultimately resides within you.

And in the future, should you decide to look back upon this part of your life, I also hope that it will serve as a reminder of your ability to benefit from your own wisdom and grow through anything.

Ready to get started?
Let's begin.

Dr. Stacy

*PS: Interested in connecting with other people who have also made the decision to grow forward? I invite you to join me at **www.growingforwardjournal.com** to receive stories of inspiration, the opportunity to participate in live webinars and events, and connect with your tribe.*

I look forward to meeting you soon.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR GROWING FORWARD JOURNAL

Journaling, also known as Expressive Writing is a therapeutic tool that has benefits for emotional and physical health. Researchers believe that the benefits are related primarily to the way writing helps us process our emotions and make sense of our experiences.

Here are a few guidelines to help you get the most out of your Growing Forward Journal :

1. Try to set aside 15-20 minutes/day to write. You might not choose to use the journal every day. But the more frequently you do use it, the more natural it will feel, and the more likely you are to benefit.

2. Ideally, journal in the same place everyday; a place where you feel cozy and comfortable.

3. Keep your journal safe and secure. This is a place just for you to write your most intimate thoughts and feelings; things you might not even want your partner to know. You need to be confident that this is a private place, otherwise it is not as likely to be effective.

4. Let your words flow. The idea here is to capture a stream of consciousness, not to write the next great novel. There is no need to worry about spelling, or grammar.

5. Let it all hang out. Allow yourself to express your true feelings, without any form of judgement, or censorship.

6. The tools and prompts provided throughout the journal were designed to help you improve your awareness of all aspects of your experience as a way of helping you find balance and grow consciously through the challenge you are facing.

7. I have allotted 2 pages/day. You will notice prompts on the second page of each day to note moments of accomplishment, joy and gratitude. These practices have been found to contribute to a sense of well-being and can be particularly impactful at times when challenges can blind us to this part of our experience. That said, you will likely find days when it is hard to enter anything under these headings. That's OK. Just starting a practice of trying to notice these aspects of your day is helpful in itself. And know that finding these moments will get easier over time.

8. There are times when expressing your feelings will stir up your emotions and you might feel worse afterwards. As with any process of healing or growth, there can be some initial discomfort. But if you stick with the process, this initial discomfort will decrease as your resilience increases. Nevertheless, on difficult days, do allow yourself an additional 5-15 minutes to help you return to a relative state of calm. In order to help you do this, I invite you to visit www.growingforwardjournal.com for exercises and guided meditations you might want to integrate both before and after your writing

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Even though it is uncomfortable, I can see evidence that I am growing forward in the following important ways:

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In order to support my growth and resilience, I need to:

ACTION PLAN

For next week

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"There is nothing that you could say, think, or feel, that would ever compromise my love for you."

Dr. Stacy

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"Cultivating Mindful Presence."

Dr. Stacy

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For next week

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"Growth is Uncomfortable."

Dr. Stacy

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**"Our Experience of the Struggle
Blinds us to Our Strength."**

Dr. Stacy

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For next week

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"Visualizing Optimal Coping - Your Guiding Light Through the Darkness."

Dr. Stacy

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For next week

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"Learning to Let the Heart Lead."

Dr. Stacy

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ACTION PLAN

For next week

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"Becoming Clear."

Dr. Stacy

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For next week

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"The Healing Effects of Kindness."

Dr. Stacy

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For next week

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"Connecting with Purpose."

Dr. Stacy

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

COMPETENCE :

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COMPETENCE :

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COMPETENCE :

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REFLECTIONS

As I reflect on the entirety of my experience this week (the challenges, the difficult thoughts & feelings, the wins, the moments of joy, and the events for which I am grateful), I am struck by:

Even though it is uncomfortable, I can see evidence that I am growing forward in the following important ways:

I see room for further growth in the following ways:

In order to support my growth and resilience, I need to:

ACTION PLAN

For next week

[illegible]

**"This life is for you...
but it's not about you."**

Got it? Enough said.

Dr. Stacy

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[illegible]

COMPETENCE :

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COMPETENCE :

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COMPETENCE :

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JOY :

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GRATITUDE :

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COMPETENCE :

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JOY :

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GRATITUDE :

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COMPETENCE :

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ACTION PLAN

For next week

[illegible]

"Connecting with Your Tribe."

Dr. Stacy

[illegible][illegible]

COMPETENCE :

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JOY :

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GRATITUDE :

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GRATITUDE :

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This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

COMPETENCE :

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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COMPETENCE :

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COMPETENCE :

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COMPETENCE :

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This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal blue lines spaced evenly across the page, typical of notebook paper. The lines are thin and light blue, set against a plain white background. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

[illegible]

COMPETENCE :

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REFLECTIONS

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In order to support my growth and resilience, I need to:

VISION

Of my Resilient Self

[illegible]

"The Power of Having a Vision."

Dr. Stacy

ACTUAL

Description of my Actual Resilient Self

It has been at least three months since you started this process of Growing Forward through this significant life challenge. It is now time to take stock of the positive changes you have mobilized for yourself.

To do this, I invite you to look back on all of those pgs, where you noted your reflections on growth. What do you notice? What stands out most about how you have grown?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

What strengths did you make most use of?

What new abilities emerged?

In what ways is your Actual Resilient Self similar to the vision you had of yourself coping as well as possible with this challenge?

In what ways is your Actual Resilient self different from your vision of what it would be like for you to cope optimally with your situation?

What did you learn from this exercise of imaging your best self functioning well in the future?

What did this entire process of focusing on Growing Forward teach you about yourself and your ability to cope with significant life challenges?

You have made it this far,
now what?

TIME TO MOVE FORWARD

I always believed you could grow through this experience. I believe in you because growing and evolving is what you are designed to do.

This practice you have developed of regularly expressing your genuine thoughts and feelings through writing has facilitated this process. The benefits you have experienced as a result of learning how to listen to your own voice with compassion, and honouring the message with action, prove once again, that you had the answers all along.

All you need to do now, is to keep doing what you have been doing. Continuing to dim the noise and follow your own lead will put you on the path of becoming unstoppable. This journal is your reminder that you can do it and grow through anything.

I would love to hear from you directly about your experience using the Growing Forward Journal. It is through your feedback that this journal will continue to evolve and serve you better.

Please do join me in the Growing Forward Community at :

www.growingforwardjournal.com

for ongoing stories of inspiration, and to connect with others who are also interested in Designing Their Lives, regardless of what life brings.

I would encourage you to share your story too. Your example of evolving through this challenge helps to elevate us all.

With much love and respect,

Dr. Stacy



*To all of the divine beings I have had the opportunity to meet,
who entrusted me to help them be*

*To all those who saw the divine in me
And guided me towards living a life without limits*

I offer my deepest thanks

In humble service,

Always

- Dr. Stacy Thomas

The image features a light-colored marble background with grey veining. A solid teal horizontal band runs across the middle of the image.

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