

The background of the cover is a repeating pattern of stylized, overlapping leaves and flowers in a deep blue color on a cream-colored background. The pattern is symmetrical and fills the entire frame.

CONNECTING
Practice TO
Purpose

A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL FOR TEACHERS

RACHEL ROBERTSON

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BY RACHEL ROBERTSON


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Welcome to Your Educator's Journal

This journal is all about you and all for you. This is a place where you can reflect, think, process, vent, laugh, doodle, draw, muse, ponder, wonder, craft, create, and plan.

There is a bunch of research that confirms how much journaling can help with personal and professional growth, processing tough feelings, making decisions, setting and meeting goals, revealing new ideas, strengthening learning, and more! That sounds great, of course, but it isn't always easy to start the habit. That's why this journal is designed with prompts, tips, and inspiration to give you the structure and motivation you might need. But, this doesn't mean you have to use it from start to finish. You can go back to front, you can skip around, you can go side to side. You can do whatever you want. You do you.

In this journal, you'll find:

- ✿ **Weekly Download:** Collected thoughts about the week to record, recall, and reflect
- ✿ **Today Was a BIG Day:** A place to capture detailed reflections about pivotal moments
- ✿ **Tell Your Story:** Prompts and questions to help you process and record your unique experience
- ✿ **Inspirational Quotes:** Keeping you going and inspired, whether you need an aha moment or a little oomph
- ✿ **Hints & Hacks:** Road-tested insights and strategies that can benefit every educator

Just be sure you use this journal! The best way to start a new habit is to build it into the routine of your day or week. Maybe you'll leave the journal near your coffee pot or teapot to remind you to complete a page or two each morning. Or maybe you'll leave it on your nightstand for a few reflections before lights out, or perhaps you'll leave it in your bag to pull out when you have a few moments during break, between classes, on the train, or during unexpected moments of waiting. And if you miss a day, a week, or more, no judgment! Start again wherever you are.

I think you'll be pleased (maybe even surprised!) at how much this journal can help you be a great self-mentor as you navigate the ups and downs, triumphs and troubles, opportunities and challenges of educating and caring for children. You know more than you think you do. You can learn from what you learn. It is within you. I promise.

Happy journaling!

Rachel Robertson

Date:

Letter to My Future Self

Dear _____ (*whatever name you choose to call yourself*)

Today is the day I begin using this journal. There are a few things I want to remember and a few things I need to say.

About the journal:

I received this journal from...

I hope this journal...

My current role in education is...

About my role as an educator:

I became an educator because...

My strengths are...

I need/want to work on...

When I think about my work with learners:

I am excited about...

I am nervous about...

I wonder about...

If I could tell my future self *anything*, it would be this:

If I could be sure my future self remembers something about how I feel or what I think now, it would be this:

With hope for the future,

You Can Do This (Truly)

You've accepted the role, you've started the job, you're trying a new age group or school! Stop right there and give yourself a big ol' high five. That's wonderful, and you deserve to be proud of yourself.

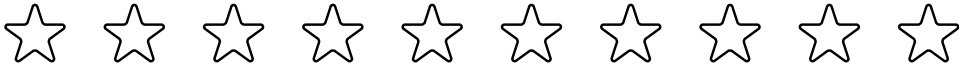
Whatever you're beginning, new starts always come with a mix of emotions. It is exciting to start a new job, but it is also daunting to feel unsure of expectations; it is joyful to spend your time doing purposeful work, but no doubt you're wondering about colleagues and organizational culture. Whatever the hodgepodge of feelings you're having includes, they're absolutely, 100%, without a doubt normal and valid. In fact, if you didn't have any emotions, that would be cause for reflection.

Just remember this: everyone is a beginner at the beginning. (That's how it works!) If you knew it all, you wouldn't be a beginner! Try to relish the opportunity to learn, to be curious, and to ask questions. Don't rush to prove yourself. Embrace what makes you unique, know what you need to learn, and jump in where and when you can contribute.

Date:

Weekly Download

Vibe check. How are things going? How many stars does this week deserve?
(Shade in the stars from 1–10)



Things I don't want to forget:

Things that made me go hmmm:

I am curious about:

I want to learn more about:

Things that brought me joy:

I am worried about:

I had big feelings about:

I am looking forward to:

I am proud of myself because:



(I might even deserve a trophy.)

I am thankful for:



(If this is a person, I need to make sure to tell them.)

Quotes to remember:

Next week, I plan to:

Do _____

Change _____

Learn _____

Continue _____

Try _____

Stop _____

All the feels:

Try to complete this at the same time and same place each week, such as Sunday evening, Monday morning—you get the picture. If you can't, don't sweat it.

(Mark the box after each word that describes how you're feeling.)

Satisfied ☐

Clear ☐

Competent ☐

Proud ☐

Resilient ☐

Productive ☐

Delighted ☐

Determined ☐

Curious ☐

Valued ☐

Confident ☐

Accomplished ☐

Worthwhile ☐

Brave ☐

Optimistic ☐

Motivated ☐

Happy ☐

Discouraged ☐

Peaceful ☐

Frustrated ☐

Worn-out ☐

Silly ☐

Confused ☐

Unsure ☐



“The best thing about being a teacher is that it matters. The hardest thing about being a teacher is that it matters every day.”

—TODD WHITAKER, EDUCATOR



Hints & Hacks: Know Your Why

Being an educator is a big responsibility. But guess what else it is: an incredible privilege. On the best days, it is easy to remember why you do what you do. On the hard days, it can feel like it's a lot of pain for not much gain. And those are the days when having clarity of purpose is essential. Every educator should know why they choose to do this work and what difference they want to make.

Here are some fun facts to remind you how important it is to be an educator:

- ✿ You build brains. Children's brains develop more in the early years of life than at any other time in their lives.
- ✿ Educators can provide an emotional buffer to protect children against some of life's biggest challenges and simultaneously teach them ways to build their own coping and resilience skills.
- ✿ You teach much more than academics and facts. You build the foundation for self-confidence, emotional intelligence, self-regulation, creativity, a love of learning, and so much more.
- ✿ You can influence life outcomes such as a child's likelihood to graduate, continue learning, have steady employment, have healthy relationships, and become a kind, compassionate, and contributing adult.
- ✿ You are a treasured partner (one could say a *lifeline*) for families. Together, you are providing care and education for the most valuable person in their lives.

Now that we've clarified just how amazing you are, take a moment to clarify your personal why. Why do you do what you do?

Date:

Weekly Download

Vibe check. How are things going? How many stars does this week deserve?
(Shade in the stars from 1–10)



Things I don't want to forget:

Things that made me go hmmm:

I am curious about:

I want to learn more about:

Things that brought me joy:

A space to pause, reflect, and reconnect with your why

Connecting Practice to Purpose is a guided journal created especially for early childhood and elementary teachers navigating the emotional highs and lows of the classroom. More than a professional-development tool, this book centers you, the human behind the teaching, and offers empathy, encouragement, and renewal in an interactive, supportive format.

Designed as a companion for both new and seasoned educators, this reflective journal provides thoughtful prompts that honor real classroom experiences. Use it to celebrate your best days and find grounding support for the harder ones. With minimal time commitment and maximum emotional impact, this journal meets you where you are, helping you sustain your passion and purpose.

Inside, you'll discover how to:

- **reflect** on daily classroom experiences with honesty and compassion.
- **strengthen** emotional resilience and prevent burnout.
- **reconnect** with your personal teaching purpose.
- **navigate** challenges with clarity and confidence.
- **celebrate** growth—both yours and your students’.

Whether used independently, in professional-learning communities, or as part of wellness initiatives, this journal supports long-term sustainability in the profession and makes a meaningful, giftable resource for educators at every stage.

With *Connecting Practice to Purpose*, you'll gain tools to care for yourself as intentionally as you care for your students, because when educators thrive, classrooms flourish.



Rachel Robertson brings more than 25 years of experience in the education field and is a highly regarded thought leader in early childhood education. She holds degrees in education, human development, and family studies, along with a certificate in Early Education Leadership from Harvard University. Rachel serves as chief academic officer for Bright Horizons, where she leads early care and education programming and educator professional development for more than 600 centers and 15,000 early educators nationwide.


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