My Journal

for kidney caregivers and care partners

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."
—William James

Have you ever thought about journaling about your life as a kidney caregiver?

As a caregiver or care partner, you dedicate time to your loved one's health. It is important you also allow time for your health and well-being. Journaling is one way you can share your thoughts in a unique way.

Many people find that writing down thoughts and feelings helps them, but sometimes it can be tough to think about what to write. This can be especially true if you are trying to reflect on something big, like your life. Below are suggestions that can help get you started. Remember, a journal is just for you—no one else will read what you write, or the insights you uncover, unless you want to share them. All you need now is the courage to begin.

Getting started:

- Find a quiet place to write where you feel comfortable.
- Decide if you want to write with pen and paper or electronically.
- Set a routine of when and how often you will write. Try to write daily.
- Choose to stop writing if you become tired or overwhelmed.

Tips for journaling:

- Date your journal entry.
- Record details such as time, location, who you were with, and what you were feeling. Journaling is like a record of your story. The details will help with the memories.
- Write as much or as little as you want. Journaling does not need to be three pages long. It can be three sentences or three words. It is your choice.
- Remember, what you want to write in your journal is the focus, not the spelling or grammar. Let your words flow.

*"Writing can be a private communication first with paper
and then with the self."*
—Gillie Bolton

Start With One Word at a Time

Date: _____ **Day of the Week:** _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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If I could talk to others whose loved ones were just diagnosed with kidney disease, I would say . . .

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Make It a Routine

Date: _____   **Day of the Week:** _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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If my heart could talk, it would say . . .

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Set Your Own Pace

Date: _____ **Day of the Week:** _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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As I think back on how I felt just before my loved one started dialysis, I remember feeling . . .

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Decide to Do It for Yourself

Date: _____ Day of the Week: _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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I really wish others knew this about me . . .

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"Caregivers are the selfless people who provide unpaid care
for loved ones who are ill or have serious medical conditions. This is
among the most challenging work there is."
—Rosalynn Carter

Be Open to Creativity

Date: _____ **Day of the Week:** _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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When I think back to a time we made an important decision about treatment, I think we considered the most important thing was . . .

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Allow Yourself to Take Time for You

Date: _____ **Day of the Week:** _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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The challenges I am most proud I have overcome are . . .

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"Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another."
— John Dewey

Reflect

Date: _____   **Day of the Week:** _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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If I could go back and talk to myself when my loved-one first started dialysis, I would say . . .

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Relax

Date: _____   **Day of the Week:** _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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This gives me strength to keep going when things are tough . . .

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"You can't have it all at once. Over my lifespan, I think I have had it all, but in given periods in time, things were rough. And if you have a caring life partner, you help the other person when that person needs it."
—_Ruth Bader Ginsburg_

Breathe

Date: _____ **Day of the Week:** _____

Today, I plan to . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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When I look in the mirror, I see . . .

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Discover Your Personal Journey

Date: _____   Day of the Week: _____

Today, I feel . . .

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Right now, I feel or I want . . .

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As I reflect on my journey as a kidney care partner, I am most proud of . . .

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"You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem,
and smarter than you think."
—Christopher Robin