

**Dotsie Bregel,
Founder and CEO of
The National Association of Baby Boomer Women
(NABBW)**



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Presents

**Journaling Your Way to
Health, Freedom, and Creativity**

With

Linda Joy Myers, Ph.D.

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**Journaling Your Way to
Health, Freedom, and Creativity
With
Linda Joy Myers, Ph.D.**

Dotsie: Hello and welcome to the call. Today we have **Linda Joy Myers** with us who is the second guest in our series, **Writing in the Middle Years, for Profit or Fun**. When we are finished with the interview, I'll open up the lines for questions.

For those of you who don't know me, I am **Dotsie Bregel**, and I am the founder of the **National Association of Baby Boomer Women** which can be found at www.NABBW.com, and also www.boomerwomenspeak.com and they are the number one sites on major search engines for baby boomer women. I'm passionate about educating and empowering boomer women, which happens to be my generation of women.

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If you are on the call today as a guest of Linda Joy, and you are not a member of the [NABBW](http://www.NABBW.com) but would like to join, feel free to email me at dots@nabbw.com and I can send you a link to join for the reduced rate of \$50.00. It's typically \$75.00, and we'd just like to extend that special offer to you if you're on the call.

For your information, all of our past teleseminars, and I believe we're up to around 50 right now, are yours free when you join the association, and you can either listen to them through links on our Web site while you are working on your computer, or you can print them and take them wherever you want and have time to read the teleseminars. That's just one of the many benefits of the association.

Okay, let's get started. Linda Joy, are you there?

Linda: I'm right here.

Dotsie: Okay, Linda Joy Myers, Ph.D., is the President and Founder of the **National Association of Memoir Writers**, www.namw.org so that's one of the reasons I thought she would be a great person to interview about journaling. She is a prize-winning author of "*Don't Call Me Mother: Breaking the Chain of Mother Daughter Abandonment*," and "*Becoming Whole: Writing Your Healing Story*." She's a therapist, speaker, and writing coach, and she offers online teleseminars on memoir writing at www.namw.org. Linda Joy, how are you doing today?

Linda: I'm doing great, I love this subject.

Dotsie: That's good, I'm sure you do. Do you want to tell us a little bit about your association, and then also tell us about your book, *Becoming Whole: Writing Your Healing Story*.

Linda: Okay, great. Well, my association the **National Association of Memoir Writers**, www.namw.org, and because of my love of both journaling and memoir writing, I noticed after finishing my books and looking around the Internet, that there wasn't a national organization on this subject, so I decided to build that. It's been really, really great. We're offering whole lots of membership benefits including a monthly teleseminar for our members. Books, free books, and discounts on books, and e-books, downloads, and we're new on the Web and everything, so we're really building our organization, at this point. One new event we're going to have that is going to be great for everybody is we're planning a telesummit; Memoir Telesummit in October, around October 23rd and we'll bet letting everybody know about that.

Dotsie: Okay, you want to explain to everybody on the call what a telesummit is in case they don't know?

Linda: Okay, a telesummit is a conference by phone so that we're going to be listening to five different presenters but you can do it in the comfort of your pajamas, if you like. It will be all day starting at 10:00 in the morning pacific time, and end at 4:00 in the afternoon. We're going to have agents, somebody talking about self-publishing, somebody helping people with plot, and a couple of other people that we are still getting. We're just planning it, right now. And so it is a great way to go to a conference, and it's free; totally free.

Dotsie: Okay can you send us information about that? Because I know we have a lot of writers that are members of our association that I'm sure might be interested in that because it is often a topic in the forum community at [Boomer Women Speak](#) where we have over 60 forums and one of them—well, there are several for writers—but a recent topic in there has been about, you know, which route do I take to get published. So I know there are people that might be interested in that. So if you could send us the information, we'll get it in our newsletters since you are a member of the [National Association of Baby Boomer Women](#). Tell us about your book, *Becoming Whole: Writing Your Healing Story*, and what prompted you to write that?

Linda: *Becoming Whole: Writing Your Healing Story*, is a book that I began writing as a result of having taught memoir writing to people, and also training therapists in learning how to use memoir writing as a healing. It was very much inspired by Dr. James Pennebaker and other people who were doing research on how writing helps to heal both mind, body, and spirit, really. He recently spoke

again—I spoke to him then, and I recently heard him talk again about this marvelous research and I do have links to it on my site. And you know what they discovered is that people wrote only fifteen minutes, three times a week for the study, and they found improvements in the immune systems of people who did just that amount of writing.

Dotsie: Oh, I've never heard that before; improvement in the immune system. And can you give me his last name again?

Linda: Dr. James Pennebaker. And he's got a Web site; I have a links on my site to him, and to his articles. And also, I talk about him in my book and really explain the nature of the study. First his studies, then there are studies that have been done after his original studies which were done in the late 90s and early 2000. And the follow up studies are showing it helps people with depression, it helps breast cancer patients with their recovery. There's really a lot of health benefits. They've work with many different populations. So you know if people want to know more about the research, it's worth looking at it. But what I did is go okay, this is very exciting. Having been a journaler since I was very, very young, I knew it was helpful to write, and I knew it was helpful to spill things out onto the page. But to have the fact that there was research supporting this was just thrilling to me. So I thought I've got to write a book so that more people will find out about this because many people aren't hanging out around the psychology journals, you know?

Dotsie: Right. Right. Well you know, we hear that it is good for your mind, and it really helps you bring clarity to your thoughts, etc, but I've really not heard that it absolutely improves the immune system so that's a really great thing to learn. You sell your book on your Web site, and its easily visible there for people who are interested in looking at the book and purchasing it?

Linda: Oh yeah. It's there under books and products. And also, I have a two-book special in case people would like to also buy my memoir which is called, "*Don't Call Me Mother: Breaking the Chain of Mother Daughter Abandonment*," and I wrote much of that memoir, just to touch on this topic for a minute, we'll come back to it later, maybe, as journal entries. As I wrote the book to be a memoir, I look at a lot of those journal entries; I didn't grab from them, but I picked up the feelings of things that I had remembered, you know, in the journaling. It's about three generations of mothers who abandoned their daughters, and how I broke the chain of abandonment, and also the fact that my mother denied that I was her daughter even until she was dying, but she wanted to pretend she was young, I don't know...she had a mental illness. So you know, and this book is for—a lot of women who have written to me who have read it who have had experiences that really are hard to find. I mean I didn't find any book remotely like it as I was trying to heal and cope with this. So it's something I began in my journals and finished as a memoir which is what people can do. Maybe if they don't feel like they are ready to write a memoir, they can capture

the scenes, and feelings, and situations, and later they might end up drawing upon them.

Dotsie: Okay, well let's get in to the meat of the teleseminar and I'll start asking you some questions about journaling. I guess the first is, you know, a lot of people want to journal, they'll journal on occasion, but they don't really stick with it. They don't have any type of habit. Can you tell us how to create a habit?

Linda: I want to say a couple of things about the habit. One is that I just recently came back from a journaling conference in Denver, and we did some surveys about how many people journal everyday versus once a week, versus very occasionally, and Dr. Pennebaker had also studied how often people needed to write for health benefits. What we found out was that an awful lot of guilty looks went around because so many people didn't journal every day. But we were reassured by Dr. Pennebaker that this was alright because when people did journal, usually they really needed to get something down and that's very, very beneficial to them. But there really are ways that we can invite ourselves more to do it because everybody is so busy and there are so many things taking our attention.

One is to go out and buy a brand new, nice journal that makes you want to pick it up. And sometimes if people buy—I've done this, I don't know about you—I've bought a journal that was leather-bound, and I felt like I had to write really pithy things in there. I would think oh it has to be so good, and I didn't have anything that great to say, and I didn't use it. I still have it, it's beautiful; I love to touch it. So you need to buy a journal that also invites you to open it, but that you will also write in it and not ruin it, by writing whatever your thoughts are or messy situations that are in your life. And get a pen that you really like to use. And keep these in your purse, in your car. You can have more than one. I high suggest that people date every single entry even with the year because I've found journals and it gives the month, and the day, and I don't know what year is anymore.

Dotsie: That happened to me. That's definitely happened to me. Well what about people who are journaling on their computer? Like I have a younger niece and she's a writer; professionally. She does her journaling on her computer. And I know that our generation does more with the pen as opposed to a PC, but I mean, you recommend writing no matter how you do it, is that right?

Linda: Well I do. They did studies on pen versus computer. The general thing is it's great to get self expression happening, no matter how. In other words, if people are working on healing specifically, they notice they said there was a connection between the brain, and the arm, and the hand; and kind of a flow in the body. And it often invited a different kind of writing. It wasn't that one was better than the other. So people could try both and see what happens.

Dotsie: Okay, that sounds good. While we're on this topic, I read a book called—actually, I met Michele Weldon at a seminar I went to several years ago. She wrote the book, "Writing to Save Your Life." That's also another good book that I would recommend.

Linda: Yes. She wrote an endorsement for "*Becoming Whole: Writing Your Healing Story*," as a matter of fact. She's a really, really nice woman. It's a great book.

Dotsie: Okay, so you recommend that, too. Alright, so let's say we get in a habit; oh another thing I wanted to mention. You talk about the hard-bound books. I've used both and you know what? I have to say that I really love just the old, spiral notebooks, because they are easier to plop on your lap and write in, and they are easier to keep open while you're writing and that kind of thing. So I know it's all personal preference. And I've used a little bit of everything. Actually, right now the one I have is a bound book and I'm certainly using it, but I really prefer the spiral, just the old, spiral notebook. So basically, it's figure out what you like best and go with it. And then come up with some kind of habit.

So tell us about journaling to discover our identity as a woman because this is really interesting, I think, especially for women at midlife, because many of us while we are still maybe the same at the core, our identity has changed some at midlife. Maybe we've found our self divorced, or in an empty nest, or remarried with step-children, or whatever. So it just seems like things are always changing. Why don't we talk a little bit about that?

Linda: Well, I think that's a really great idea and a great topic, and there's lots of way to do it. One way, one big exercise that I have people do, I'm also a therapist as well as a writing teacher, and is the question; "Who Am I?" And you write down the question, and then you free write all of the things that come into your mind without censoring, and when you feel like stopping, don't stop, and keep answering that question more. Because a lot of times we have an automatic stopping place that is our kind of unconscious censoring process going on, and if we go half that, we might find out some really interesting things about ourselves. So that's one important exercise.

Dotsie: Okay.

Linda: And then another one is, you can write—well, what a lot of my students do and people that I work with, is they write a story about themselves at different ages. Like you can even write from the voice of the 5-year old girl that you were, or whatever age; or 8 years old. The world looked different to us at different ages. And you could pick an age, childhood, early childhood, later childhood, teenage years, a couple of points there, and then go through the decades. No matter how old people are, it's not going to be a too overwhelming a task over a month or two, you know, you could really cover those decades, and write from

the point of view of here I am, 32-years old, this is what I'm doing, this is what I'm thinking, this is what is happening—and recapture that person, and also talk about now.

And then another is a reflective. Once you've done that, it's here I am, whatever age you are now, and then what do you think? What do you feel? What do you notice about those younger versions of yourself, and to write about that.

Dotsie: Right and how you've changed and that type of thing. That's interesting. I don't think I've ever done any of those suggestions, and yet, I journal all the time. That's really cool. I wouldn't mind trying some of them. Very good.

Linda: Well, I think it's because I teach memoir writing, and we're always going into the past in memoir writing, you know, and so there it is, there we are.

Dotsie: It's interesting. I'm reading a book now called, "About Face." It's I think, like twenty-four women who write about what they see when they look into the mirror. And it's interesting because several of them have written about what they've seen at different stages, you know, like the five year old, or the fourteen year old, or the thirty or the fifty year old. It's really interesting because, it's different at every stage. So maybe something else we want to do is consider writing about what we see when we look in the mirror. Oh gosh.

Linda: That's a good one.

Dotsie: Yeah, okay...how about techniques for being creative with the journaling?

Linda: Well, one of the most important techniques is to not let the inner critic interfere with what you're wanting to say about yourself. We talk about the concept of a free write, and that's what journaling basically is. I don't know if people use that concept, you know, it's a free exchange back and forth. Free write, writing for creativity, journaling; they're all kind of the same thing. Before I did this talk, I took a little walk, and I was thinking about the journal. I saw somebody's roses and I thought; *this is what a journal is*. The journaling experience is like going into the garden of our unconscious. And we want to invite all the little flowers that are kind of tucked away; even the little seedlings that are down there. We want to invite them to come to the surface and open up and flower, so that we can really see them and appreciate them fully.

So for creativity, the first thing is we even might do a brief meditation on, "alright, I am going to allow myself to speak freely, to say whatever is on my mind. I am not going to show this to anyone." I like people to create overtly what I call a "sacred space" contract where they say, "this is mine, I will not show it to anybody, no matter how great the idea is right now. I'm just going to let it be my place to develop my ideas." And then, you know, we write about what's juicy;

what we love; what we have loved in the past, and perhaps we have lost. We write about what we want and again, that needs to be another writing similar to the “Who Am I” exercise. What do you want, and what your visions are for yourself and your life, and then when you feel like stopping; don’t stop. You know? Just don’t stop yet.

You can also approach it from the underside of write about what you’ve lost, and what you want to create again of something that you’ve lost. I mean, sometimes we have very strong feelings about things and we’re grieving or mourning perhaps for what we don’t have, and we feel stuck. We say, “okay that’s over, I can’t have that,” and we could get into belief systems. What you want to do is to go ahead and say all that because if we censor that darker, more painful side, then we’re blocking our creativity a little bit, without meaning to. So we can write about the painful feelings, or the loss, and then come on up to what do I want, what do I want from that? How can I create that again? And this could be a topic about anything. It doesn’t have to be about art, or writing. It could be about gardening, or taking care of your pet, or playing with your child, or you know, going to the beach. It can be about really anything. And as long as we don’t censor, we’re going to find a little trail of stones that leads us to something that we’re really looking for.

Dotsie: I just have another question here for you because we’re going to get into a little bit about keeping dream journals, emotional healing, etc, and I just wondered if you have a plan for what’s to happen with your journals after you die. And I know it sounds like a morbid question, but some people are really afraid to journal because someone might read it; and what if they see the real me; or whatever. And other are like oh, I have all of these journals; what’s going to happen to them when I’m no longer around? Will anybody read them? That kind of thing. Can you address that a little bit?

Linda: Yes, absolutely. We did talk a lot about this at the journaling conference and so I’ll just tell you some of what I heard. Because I myself do not have a plan, I know I should. I’m just figuring I might not die tomorrow and maybe I’ll figure it out then. I have thrown away things that I really knew that I didn’t want anybody to see or write, for sure, and it may or may not be in a journal. I also have censored myself in my journal for that reason, but I’ve also worked on just writing things on pieces of paper and then when I’m done with it and I come across it, I just throw it away. So that’s kind of my technique, like okay, I took care of that, good-bye. But at the conference, we talked about all kinds of things around that there are a lot of middle-age women at that conference, or later than middle-age, and they had plans, and I’ll tell you what some of them were.

So some women have friends or relatives, close relatives, usually women friends, women relatives, and they had a plan with them, “When you find out that I have died, I want you to go in my house, I want you to grab this box, wherever it is, and I want you to take it and burn it. Get it out of the house as soon as possible.

So they have somebody who is going to go in and take care of that. People lock them up in vaults and stuff like that; people who have really a lot. And then, some people go through the journal and get rid of the stuff. I mean it is a pretty big project if you are older and you have, you've wrote in several journals every year. But you know, they would go through and really look at it. And some of them didn't care. Some women said, you know, whoever I am and whoever I was, there's nothing that I wrote in there that I feel embarrassed about, and so let them find out who I am. A little bit like the *Bridges of Madison County*. You know, okay, so this is who I am, and this is who I was, this is my life, maybe they'll learn something, or maybe they'll be shocked, but I really don't care. It depends on the personality of the person as to how you feel about that.

Dotsie: Yeah, because I've heard of people putting this type of thing in a Will and it just really surprised me, but I guess it makes sense if you take journaling that seriously. Let's talk a little bit about keeping a dream journal. It's interesting because the topic of dreams, and dream interpretation, has come up in our forum community recently, but also in the past. So I know interpreting dreams is definitely of interest to many boomer women. And do you do that when you keep your journal? Tell us what that's about.

Linda: Again there are lots of choices around this. There are several things that seem to be very important about the dream journal. And one of them is that you keep it beside your bed at night. Now some people say that they can't read their writing so they keep a tape recorder besides their bed. It really depends on your sleeping arrangements, who all is there, you know, and things like that. And so, now you've got those books with the little bitty lights on them, you can just turn on the light and be able to see. What you do, what I suggest, and remember I am a therapist and there are certain techniques that I recommend, and I do recommend that people write their dream in present tense, saying "I." This is what I am doing, I am here, I am there, make it the present tense, and then just let it come out. Dreams are just a—you know, we remember part of it, or remember a fragment, so first get the dream down itself as fast as you can. If you wake up and you think you'll remember it in the morning, you won't. I mean, it's extremely rare that people do. So if you really feel passionate about capturing the dream, just go ahead, and don't try and kid yourself, you know, it's like no, I probably won't, you know I'm going to capture it now. Then the next day you can look at it, and then I recommend a level of journaling there where you take the dream and you write what your reactions are to it, your thoughts, and your feelings. You might think you know what it means, or you really might not, but that doesn't mean you can't react to it. You go ahead and react to the dream, write about it more, and as you're doing that, you may end up, you know, querying yourself about what does this mean, I think it is associated with such and such. Everybody has their own dream imagines. I mean, my house dream might mean something really different than your house dream. A snake might or might not be what Freud thought it was. I think that we, as women, really need to just go into our own dictionary of images and associations, and let the "right

brain” really flow, which it will do if you are writing. And let ourselves try to figure it out and don’t necessarily think that some authority figure is going to know more about your dream than you do.

Dotsie: You may very well not have the answer to this question, but I’m just wondering. It was a questions that I asked in our forums and I actually haven’t looked back to see if someone responded. But do you know a good book on interpreting dreams?

Linda: Well because I don’t go there that much, I frankly don’t have one off the top of my head. I know there are some out there. And if I think of any I’ll email you and recommend a couple.

Dotsie: Okay that sounds good. Do you do this? Do you wake up in the middle of the night and jot down your dreams?

Linda: Actually I don’t now, but I use to. I did it for many, many years, especially when I was in the depths of my healing process. When I say many years, we’re talking two and half decades here. And my dreams were one half; I say fully, one half of my healing process. If I hadn’t been getting messages from my dreams, I wouldn’t have healed as much or as fast, and it was extremely, extremely helpful to me. And I’m not in that process so much now, so I don’t do it as much, but I have to just say that, especially if people are trying to work some things out, my dreams just gave me the directions to go, the symbols, the feelings of working it out. I’d bring the dreams to therapy, I’d write about it, and it was half of the process.

Dotsie: Wow. How about that? Okay, that’s a lot. That’s a big portion, isn’t it?

Linda: Yes, it really was. It really was.

Dotsie: How about journaling for emotional healing? We’ve talked a little bit about this when we talked about...well, your book and Michele Weldon’s book, *Writing to Save Your Life*. Tell us a little bit more about that.

Linda: Well, you know, again; using the dream journal as a part of it is a good idea. Then in emotional healing, the important thing is to tell the bottom-line truth. To really not listen to the inner critic voice, and in my book, I have a whole chapter on deal—many places that I talk about the inner critic, and a whole chapter on how to help your inner critic be quieter and not to really get trapped by the inner critic voices. The inner critic is going to say, “Well, you really can’t say that,” “Well, your mother really wouldn’t like it if you said that,” “Well so and so will get mad at you if you say that,” those kinds of voices. You need to write beyond those voices and say what you really think.

And I think a lot of women, we really, I hope the younger generation isn't as programmed as some of us was, I was, certainly. "Oh that would be nice," "Oh you can't really say that," you know, "Oh I have to think about everybody else's feelings." I can't even put it in my journal because what if they find it, you know? Okay, don't put it in your journal, put it on a separate piece of paper, you can burn it afterwards. If there is some trauma, some injury, some abuse you need to work out, you need to be able to tell the bottom-line truth. And there are layers of truth as many of us know. And one of the big steps in all spiritual practices—as far as I know this is universal—and in therapy practice, is to dig down, as we can stand it, don't write about something if you are going to be so upset you can't go to work the next day. You know, you've got to take care of yourself around it. But when you are ready, tell the real truth exactly the way it was. And also have a support system if you are using a journal for emotional healing. You know I have clients who bring a journal into the therapy session and read it to me. So there is a way I can help surround them, protect them, listen to them, about what it is they are saying, and we can take it to the next level.

A lot of times the journal is the therapy, you know, in a lot of situations. So you can write. If it is too painful though—and they have done studies about this also—you write it in third person; as if in a novel. Write it in the third person. Instead of "I," you say "she was eight years old, and one day she went into the basement, this is what happened." And you can give the same name for that person, or you can change the name, even. What they found out in these studies was that it is almost as healing to write a fictional story, meaning a story that has changed a little bit, as it is to write a direct, true story. So that's why, if you need to change it a little bit, you can; and it will still help.

Dotsie: Wow, that's interesting. I've never heard that before. Well now you're talking about journaling for emotional healing, and a lot of this journaling seems to be based around issues. Do you know many women who journal who don't have major issues.

Linda: Oh yes.

Dotsie: And what are they journaling for?

Linda: Well, they're journaling about their garden, they're journaling about their grandchildren, they're journaling about their house, their pet. What they use it as, and I love this idea, they use it as a journal to awakening. It's like a spiritual practice, too. Another area that I'm completely involved and interested in is writing a spiritual autobiography and keeping a spiritual journal. And you know, it's how to listen to the still, small voice inside of us. That might be God, whatever you want to call it. It's a listening practice. So you write down what you're hearing. There are lots of ways to use journaling as an awareness technique and a spiritual practice.

Dotsie: Okay, and we'll talk about that a little bit because I think that is more of like, visioning in your journal writing because that's really a lot of what I do with my journaling—is I reflect on the day before, but I also journal about the day that I'm facing, and the future. You're talking about journaling and writing about like your sacred journey. Are you familiar with the book, *Writing the Sacred Journey*?

Linda: Yes, I have read that one. I think I even have it on my shelf.

Dotsie: Oh you do? Okay, because I didn't know if you were familiar with it, but I read it, and it was a really good book. For those of you on the call it is called, "*Writing the Sacred Journey: The Art and Practice of Spiritual Memoir*," by Elizabeth J. Andrew. That's another good book if anybody is interested in journaling about the sacred journey, or about faith issues, or anything like that. I should have saved my comment about the book about faith for the next question because there are also people who are like dialoguing with your body when they're journaling. Can you tell us about that because I'm not—I guess maybe people with weight issues and that type of thing?

Linda: Well anything really. People who are trying to use writing to heal their body. Let's say they have cancer, they have a broken bone, they have a stomach ache, they have a headache, they have chronic pain. I have clients who have Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and you know, in our society, we're suppose to have a beautiful body and it should work perfectly for us. So we should shut up, and we shouldn't be moaning and groaning, and complaining, and talking about our aches and pains; and all of this kind of stuff. I mean, there is a place for really holding what we are actually feeling and our journals can do that. The journals not going to answer back and say oh you should quit whining. You're not whining. You're talking about what is real. And so you talk to your—let's say you have a headache. You talk to your head and you say, "Why? I'm hurt, this is hard on my head. What is happening, what is your message to me?" is one question you could ask. There are a bunch of questions that we can ask of our bodies. What is your message for me? What is it that I'm not listening to that you have to tell me? How am I ignoring you, or hurting you, or putting you in a position where you have to be this extreme to give me this message that you're giving me? Is there some other treatment or some other thing that I need to be doing, that I'm not doing? And whatever part of the body it is, you can even have a dialogue with your body when you are not in pain, when you are not ill. But you want to be more in touch with yourself. I know some people who are in their heads a lot. They don't even know what their feet and legs are doing; they don't even feel them. So you have a dialogue with your feet so you become more aware of your feet. You can even write a poem to your feet, thanking them for all of the hard work they do. All the ways they get you around. You know, we take our bodies for granted a lot. And so it doesn't have to be an illness-related dialogue. It can really be a lot of fun. See what happens.

Dotsie: So do you know anything about healing like people who are dialoguing with their body and how that ties into the healing process?

Linda: Well, it is the same kind of thing. I have read, but I don't know where, of stories about people getting messages from this kind of, you know, intuitive messages from this kind of writing that helped them explore other arenas of healing, or explore other questions about themselves and what they're doing or how they're living. It can be a quality of life issue, not just of illness. And some people really find it helpful to really tell the truth about how they're really feeling because maybe they come from a family that says "you've got that again? Leave me alone; don't talk to me about it." You know that irritation just because somebody has a chronic problem and people say, "Oh you're just trying to get attention here. Shut up." And so we need a place where we can say what's true.

Dotsie: Yeah, and you know, it's interesting, this whole dialoguing with your body, because unless you take the time to journal, and dialogue, and be still, you're just running from one day to the next and you're not even paying attention to your body. So I would think that the facts that you mentioned people think, oh maybe I should try this, maybe I should go to this type of doctor, maybe I should try some type of holistic approach. But it isn't until we are still, and journaling, that we can even get that kind of feedback, or have those kinds of thoughts. So I would think that would be a really big benefit for someone suffering through some type of disease or something.

Let's talk about visioning in your journal, because this is really interesting to me. This is kind of what I do so I would love to hear what you have to say.

Linda: Yeah, well...you know, visioning can mean a lot of different things like the reflecting that you were talking about and it's very interesting about writing into the future. Another study that I'll mention that was done, I think it was by a woman named Laura King. She and other authors are in a book called, "*The Writing Cure*." And what they found out in these studies was that writing about your best self, and your best future self, is a way of changing the immune system for the better. So we begin to experience ourselves in a different way, in a new way perhaps, in a positive way, and it's really, really true that when we are experiencing something new and different, and more positive, we begin to create new chemicals in our body. We create happiness chemicals, really. So it is very important for us to—and nothing comes that we do, comes before visioning it. We have to have a vision, and see it, and imagine it, before we create stuff. That is how the root of all creativity is, having an idea, you know, having an image. So writing it down makes it much more concrete. Frankly I wasn't writing in my journal as much and as I begin creating www.namw.org I thought, and then other people were saying, all these business people I was listening to say, "oh yeah, I write in my journal all the time about what I want to do next." And I started to do that. And things began to manifest immediately! I was like, WOW! I really need to

keep doing this, and I am doing it. Things begin manifesting I think because I was getting so clear about what I needed to do.

Dotsie: Yes, and I think it is so true. And I think a lot of people in business use journaling just to stay on track. Not a lot, but some. Just to kind of stay on track and plan, and continue to be productive. How about if we talk about blogging and online journaling? Do you have anything to say about that?

Linda: Well, you know, it's gotten much more popular now, I think especially with younger people to do a lot of this online, which is interesting and fine. I mean it's a different philosophy from those of us who hid our journals under the bed. It's a different approach. It's everybody's choice about what they want to do. And so, of course blogging is a short term for Web blog, and people can get a blog site free from various companies; Blogger, Wordpress, and so on, and journal there. Now you could say why should you; I don't want people to read it. Well you can do it as a discipline. Actually, I know therapist whose clients, a few of them, blog their journal entries, and then give her; send her an email and she gets the blog post for what they were thinking about and dealing with. She scans it, she reads it. So that was one way of them staying connected and working together. You can also write in the blog as a discipline like maybe when you sit at your computer you focus, and you gather your thoughts differently than if you sit around with a piece of paper and a pen. Great, if that works for you. You can blog it and have it private. Nobody will read it. You don't have to set it up so that anybody can read it. So sometimes it is a discipline for people. There are some journaling sites, I'll name a couple. One is called www.lifejournal.com. I met the owner of this site at this journaling conference. It is a software program, and some of the people at this conference had used it. I haven't used it myself. But it seems very interesting. So that is www.lifejournal.com. And then I noticed there's some other sites and I'm not on them or anything, but I noticed there is one called, www.diarisp.net and then there is another one called www.mytherapyjournal.com and it's free for fourteen days and then there is a cost, I don't know what it is. I'm not on these things. If people Google, I googled a bunch of these things to find out what was there. I did "online journaling," I did "therapeutic journaling," I did a bunch of different Google searches and so people can do that and see what they are looking for, to see what they can find. Really there are a lot of them and way more than what I am listing, and they can find them and then there are links on these places, and so there you go.

Dotsie: You've mentioned this journaling conference a few times. Can you tell us about that? Or the Web site for that. Is it an annual conference?

Linda: Well, it's going to be. It was done through Kay Adams and she is a therapist, and a writer, and she's published a bunch of books about writing, and in fact on my site, www.namw.org, an interview with her is one of my membership benefits. You can find her on my site at www.namw.org and read

about her. Her picture is there, and her links are there, I just don't have it in front of me right now.

Dotsie: That's fine. I'm sure if someone googled journaling conference, we could find that. Is her name Kay Adams? K-a-y Adams?

Linda: Kay Adams, and also her name is Kathleen Adams, same person. She's in Colorado, and she has a Web site. You can easily Google her and find her immediately.

NOTE: Kathleen Adams Web site is www.journaltherapy.com/.

Dotsie: Okay.

Linda: Now she did the first ever, she called it The Power of Words, journaling conference and it was the first time that all of the big names, and smaller names, and the writing as healing of therapeutic writing community had ever gathered together. And it was absolutely mind blowing. I mean, all of us were having paroxysms of joy for four days about this because many people have been secretly journaling, or quietly writing, and quietly writing for healing, quietly kind of not telling anybody, and not knowing people to share it with. Some people that were there are from really tiny, little towns where there's nobody like them that they could find, you know? And we were all together. There were over 400 people there.

Dotsie: Wow, that's impressive. And I believe the Web site might be www.journaltherapy.com/. Let's move on because we only have ten minutes and I want to know a little bit about keeping a journal for memoir and short stories.

Linda: Okay, great. This is another creative use of the journal. As I mentioned earlier, I wrote most of my memoir in my journals first, and I was shocked when I went back after the book was published and I saw all of these stories sprawled out. And some of them I actually ended up using because then I would write the story in the journal because I would need to write it myself from the pen, onto the paper, especially the more difficult stories to get to. There were just certain things that I could not write on the computer. And so then I had copied them into the computer and they eventually developed into stories. And so I would carry the journal around, and I would also make a list of different, I call it, "turning point" stories, that I knew were really significant, and I would just put them in my journal. I would make my list in my journal, my ideas of what chapters I wanted to use, and I would go back and you know, the book is pretty much what I sketched out in the journal?

Dotsie: You know we have a woman who post in our forum community quite a bit, and she's a writer; she's written a lovely book. We are encouraging her to write more and have encouraged her to print her post; just to print her post from

our forum community and just kind of organize them in some sort fashion, and you know, put together another book. So it sounds like something similar to what you're suggesting with the journaling, and then turning it into a book.

Linda: Right, you know, and a lot of people are now writing their books on their blog? You know they write what will turn into a book on their blog. Either they blog it openly, or they write it in there and that's another way of containing and organizing and then short stories, I mean, you know you can use your journal for anything.

Dotsie: Right.

Linda: You know, as a creative place to begin sketching a short story, or short memoir piece, it doesn't matter what. And also to use the journal to write about books that you've read. What did you like? What grabbed you? I mean I read a book and later I've thought, I've forgot it. I mean I remember I loved it, but gee, what happened? I don't know why, but it just goes into the big pool of books that I've read which are lingering in my right brain somewhere. So I journal about it, just a couple of lines, and I go yeah, I may even want to read it again, or recommend it to people. So that's another way we can keep track of that.

Dotsie: Okay, and what about journaling as a legacy? And then we'll see if anybody has a question.

Linda: Okay, well again, journaling as a legacy—so there are, in the 19th Century, a lot of women kept journals, you know, about the pioneer women that came across the country, and they often just wrote about the weather, and the canning, and all that kind of stuff. But you know, we don't live like that any more and so those journals are extremely wonderful documentations of how life was actually lived. So people shouldn't sell themselves short in any way about writing. Maybe they don't want to write anything deep, or healing, or pithy, or painful, or anything. You don't have to. By writing about daily life, you are chronicling your life, how you're living it, and the women's wisdom that you have, and thoughts. And if you can add thoughts, of course, that's always wonderful because people always want to know more. And these are important documents, and who knows...in 100 years, the way we're doing things now may seem weird to somebody else like, "Oh, they did it that way? How interesting!"

Dotsie: Right. Right, exactly. And you know, our forum community has been online for over five years, and there's definitely history there, too. Just about the way things are done, the way we relate to people, and that type of thing. It's kind of cool to look back. Let's see if anybody has a question for you.

Caller No. 1: Hi this is Lynn. I don't have a question, but I do have a comment. I really enjoyed what you had to say Linda Joy; and as you and Dotsie both know, I do journaling as well. I just want to add that journaling is a great way to relieve

stress. I'm particularly focusing on relieving stress for caregivers by journaling, and I have workshops in which we exchange journaling through emails and only say what we love about the writing. That book is coming out in December with over 200 sentence starts so people can start their journaling from those. And journaling is just an amazing thing. I know first hand, and I'm delighted to share it with other people. I love what you're doing, Linda Joy, and how it relates to memoir and how it's the first start. So thank you very much for sharing all of this.

Dotsie: Okay, now don't go anywhere. Tell us your Web address.

Caller No. 1: It's www.writeradvice.com. My email is lgood67334@comcast.net

Dotsie: Okay and I'm sure they can get you through the site. So that's www.writeradvice.com. And Lynn also has a newsletter you can sign up for, too.

Linda: Lynn's going to be a presenter in January for NAMW, so we'll see you there, Lynn.

Caller No. 1: Okay, looking forward to it.

Dotsie: All the connections on the Internet are amazing, aren't they? How about that? Okay, does anybody else have a question or a comment? No?

Then do you have anything else that you would like to share that maybe we haven't touched upon? Why don't you give you Web address again.

Linda: Okay yes, it's www.namw.org. What I would be glad to do if somebody is on the call and would like to join us, is give a \$20.00 to joining NAMW, if you're on the call here with Dotsie. So just email me at lindajoy@namw.org and we'll set that discount up for you, and have you be part of what we're doing.

Dotsie: Okay and Linda Joy, you are able to offer that discount say, six months from now if somebody joins the association and listen to this as a past seminar, right?

Linda: Yes, what we'll do is, people would need to—the coupons inside the cart only last a short time, but if somebody emails me, or calls me, then I'll be able to set it up for them.

Dotsie: Okay and then do you also want to mention your special with your book again?

Linda: Oh yes, I have a two book special on www.namw.org. The two books are thirty dollars so it's quite a big discount. And you can get that at www.namw.org. And we also have a CD for sale, "*Five Secrets for Writing a Publishable Memoir*," we have that for sale. And as we are continuing to develop, we are developing

more CD programs, and audio downloads for people to have, and transcripts, so things are evolving. So come and visit us and see what's happening. If people want to just sign up for the newsletter list, it's on the site there, and you get a free, 30-page e-book called, "*Begin Your Memoir Now*," if you want to just join the newsletter list and you'll get something that will help you get started with your writing.

Dotsie: Okay very good. Well it looks like we are out of time, but I just want to thank you so much for being on the call, and this teleseminar will be transcribed so that people can read it if they like, and we'll also make the audio link available in the ***Members Only*** section at the [NABBW](#), and then we will also include it in a couple of the upcoming Weekly Updates that the members of the association receive. So anyway, I just want to thank everyone for being on the call, and I look forward to talking to you again soon, Linda Joy.

Linda: Well thanks so much Dotsie.

Dotsie: You're welcome, have a good day.