

# Overcoming

## You're Stronger Than You Think

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Reflections, Journal Prompts, and Tools  
for Tapping into Your Inner Resources

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## Welcome!

*You are uniquely prepared to face – and overcome – whatever life brings your way.*

You might not always feel like it, but you absolutely have the ability to navigate the waters of life, even when those waters become choppy and overwhelming. **Overcoming: You're Stronger Than You Think** provides encouragement, inspiration, and practical tools to help you get through the tough times in life.

The guide is built around a series of thoughtful reflections that will help you gain new insights; and corresponding journal prompts to lead you towards deeper self-exploration. Don't be afraid to select a journal prompt you feel a little unsure about; you might be surprised by what your writing reveals. But always use the prompts in a way that feels safe and right for you.

**Remember:** *your journal is your private space, where you're totally free to be yourself. There is no right or wrong, so don't hold back! Express anything you like, in any manner that feels right to you.*

*For ideas on how to enhance and enrich your journaling experience, see **Tools and Resources** at the end of the guide.*

# Your Past Has Prepared You for the Present

## Reflection

Every experience you've been through in your life has played a role in shaping you and refining you, leaving you uniquely prepared to face – and overcome – whatever life brings your way. The secret lies in tapping into all the power and resources that you possess within you. When you do that, you gain the ability to rise up and soldier on, regardless of the challenges and obstacles that show up on your path. In the process, you'll come to realize that you're a whole lot stronger than you think.

Circumstances in life may leave us feeling battered, bruised, and exhausted, but the human spirit is a wonder. That includes your spirit, too! Even when things look bleak and you feel like you don't have all the answers, focus on hanging on and pushing through, taking things one day at a time. You'll be surprised at what you're capable of and the reserves of strength you have deep within you.

The following journal prompts will help you to see how your past has prepared you for the present in a meaningful and purposeful way, so that you're uniquely equipped to deal with whatever lies before you.

## Journal Prompts

What is one of the toughest situations you've ever had to deal with?

What have you been through in the past that you think was instrumental in shaping who you are?

Describe a challenge or obstacle that you were able to successfully overcome.

Describe a situation you've been through that you think has made you a stronger person.

When have you had to persevere through a difficult time in life?

When have you dealt with something that might not have seemed like a big deal to anyone else, but it was a big deal for you?

Describe a situation where you know you made the right decision, even though making it wasn't easy.

*To remain strong during difficult times, you need to take care of yourself. For 21 self-care tips that will nourish your body, mind, and soul, see **Tools and Resources** at the end of the guide.*



## Reframing: A Change in Perspective

### Reflection

We've all found ourselves stuck in an awful, never-ending thought loop where we keep replaying a situation over and over again. Nothing gets resolved, we feel terrible, and instead of those terrible feelings going away, they stick around and intensify. The process of reframing can get us out of that negative thought loop and moving in a new direction.

Reframing is when you change how you think about a situation. The situation remains the same, but as your thinking changes, you start to view the situation differently. The change in your assessment of the situation leads to a change in your emotional state. You feel better, therefore you're able to process things in ways that are healthier, more constructive, and more empowering.

Even when nothing material changes externally, reframing can change everything. The following journal prompts will help you see that when you change how you're thinking about situations, all kinds of new possibilities, options, and opportunities emerge.

### Journal Prompts

What "problem" in your life can you reframe as an "opportunity" instead?

What type of situations are most likely to get you stuck in a negative thought loop? How might you approach these situations from a different angle or perspective?

Think about a situation that makes you feel frustrated. How might you reframe it in a way that's more empowering for yourself?

Think about a painful situation that still nags at you. What are some alternative perspectives that you can view it from?

What flaw or weakness are you most likely to get down on yourself about? How can you think about it differently, in a way that shows more kindness, understanding, or acceptance towards yourself?

How can you reframe a "failure" or "setback" in your life as a learning opportunity instead?

When you find yourself focusing on something negative, what are some of the positive things in your life that you can focus on instead?

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# Your Personal Survival Toolbox

## Reflection

The ups and downs of life can strike at any moment, that's why you need to be prepared with your personal survival toolbox! This is a symbolic treasure chest of wealth that is uniquely yours. It is comprised of all your charm, talent, and other wonderful qualities, along with the knowledge, skills, and experience that you've acquired during your life journey.

Your survival toolbox is limitless. You can add to it any time, as much as you like, and as often as you like. You can refine the tools that are already there. And you can reach into it any time you feel like you need some support to deal with the challenges you're facing.

Everyone has a personal survival toolbox at their disposal. However, many people don't take full advantage of it, as they fail to realize how many tools they've accumulated over the years. The following journal prompts will reveal just how much you have in your toolbox, so you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you've got what it takes to deal with any challenges that come your way.

## Journal Prompts

What has helped you to solve problems in the past?

Which of your qualities do you think have been most helpful in getting you through difficulties?



What do you consider to be your top 5 strengths?

*There are many different kinds of strengths. Need help to identify yours? See the list of personal strengths provided in **Tools and Resources** at the end of this guide.*

What do you do uniquely or especially well?

Which of your strengths are you most grateful for?

What good qualities do you bring to your relationships with others?

What is your "super-power" – a special talent, skill, quality, or knowledge you have that makes you feel super-confident?

*For a list of tangible items you can add to your survival toolbox, see **Tools and Resources** at the end of the guide.*



## Tools and Resources

### Enhance Your Journaling Experience

Here are some ways to enhance your journaling experience and truly make it your own:

- if you're more visually oriented, go ahead and include artwork or your own drawings in your journal
- use one of the many digital journaling tools available if you prefer that format over writing in a journal notebook
- add fragrance to your writing environment with essential oils or incense
- have some fresh flowers or plants in view as you write
- light a candle before you sit down to write



- connect with nature by taking your writing outdoors
- don't be constrained by writing prompts; allow yourself to explore whatever direction you feel drawn towards

## Self-Care for Body, Mind, and Soul

Here are 21 tips for how you can take care of yourself and build yourself up, regardless of what's going on in your life.

1. Practice good posture – head up, shoulders back.
2. Take a few moments to breathe slowly and deeply.
3. Do something nice for yourself; treat yourself to a little gift or splurge on a little luxury that you know you'll enjoy.
4. When you find yourself engaging in negative self-talk, tell yourself something positive and encouraging instead.
5. Add beauty to your space with some fresh flowers in a colour that you love.
6. Perform some simple stretches throughout the day.
7. Find time for your favourite hobby.



8. Reflect on a happy memory (or a special person) that makes you smile on the outside and the inside.
9. Curl up with a good book that you can lose yourself in.

10. Enroll in a course to learn about something you've always been interested in.
11. Listen to your favourite music. Sing out loud if you feel like it. Dance if you feel like it.
12. Watch an inspiring movie that leaves you feeling uplifted.
13. Replace soft drinks with water to keep properly hydrated. Add some fresh lemon juice for a refreshing and cleansing drink.
14. Turn off all your devices (TV, computer, cell phone, etc.) and enjoy some quiet time. Doing this before bed will also help you to sleep better.
15. Get outside for some sunshine and fresh air.
16. Nurture your spiritual side through a practice such as prayer, meditation, or chanting. You'll feel more stable and grounded, and it will help you manage stress more effectively.



17. Add some small routine tasks to your "Things to Do" list so you have more opportunities to check things off as completed.
18. Connect more often with the good people in your life that support and encourage you.

19. Put some distance between yourself and anyone who doesn't treat you well.
20. Find some affirmations that inspire you – or come up with your own. Write them out on cue cards and place the cards where you'll see them regularly.
21. Enjoy a nice, long soak in a warm bath. Continue to pamper yourself afterwards by applying your favourite body lotion.

**Bonus tip:**

Going for a walk is one of the best things you can do for yourself when it comes to self-care. Physically, it will do a world of good for your body, benefiting your heart, lungs, joints, and overall energy level. Mentally, it will leave you feeling both relaxed and recharged, so you're able to think more clearly. Walking is also a great way to boost your mood, and it can help ease the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

## List of Personal Strengths

Everyone has strengths of one kind or another. If you find it difficult to see your own strong points, use the following list for inspiration.

Adventurous	Flexible	Poised
Analytical	Friendly	Quick-thinking
Artistic	Generous	Self-controlled
Athletic	Gentle	Reliable
Calm	Funny	Resourceful
Caring	Hardworking	Resilient
Cheerful	Helpful	Responsible
Creative	Imaginative	Sensible
Compassionate	Intelligent	Sensitive
Conscientious	Level-headed	Smart
Courageous	Loyal	Spontaneous
Curious	Mature	Thoughtful
Disciplined	Optimistic	Trustworthy
Easygoing	Open-minded	Warm
Energetic	Organized	Wise
Free-spirited	Passionate	Witty

## Your Survival Toolbox

The following items are all great additions to your personal survival toolbox.

### **Photos:**

Photos can serve as a reminder of good times in your life. Select some special ones, frame them, and keep them displayed where you can see them for continual encouragement.

### **Music:**

Is there a special song that lifts you up when you're feeling down and puts you in a good mood? Is there music that relaxes you when you're feeling anxious or agitated? Whether you listen to CDs or go digital, the music that you love belongs in your toolbox.

### **Books:**

Which books have impacted you the most? Maybe it's an uplifting biography that moved you, or a timeless classic that changed your outlook. Keep these books handy and revisit them from time to time. As you mature and evolve as a person, you'll extract even more from them than you did on your first read.

### **Cards and Notes:**

Have you ever received a card or note that touched your heart and totally made your day? Someone chose just the right words to express their love, support, or thankfulness. Keep those cards and notes (and emails, too – just print them out) and read them whenever you're in need of some encouragement.

**Awards and Other Recognition:**

Maybe you won first place in your fifth-grade spelling bee. Maybe your homemade black bean soup was a hit at your friend's potluck dinner. Maybe your boss noticed that you stayed late and expressed genuine appreciation for your commitment. Recognition certainly isn't everything, but it feels great when it happens.

Whether you received an award, a trophy, or a word of thanks and a pat on the back, add these items, moments, and memories to your toolbox and take hold of them whenever you need a boost.



## About the Author



Susan Knight is a health writer and certified health and wellness coach. She is also passionate about journaling and its health benefits; she has written on the topic and interviewed experts in the field of therapeutic journaling. She has created a variety of journaling guides to help others experience the transformative power of journal writing.

In her spare time, you'll likely find her tending to her many houseplants, curled up with a good book, or playing her much-loved harp.

Susan shares:

*"During the really difficult times in life, we can feel like we're trapped in a dark, hopeless place with no end in sight. During those periods, it's vital that we grab hold of something – anything – that can strengthen us and keep us going until we see some light at the end of the tunnel."*

For more journaling guides and other resources, visit:

[TakeHoldOfWellness.com](http://TakeHoldOfWellness.com)