

# Therapy in pen and paper

## Write Your Way Home – a Torah guide to therapeutic writing-Menucha Publishers

### R Deutsch

The written word is very powerful and many of our great Torah leaders over the centuries have advocated using writing to improve our *avodas Hashem*. Rav Shlomo Wolbe ztl famously wrote, "It is crucial that one who is building his spiritual world and is concerned that his challenges not take over his life, keep a journal. Many previous *Gedolim* toiled over their journal entries." (*Alei Shur*, Vol I P.160)

With the publication of **Write Your Way Home**, Mrs Yocheved Rottenberg has done a great service to the Jewish world by bringing this writing medium to a practical level, which anyone can utilize. All you need is a notebook and pen – and some spare time – and with the help of this book you can gain the tremendous value that therapeutic writing has brought for thousands around the world.

Mrs Rottenberg is a certified Journal Facilitator, trained at the Therapeutic Writing Institute in Denver, Colorado. Now, she has combined her gifts of penetrating insight into human nature with the skills she has gained in therapeutic writing to bring this book to fruition.

Each of the seventy two chapters, on topics covering – alphabetically – from *Acceptance* and *Anger* to *Worthlessness* and *Your Life Story*, begins

with an inspirational idea by Chaya Hinda Allen – well known for her Positivity workshops, and continues with practical writing exercises designed to help you get to know yourself better and become the person you really want to be.

The writing exercises are very varied and of different time lengths as well. The author advises, "Set a timer for the specified time and just write without stopping. Don't stop to think, or do any editing. The best results will come this way, with the person doing the exercises getting in touch with his deepest, innermost feelings and emotions."

So, what does a writing exercise look like?

In the chapter on *Insults*, for example, the book says; *Did someone insult you? Do you feel hurt? (A thirty minute exercise)*

1. Set the timer for five minutes and write out the incident that hurt you. Write how you felt about it then and how you feel now. Write without stopping until the timer rings.

2. Now write a dialogue with the person involved. Explain to them why you felt so hurt and what was hard for you. Let them explain themselves. Listen to their explanations and try to accept it. You can speak up and tell them what hurt you.

3. Discuss it until you feel that

the conversation has come to a satisfying conclusion.

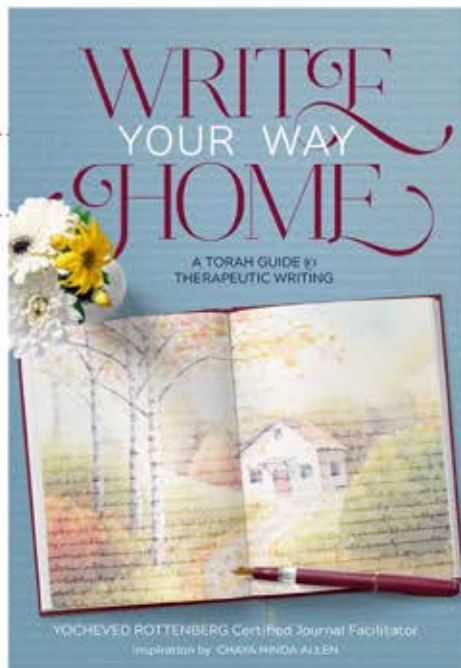
4. Read over your writing and write a reflection.

The true value of this book can really only be experienced by trying it out. Even if you don't see yourself as a writer, Mrs Rottenberg explains that you don't have to be a writer to benefit from this book. "... It is for any person who is looking to grow and is willing to put in the effort it takes to do that. ...studies have shown that therapeutic writing can greatly improve physical health."

Based on the success of the book, Mrs Rottenberg has now rewritten it in a new version. The new book is called **Write Your Way Home – the Jewish Guide to Therapeutic Writing** and the subtle difference in title – Jewish, as opposed to Torah, – is reflected in its pages.

Quoting the author again, she writes; "With great *Siyata Dishmaya*, I have been zoche to publish a new version of my book, one specifically geared to a secular audience. Besides the obvious benefits of therapeutic writing, this book has an additional purpose.

"It was made for the secular audience, in a way that is relatable to them. Since it is a therapeutic writing book, it is not a threatening book about *Yiddishkeit*. However,



anyone who reads it will be exposed to an ENORMOUS amount of Torah wisdom, an appreciation for our *Yiddish* heritage, and a very eye-opening *kiruv* experience. Each page is full of Torah values that they will embed automatically while reading it as a self-help book, *bs"d*."

Whether you are buying this book for yourself or as a gift for someone you care for, or even more, treating a secular friend or relative to a Torah-based book with enormous emotional and spiritual benefits, **Write Your Way Home**, is sure to be a successful choice.