

# AI-01951 Self-Authoring Therapy

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Tags	Problem
Created time	@August 9, 2025 12:40 AM

**Explain the concept of self-authoring writing therapy. What are the foundational elements of the exercise. List 22 question topics for the exercise**

Self-authoring writing therapy, also known as self-authoring, is a structured writing program designed to help individuals reflect on their past, understand their present, and plan for their future. The core concept is that by engaging in a systematic process of writing about one's life, individuals can gain clarity, organize their thoughts, and develop a sense of purpose. This process helps them re-evaluate their life story, identify past mistakes and successes, and project a more desirable future. It's not a free-form, unstructured journaling exercise; instead, it's a guided process with specific prompts and sections. The therapy is rooted in the idea that our lives are a narrative, and by actively "editing" and "authoring" this narrative, we can change our perspective and behavior.

The foundational elements of the exercise are typically divided into three main parts:

1. The Past Authoring: This section focuses on a comprehensive review of an individual's life history. The goal is to examine the past from various angles, including significant life events, relationships, challenges, and successes. By writing about these experiences in detail, individuals can identify patterns, understand the origins of their beliefs and behaviors, and gain a more complete and coherent picture of their life story. This process often involves re-interpreting past events, which can lead to forgiveness, self-compassion, and a sense of closure.

2. **The Present Authoring:** This part of the exercise is about taking stock of the current situation. It encourages individuals to analyze their present strengths and weaknesses, their personality traits, and their current relationships and circumstances. By honestly assessing their current state, they can identify areas that need improvement and recognize their existing resources. This section often involves writing about one's virtues and faults, as well as the impact they have on others. The goal is to create a realistic snapshot of the present from which to build the future.
3. **The Future Authoring:** This is the forward-looking component where individuals envision their ideal future. It involves writing about their goals, aspirations, and the person they want to become in the next few years (e.g., 5-10 years). The exercise prompts them to think about their career, relationships, family, and personal growth. It encourages them to be specific and detailed, thinking about what their ideal day, week, or year would look like. This process helps to clarify ambitions and provides a roadmap for working towards them. The future authoring also often includes a section on the "dreaded future" or a future to be avoided, which can motivate individuals to stay on track.

The self-authoring program, particularly as developed by Dr. Jordan Peterson, has been implemented in various settings, including universities, and has shown promising results in improving academic performance and well-being.

Here are 22 question topics for a self-authoring exercise, organized by the three foundational elements:

**Past Authoring Topics:**

1. What were the most significant events of your childhood and adolescence?
2. Describe a time in your life when you faced a major challenge and how you overcame it.
3. Who were the most influential people in your life and what did you learn from them?
4. Write about a time you experienced a significant failure. What did you learn from it?
5. What are some of your happiest memories and what made them so?

6. Describe your relationship with your parents and siblings. How has it shaped you?
7. Recall a time when you made a difficult decision. What were the consequences?
8. What were the defining moments of your educational or career journey?
9. Write about a time you acted courageously or stood up for something you believed in.
10. Describe a pivotal moment that changed your perspective or life trajectory.

**Present Authoring Topics:**

1. What are your current strengths and talents? How do you use them in your daily life?
2. What are your weaknesses or character flaws? How do they hinder you?
3. How would you describe your current relationships with family and friends?
4. What is your current relationship with your work or studies? Are you fulfilled?
5. What are your core values and beliefs? How do they guide your actions?
6. Describe your current health and lifestyle habits. What would you like to improve?
7. What are the things you are most grateful for in your life right now?

**Future Authoring Topics:**

1. What does your ideal future look like in 5-10 years? Be specific about your career, relationships, and personal life.
2. What are your most ambitious goals for the future?
3. What steps do you need to take in the next year to start moving toward your ideal future?
4. Imagine a future you wish to avoid at all costs. What does it look like, and what behaviors would lead you there?

5. What kind of person do you want to become? What virtues or qualities do you want to cultivate?

**List 22 guide questions for my self-authoring writing project in the domain of past-authoring.**

Here are 22 guide questions for the past-authoring portion of your self-authoring writing project. These questions are designed to help you explore different facets of your life, from your earliest memories to significant turning points, to help you understand how your past has shaped who you are today.

**Childhood and Adolescence**

1. What is your earliest memory, and what emotions do you associate with it?
2. Describe a significant family tradition or ritual from your childhood. What was its importance?
3. Who were your closest friends in childhood and adolescence? What were your relationships like?
4. Recall a time when you felt a strong sense of belonging. Where were you and what were you doing?
5. What were your greatest fears or insecurities as a child? How did you cope with them?
6. Write about a time you felt a sense of awe or wonder. What caused that feeling?

**Education and Career**

1. What was your greatest academic or professional achievement? What did you learn about yourself in the process?
2. Describe a time you failed at a task you cared about. What were the long-term consequences of that failure?
3. Who was a mentor or teacher who had a profound impact on your life? What did they teach you?
4. What was a moment in your career or education when you felt truly inspired or passionate?

5. How have your early career goals changed over time, and what led to those changes?  
Relationships and Social Life
6. Describe a time you had a significant conflict with a friend or family member. How was it resolved, or was it not?
7. What was a time you felt truly understood or supported by someone?
8. Think about a relationship that ended. What was the most important lesson you learned from it?
9. Write about a time you acted courageously in a social situation. What was at stake?

### **Pivotal Moments and Personal Growth**

1. What was a moment or event that caused a fundamental shift in your worldview?
2. Describe a time you made a decision that went against the expectations of others.
3. What is a deeply held belief you once had that you no longer hold? What led to that change?
4. Recall a time when you had to take on a new responsibility that pushed you out of your comfort zone. What did you learn?
5. What is a past mistake you have forgiven yourself for, and what was the process of forgiveness like?
6. Write about a time you experienced a significant loss. How did you cope with your grief?
7. What recurring patterns or themes can you identify when looking back at your life?

### **List 22 guide questions for my self-authoring writing project in the domain of present authoring.**

Here are 22 guide questions for the present-authoring portion of your self-authoring writing project. These questions are designed to help you take an

honest and thorough inventory of your current life—your character, your relationships, and your present circumstances—as a starting point for building a better future.

### **Personal Identity and Character**

1. What are your current strengths and talents? How do you apply them in your daily life?
2. What are your most significant weaknesses or character flaws? How do they affect your life and your relationships with others?
3. What is a core value or belief that currently guides your decisions?
4. How would you describe your personality to a complete stranger?
5. What are the things you are most grateful for in your life right now?
6. What is a habit or behavior you're currently trying to change, and why?
7. What is a fear or anxiety you are currently facing? How are you dealing with it?
8. When was the last time you felt a sense of pride in your own actions? What did you do?

### **Relationships and Social Life**

1. How would you describe your current relationship with your family? What's going well, and what could be better?
2. Who are the most important people in your life today, and what role do they play?
3. Describe your social life. Do you feel connected, or do you feel isolated?
4. What is a current conflict or difficult situation you have with someone?
5. How do you believe others perceive you, and how does this compare to how you see yourself?

### **Career and Personal Endeavors**

1. How do you feel about your current job or academic studies? Are you fulfilled or are you simply going through the motions?

2. What is a personal project or goal you are currently working on? What's motivating you?
3. Do you feel your work aligns with your values? If not, why?
4. How do you spend your free time? Does it energize you, or is it a distraction?  
Health and Lifestyle
5. What is your current relationship with your physical health? Do you feel strong and well, or do you have concerns?
6. Describe your lifestyle habits (diet, exercise, sleep, etc.). Are they supporting your well-being?
7. Do you feel in control of your finances, or are they a source of stress?
8. What is the current state of your living environment? Does it feel like a supportive space?
9. How do you handle stress and setbacks in your current life? What are your coping mechanisms?

**List 22 guide questions for my self-authoring writing project in the domain of future-authoring.**

Here are 22 guide questions for the future-authoring portion of your self-authoring writing project. These questions will help you envision your ideal future in detail, from your career and personal life to your habits and character, giving you a roadmap to work toward.

**Envisioning Your Ideal Future**

1. What would your ideal day look like in 5-10 years? Describe it in as much detail as possible, from when you wake up to when you go to sleep.
2. What kind of career or professional path would bring you the most fulfillment and success? What specific role are you in?
3. Describe your ideal relationships with your family and friends. What are those relationships like, and what role do you play in them?
4. What kind of home or living environment would make you feel most comfortable and secure?

5. What hobbies or personal interests do you want to be actively pursuing?
6. How would you like to contribute to your community or the world?
7. What kind of person do you want to be in the future? What virtues or qualities will define you?
8. Imagine you have achieved everything you set out to do. What does that success feel like?

### **Setting Goals and Planning**

1. What are your most ambitious goals for your career in the next 5-10 years?
2. What are your most important personal and relational goals?
3. What new skills or knowledge do you want to acquire to reach your goals?
4. What are the key milestones or steps you need to take in the next year to start moving toward your ideal future?
5. How will you manage your finances to support the life you envision?
6. What are the things you need to stop doing to make room for your future aspirations?
7. What are three specific daily habits you will implement to move closer to your goals?
8. Who are the people you need to surround yourself with to help you achieve your goals?

### **Avoiding the "Dreaded" Future**

1. Describe a future you wish to avoid at all costs. What does it look like?
2. What negative habits or behaviors, if left unchecked, could lead you to this "dreaded" future?
3. What potential pitfalls or obstacles might stand in your way, and how will you overcome them?
4. What is a past mistake that you want to be sure you don't repeat?
5. What are the things you're doing right now that, if continued, would lead to an unfulfilling future?

6. How will you stay motivated and disciplined when faced with setbacks?