



6 Psychological Benefits of Writing Things Down

by Kaya Ismail July 4, 2016

Human beings have long been fond of jotting things down. In fact, the Kish Tablet is the oldest written document that mankind has – and it's almost 6,000 years old. But in today's increasingly digital world, the trusty notepad has been replaced by to-do list apps, and the fountain pen has been ousted by Google Docs. Sadly, the good old-fashioned practice of putting pen to paper has lost its allure. But there are six excellent psychological reasons why you should help revive it.

1. **It Helps You Think Bigger** – Writing down your dreams, goals, and business ideas helps you brainstorm on a more ambitious scale. There's nothing quite like writing down a startup idea in the middle of a blank page and then branching out with a flurry of ideas. Plus, writing down your thoughts gives you a chance to explore dreams that you may not wish to share with others. It also affords you a physical space to keep track of those thoughts and return to them later if needed.

2. **You'll Learn More** – A study carried out in 2010 by Indiana University found that the areas of the brain associated with learning worked far better when kids were asked to write words like "spaceship" by hand versus just studying the word off a whiteboard. So, note taking in class wasn't all for nothing, after all.

3. **You'll Remember More** – Learning and remembering are two different things (outside of the school system, that is). Writing things down that you need to remember – like checklists – gives you a far better chance of actually remembering them when you have to. But don't just take my word for it. In 2014, the Association of Psychological Science reported that students who physically took notes received a memory boost – particularly when compared to those who took notes via a laptop.

4. **You Won't Be as Distracted** – Shunning your notepad to write on a device is a dangerous game. As you type, notifications will often slide into view to drag you away from your task. Plus, your favorite social media platform is always just a few taps away. Good old-fashioned paper will keep you focused – and focus is the key to thinking clearer and thinking better.

5. **It Frees up Mental RAM** – Your brain is like a hard drive. A multi-layered, super-epic, crazily-complex hard drive. When you note down your ideas, thoughts, and emotions, it helps your brain to unload some baggage, giving it room to think about other things. Or better yet, with all that extra space, it could even begin to relax.

6. **You'll Stay Sharper as You Age** – According to the world-renowned science journal *Neurology*, writing things down will keep you on top of your memory game for longer. In a press release, the study's author Robert Wilson, a Neuropsychologist, said that, "Our study suggests that exercising your brain by taking part in activities (such as reading and writing) across a person's lifetime, from childhood through old age, is important for brain health in old age." So, if you want to remember where you left your keys thirty years from now, I suggest you start writing more today.