

# How to Create Your Own Coloring Journal

*A Step-by-Step Guide*



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Fresh  Possibilities

## How to Create Your Own Coloring Journal: A Step-by-Step Guide

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## INTRODUCTION

For a time, the book publishing industry witnessed the phenomenal rise of adult coloring books in the market.

Not that they haven't been around before Johanna Basford's first commercially successful adult coloring book, [The Secret Garden \(2013\)](#). In fact, they have been around since the 1800s when the McLoughlin Brothers worked with Kate Greenaway to create [The Little Folks' Painting Book \(1879\)](#).

Many more followed, with children's coloring books becoming a popularly recognized educational and learning tool for kids.

However, nothing matched the popularity of adult coloring books.

As you've taken an interest in creating coloring journals, the probability is high that you yourself may have been caught up in the adult coloring craze.

Perhaps you've invested so much in coloring designs with the intention of self-publishing your own coloring books.

What do you do with the skills that you painstakingly develop from courses that amounted to hundreds, if not thousands, in purchases?

How about the software applications you bought? I have one too many myself.

Not only that, creating your own coloring designs have become a passion. It sure is for me.

Rejoice. It's not too late.

If you've been observing the book market, journal publishing is the cool kid in town and that's where coloring comes back in.

## DEFINING A COLORING JOURNAL

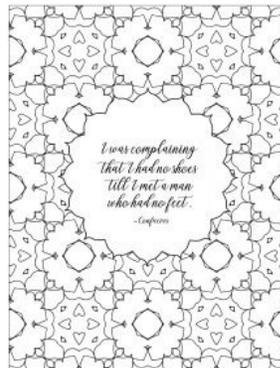
Before moving on to the creation process, let's deal with the basic stuff.

What is a coloring journal?

It's a journal with a line art coloring component. It provides users with both a coloring and journaling experience.

For coloring, line art is incorporated to give users time to color and be in a state of reflection and meditation.

In my Gratitude Coloring Journal that you get with this guide, I incorporated these coloring pages with gratitude quotes:

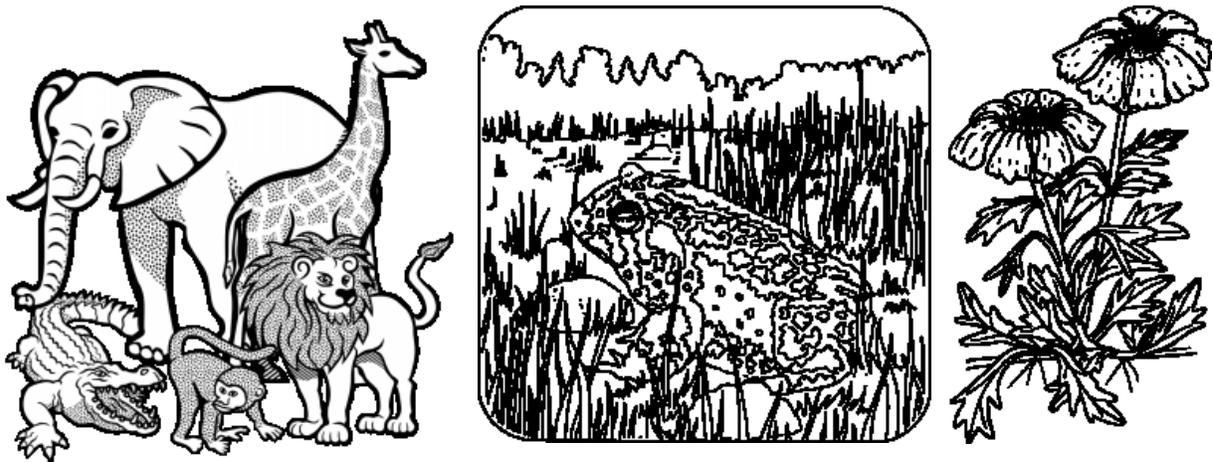


A rich source of royalty- and copyright-free line art are:

- [Openclipart](#)
- [Clker](#)
- [Pixabay](#)
- [Public Domain Pictures](#)
- [Public Domain Vectors](#)

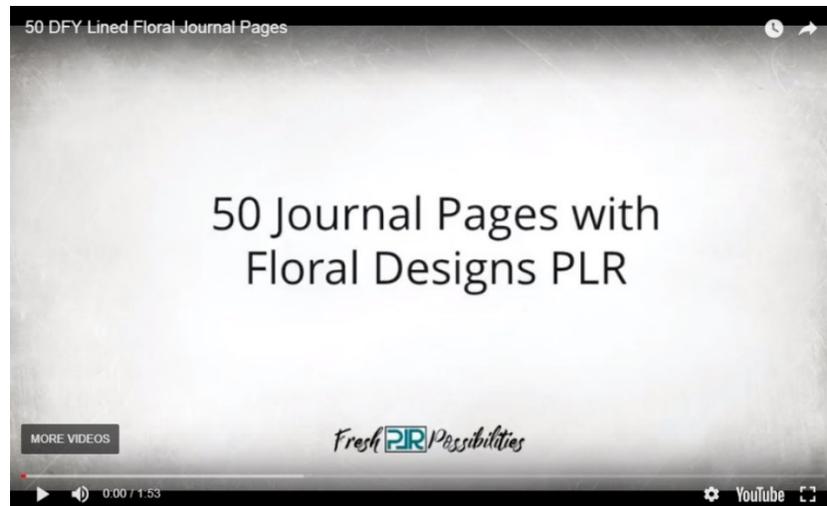
If you don't mind crediting the author or artist for the images that you download, [Freepik](#) is a great place to go.

*Look what I found from Openclipart!*



Another great option is to have coloring designs already incorporated in your journal pages.

The following video shows a set that I created for my shop, of which 5 are included in your Coloring Journal Creation Kit:



For journaling, abundant spaces are provided for prompts that stir or propel various actions and reactions.

These journaling prompts take many forms such as:

- questions
- quotations
- directions or instructions
- checklist section
- to-do list
- planner
- calendar
- musings
- notes
- doodle page
- among many others.

## PARTS OF A COLORING JOURNAL

The simplest forms of journals, also referred to as “no or low content books,” include blank books, notebooks and bullet journals.

What do they have?

At the bare minimum, they only have three parts:

- Cover with title and author name
- Copyright page
- Inside pages that are either blank, ruled, or dotted.

A coloring journal, though also a low content book, has more components.

Let’s take a look at what constitutes a coloring journal.

### Cover

- Title
- Subtitle (*optional*)
- Author name
- Blurb for back cover (*optional*)
- Featured images for back (*optional*)
- ISBN (*optional*)
- Background – design, photo, texture, colored (*optional*)

## Front Pages

- Title
- Copyright page
- Author name
- Author biography (*optional*)
- Promotional links (*optional*)
- Dedication page (*optional*)
- Introduction (*optional*)
- Instructions (*optional*)
- Supplies/materials (*optional*)

## Inside Pages

- Coloring pages
- Journaling pages
- Dividers (*optional*)
- Blank pages (*optional*)

## Marketing Page (*optional*)

- Books (*optional*)
- Shops (*optional*)
- Website (*optional*)
- Social media (*optional*)

The optional parts are nice to have but not necessary. They add more personality, richness, and value to your coloring journal.

However, it's all up to you. If you have the energy, patience and time, go for it!

***In summary***, you only need four elements for your coloring journal:

- cover
- copyright section
- coloring pages
- journaling pages.

You may even combine the last two.

## RESOURCES FOR COLORING JOURNAL CREATION

If you're creating your coloring pages, you need the following:

- Pencil
- Eraser
- Inkpen
- Blank paper for drawing
- Scanner
- Photo editor such as Adobe Photoshop, GIMP, Paint
- Vectorizer such as Adobe Illustrator, Inkscape and Vector Magic (optional)
- Notebook for writing

In my [website](#), you'll learn in detail [how I create my coloring pages](#).

By the way, always keep in mind the PLR coloring designs that you already have. Having them would certainly make your life much easier as you save time, effort and money!

For your journaling prompts, you need to determine what form of prompts (as I earlier discussed) you would like to create.

Here are some tips on how to generate journaling prompts in question form:

- **Mine your brain.** There are lots there for sure. You don't even have to think hard.

- **Search the internet.** There are tons out there. Go, ask Google.
- **Ask a family member or friend.** They are a great resource.
- **Browse books on your topic.** Check out the table of contents.
- **Check out journals on your topic for inspiration.** It's hard to say "don't copy" because you probably have the same idea as others. There are standard questions like "What are you grateful for?" or "3-5 things you are thankful for." If you want to be on the safe side, modify the questions or say them differently.
- **Try [PLR](#) or ready-to-use content.** PLR or private label rights content grants you certain rights to brand the materials and use it for various purposes. For starters, read about 41 uses of PLR content [here](#).

With coloring designs and prompts in hand, what do you do next?

Turn them into pages!

For that, you need photo editing, word processing and/or presentation software applications such as the following:

- Adobe Photoshop (photo editing)
- Adobe Illustrator (photo editing)
- Microsoft Word (word processing)

- Microsoft Publisher (word processing)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (presentation).

These apps do come with a high price but there are decent alternatives.

For photo editing, there is [Photopea](#), an advance online image editing that compares nicely and evens out the playing field with Adobe Photoshop in the terms of the following:

- It has the same functions as Photoshop yet is very easy to navigate.
- It can open Photoshop files and save them into PSD, JPG, PNG and SVG formats.
- It is web-based so there's nothing to download or install and as long as you have access to wifi and a computer, you're good to go.
- It is totally free!

Nothing beats that or even comes close.

Of course, you've got [GIMP](#) and [Paint.net](#).

Other popular alternatives for both word processing and presentation are [Open Office](#) or [Libre Office](#), which are free and open source.

You may also try Google Docs and Google Slides that are free with a [Google account](#).

## COLORING JOURNAL CREATION PROCESS

I go through three major processes when creating coloring journals:

### 1) Creating the Coloring Pages

For the coloring pages, you'll have to go through the following:

- Sketching
- Inking
- Erasing
- Scanning
- Digitizing
- Clean up
- Vectorizing
- Test printing
- Enhancement
- Packaging.

I did all the coloring pages for my 31- Day Gratitude Coloring Journal previously so I saved on time.

If you don't have the expertise, patience nor time to create your own coloring pages, you may opt for any of the following:

- PLR designs – There are plenty of PLR coloring designs to choose from, which you most probably may have already tapped. (Note: I'll send you a list in an upcoming email.)

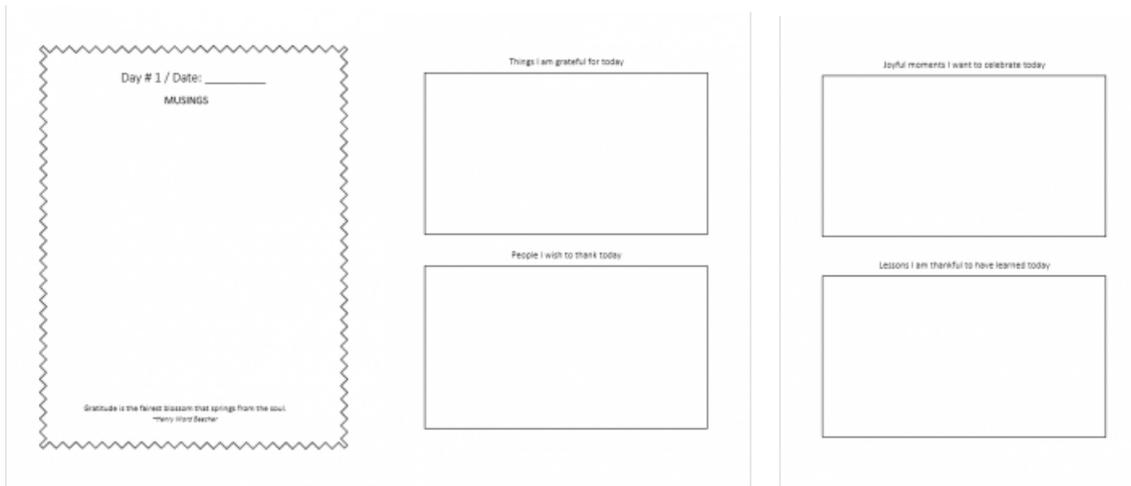
- Public domain images – [Public domain](#) includes “all the creative works to which no exclusive intellectual property rights apply. Those rights may have expired, been forfeited, expressly waived, or may be inapplicable.”
- Stock photo – There are plenty of paid stock photo sites to choose from like [Shutterstock](#) and [Getty Images](#), but there are free sites as well. You just have to be aware of usage rights for those that you use. Have a look at a long list [here](#) and [here](#).
- Outsource – [Fiverr](#) has established itself as a reliable platform to outsource various tasks, including graphics and publishing.

## 2) Creating the Journal Pages

Determine the timeframe that your coloring journal would cover. Mine was 31 days for the Gratitude Coloring Journal. You may decide to cover 365 days, if you’re inclined to.

For each day, I had a divider with space for the date, musings, and special gratitude quotation. I had 3 other pages for 6 more prompts that looked the same and kept repeating over 31 days.

Here’s how they look:



You may present differently.

### 3) Integration

I used Microsoft Word to combine all the pages for the 31-Day Gratitude Coloring Journal.

Now that you're done with all your pages, it's time to put them all together in one document. A simple process is:

- Prepare a checklist of what your coloring page should contain;
- Gather all your files based on your checklist;
- Prepare your word processing or presentation software to integrate all pieces together;
- Add all components in;
- Save your document into the format of your desired software PLUS PDF format;
- Test print;
- Review the overall content and presentation;

- Enhance or redo, if needed;
- Save to its final format.

Once you're satisfied with how your document looks, you're done and ready to use it or share it to the world.

Now, let's proceed with the actual steps...

## 10 STEPS TO COLORING JOURNAL CREATION

*So, how can you create your own coloring journal?*

*What clear steps can you follow as a guide?*

Some people claim that since a coloring journal is a low content book, it is easy to create. *Is it?*

At the onset, let me tell you that it requires some considerable amount of work but...

*Anything worth doing is worth investing quality time on.*

Don't worry. There are ways to deal with this concern.

Now, on with my process.

Step # 1 – Conceptualize



Come up with an idea. Call it a seed idea. Never mind if it's hazy or abstract.

Dig into what you're good at, what you're already into, what you're interested in, what your aspirations are, or what has been at the backburner that you've always wanted to pursue.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What is your coloring journal about? (Topic/theme)
- For whom is it? (Audience or user)
- Why create it? (Goal/objective)

For me, I wanted to create something for my subscribers and since I was blogging about the topic of gratitude and practicing daily gratitude using a journal, I decided to do a gratitude coloring journal. It was supposed to be just a journal but looking at resources that I already have, I thought I'll spice it up a bit with coloring pages that focus on gratitude quotes.

Then, proceed to the nitty-gritty part.

Ask yourself more specific questions like:

- Is there a specific market or sub-market you want to target?
- What would your coloring journal contain?
- How many pages will it have?
- What journaling prompts would you use?
- Where would you source out images for your coloring pages
- How would your cover look like?

- What would be the title of your coloring journal?
- What timeframes are you looking at – 7, 10, 30, 60, 90, 365 days, 52 weeks?
- Who would help you with creating your coloring journal – just you, hired staff, outsourcer?
- When do you start and complete it?
- Have you got models or samples to follow, copy, adapt or emulate?
- Are you using [PLR](#) or ready-to-use content like images, graphics, text, or templates?
- How much are you willing to spend or what is your budget?
- What resources do you already have?
- What resources do you need?
- What links will you have in your marketing page?

Too many questions, indeed, but don't be overwhelmed. Consider them as your guide. Discard them if they don't serve any purpose.

And don't worry.

You'll have your learning curve but it would be less steeper the next time around, especially if you do it regularly.

Besides, you just might come up with an easier way. As always, experience is the best teacher and time tugs along.

*Go on.* Think through the questions. Let them sink in. Come up with answers.

Imagine holding your coloring journal in your hand. Consider the possibilities and opportunities.

Write your thoughts as they could easily slip away... and then, you'll have to start all over.

Don't think too hard. Just hop along and navigate your way.

*You'll get through this.*

## Step # 2 – Take Stock (Assess)



This is the part where you assess two things:

- what you already have
- what else you need.

I tabulated the elements needed for your coloring journal as your guide. Fill in the blanks in terms of the status of each element.

However, before you even glance at the succeeding table, let me tell you a secret!

*Actually, it's no secret at all. I told you this earlier, remember?*

You only need four things to create your coloring journal:

- Cover (*Make it awesome!*)
- Copyright page
- Coloring pages
- Journal pages.

From this short list, you'll know pretty much what you already have, what you need, and what you'll do next.

Now, if you want the more detailed (read: grueling) version, you got it:

Elements/Components	Status	Remarks
<b>1. Cover</b>		
<b>Front Cover</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title/subtitle</li> <li>• Author</li> <li>• Design</li> </ul>		
<b>Back Cover</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blurb (optional)</li> <li>• ISBN (optional)</li> <li>• Featured pages (optional)</li> <li>• Design</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Front Pages</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title</li> <li>• Copyright page</li> <li>• Author name</li> <li>• Author biography (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Promotional links (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Dedication page (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Introductory content (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Instructions (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Supplies/materials (<i>optional</i>)</li> </ul>		
<b>3. Main Pages</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coloring pages</li> <li>• Journaling pages</li> <li>• Dividers (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Blank pages (<i>optional</i>)</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Marketing Page (<i>optional</i>)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Shops (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Website (<i>optional</i>)</li> <li>• Social media (<i>optional</i>)</li> </ul>		

*If you're intimidated by the amount of data in the table, don't be!*

Look closer and see that most parts are optional. They are nice to have because they would add more personality, richness, and value to your coloring journal; however, they are not necessary.

### Step # 3 – Plan out the Details



Here's where you lay down your plan to get that coloring journal done in the most efficient and effective way.

Remember the short list I gave you? Keep that in mind so that you don't get lost in the details.

The following table is not meant to clutter your mind but to give you the bigger picture. It's not cast in stone so feel free to breeze through and take what works.

Elements/Components	Activities	People Involved	Budget (#)	Timeframe	Remarks
<b>1. Cover</b>					
<b>Front Cover</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title/subtitle</li> <li>• Author</li> <li>• Design</li> </ul>					
<b>Back Cover</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blurb (optional)</li> <li>• ISBN (optional)</li> <li>• Featured pages (optional)</li> <li>• Design</li> </ul>					
<b>2. Front Pages</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title</li> <li>• Copyright page</li> <li>• Author name</li> <li>• Author biography (optional)</li> <li>• Promotional links (optional)</li> <li>• Dedication page (optional)</li> <li>• Introductory content (optional)</li> <li>• Instructions (optional)</li> <li>• Supplies/materials (optional)</li> </ul>					
<b>3. Main Pages</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coloring pages</li> <li>• Journaling pages</li> <li>• Dividers (optional)</li> <li>• Blank pages (optional)</li> </ul>					
<b>4. Marketing Page (optional)</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books (optional)</li> <li>• Shops (optional)</li> <li>• Website (optional)</li> <li>• Social media (optional)</li> </ul>					

Because I've published many coloring journals in the past, I didn't really need this guide. However, for those just starting out, this would be a great help.

Again, don't be intimidated. This is just a guide. It's meant to help you. Use what's relevant and discard the rest. Life is complicated enough so let's keep things simple.

Besides, you know your short list – *cover, copyright, coloring pages, and journaling pages.*

I assure you, once you've done this once or twice, it would be smooth sailing and it gets easier the next time around.

#### Step #4 – Execute Your Plan

Now that you have your plan in place, all you need to do is ***do it!***

It's a no-brainer. If you don't lift a finger, nothing gets done.

Here's a tip if you tend to procrastinate.

- **Start with a hook** – something small that would suck you into the bigger job. It could be writing your journaling prompts or just rough sketching.
- **Use a timer.** Free ones are [e.ggtimer](#), [Tomato Timer](#), or [Pomodoro Tracker](#). You could work on increments of 30-45 minutes and take 15-minute breaks in between. It will do you wonders!

- **Work with your imagination.** What would it be like to have your own coloring journal in your hands? Take pleasure in the idea that you're like touching the real thing.

If you're outsourcing your pages or cover, be realistic with your schedule because it is not just your own time you're dealing with; however, if you want to take more control of it:

**First**, set clear targets;

**Second**, commit to your targets – making sure that it's always in your radar (or consciousness).

**Third**, communicate it clearly to the people involved;

**Fourth**, honor your commitment!

*That's about it. You're set.*

## Step #5 – Collect and Organize

Once you have things done – either in trickles or a blast – do the following:

- **Have your checklist, outline or table of contents ready.** Print it if you wish or just have it right in front of you when working. This guide is your anchor and would let you know how far you've gone.

- **Create a dedicated main folder in your computer.** Name it “Coloring Journal” or the specific title of your book like “Gratitude Coloring Journal.”
- **Create a dedicated subfolder for each component in your book.** For instance, your coloring pages would have a subfolder of its own. Your cover would have one as well. Work along the lines of your outline and consider images, prompts, templates, quotes, copyright pages, lined pages, links for marketing page, blurbs, frames, author bio, cover, dedication page, etc. You get this.
- **Place each file where it belongs.** Include all files related to the subfolder, including your drafts in there. In that way, you know how things progressed and you can retrieve information or artwork that you may have deleted. If you want, and this is for convenience and efficiency, create another sub-subfolder labeled “Final.” When it’s time for you to integrate the files, you’ll know where to go.
- **Tick your checklist as soon as contents are done or delivered.** This is how you’ll easily know what you’ve accomplished and what else needs to be done.

If you’re to create your own artwork or pages, here’s a really important tip for you:

*Print out a sample piece as soon as done with the first.*

As soon as you get an artwork digitized, cleaned up, vectorized, and formatted, print a copy. Do this for your first one before you do work in bulk.

Believe me! You don't want to commit the same mistake, say on the thickness of your line art or having wrong margins, for 30 pages and then having to straighten out your mess for all of them.

I've committed that mistake many times in the past and I can tell you this – *It. was. not. fun. at. all!*

## Step #6 – Integrate

When you're ready, it's time to put all the pieces together:

- **Open your word processing software.** You may use Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher, or others you may be familiar with and working in already. You may also use Microsoft PowerPoint, a presentation software, for this purpose. Use what works for you. The important this is you can write text in there, import images, format the pages, and save to PDF.
- **Open a blank document in your desired page size.** Add pages.
- **Put in each file based on your outline or guide.** If some files are not ready yet and you need to keep going while

waiting for inputs from other people, just leave a blank space for the missing files.

- **Save your file every now and then.** You never know when power turns off unexpectedly, you inadvertently or absentmindedly delete a section or the entire file, you leave without ever saving your file, or... you just never know.

### Step #7 – Test print

Print your pages and check the fonts, margins, sharpness of lines, and completeness.

#### **Ask:**

- *How do the printed pages look?*
- *Did you get the order or paging correctly?*
- *Are you satisfied with how things turned out?*

### Step #8 – Review

Review everything yourself or have others review them for you. Get feedback.

#### **Ask:**

- *Have you covered everything?*
- *Are all in place?*
- *What's the overall look?*
- *Are you satisfied?*

- *Would your target users be satisfied?*

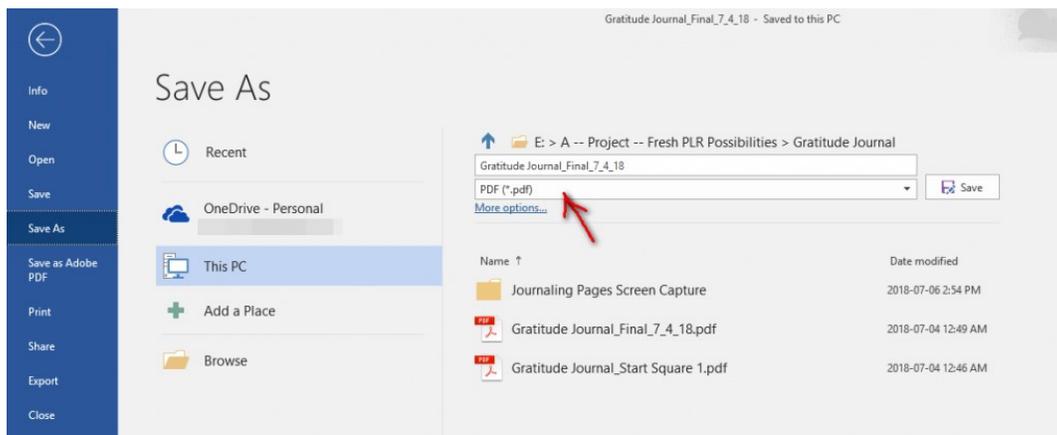
## Step #9 – Enhance

Enhance your coloring journal based on the review. Do last-minute finishing touches or changes. Redo, add to, or subtract.

If you had a plan and stuck to it, the finishing touches would be minimal if not nil.

## Step #10 – Compile

Save your final document in the software used so you can easily edit when needed. You should also save in portable document format (PDF).



Go to File>Save as>PDF.

## COLORING JOURNAL CREATION SUCCESS TIPS

1) Start small and think doable.



Refuse to think of grand things for a start because that would overwhelm you and overwhelm can kill everything – your enthusiasm, energy, creativity, and goal.

You would then accommodate your fear of failing and every single obstacle, no matter how small, becomes overbearing.

Then you'll just stop or won't even start a thing and nothing happens.

For instance...

Just create a 7-day coloring journal instead of a 90-day one.

Think of trying out public domain images or buying line art instead of venturing into creating 30 artworks.

You may even stick to creating just a journal sans coloring if you want, and that's fine, too.

## 2) Have a clear plan and commit to it.

Your plan doesn't have to be complicated. It just has to be clear on the following:

- what you want to achieve (goal/objective)
- what you'll do to achieve it (strategies/actions)
- what inputs you need to achieve it (resource requirements)
- who will help you with it (human power)
- where you'll work on it or find the resources you need (place)
- when you're achieving it (time)

When you have your plan, commit to doing it. Don't procrastinate. Just do it.

Here's an interesting thing. Some people say, "I'll create a journal today." Then, they...

- sit down with their pen and paper
- think up of 10 journaling prompts
- open their word processing application on their computer
- type the journaling prompts in
- provide lines after each one

- create a cover page.

*Voila!* They have their ready-to-print journal!

Surely, they had a working plan in mind. They may not have written down the details, but they knew what they wanted, did it, and got it.

We all roll differently so it's up to you how you'd do it.

3) Organize, organize, organize.



I cannot stress this enough. You need to organize yourself and the rest would follow. Create order in your work and you would save time from:

- looking around and everywhere
- going back and forth
- redoing tasks
- starting without completing

- chasing people and looking over their shoulders
- missing schedules
- buying resources you already have
- getting distracted by the unimportant, and
- you know what else.

In practical terms:

- Have one spot or a few defined locations for physical things you need like your paper, pencil, ink pen, eraser, notebook, guide, and others.
- Have your guide, plan, checklist, cheat sheet, or blueprint printed or ready on your computer.
- Create folders on your computer and properly label and date them.
- Know ahead of time what resources (such as Microsoft Word, Adobe Photoshop, book cover, outsourcer to hire) you need and get them ahead of time.
- Have a ready list of people to go to for specific services.
- Work from a schedule.
- Use apps that help you collaborate easily with people.
- Create a list of PLR providers who offer high-quality content.

You got this.

#### 4) Use helpful shortcuts and tools.

Use shortcuts with templates and ready-to-use PLR artwork and/or journaling prompts.

You may buy ready-made customizable journals where all you may need to do is change your cover, put in a brand new title, rebrand it with your author name and/or logo, and you're done.

For a smooth flow, you may use the following tools:

- Cheat sheets
- Checklists
- Calendars
- Planners
- Notebook.

Find out what software applications work best for you. I cannot count how many graphics software applications I have but I always go back to Adobe's Photoshop and Illustrator. Nothing beats them. For word processing, I always use Microsoft's Word or Publisher.

If money is a concern, try free open source apps. I tried them in the past and they delivered the same quality.

## 5) Get help if needed.



Noone has all the answers to everything nor can one do everything.

Seek out help if you're facing a blank wall. Find someone to help you create your artwork. Ask a coach or one who "has been there, done that" for insights, inputs, directions, instructions, or advice.

## 6) Learn the trade and master it.

If you're serious about creating your coloring journal, there are many ways to do it.

Here are a few:

- **Start implementing what you know.** It's great to know so much but not doing anything with them is like stockpiling rubbish;

- **Explore what you don't yet know.** If you want to create art and you say you can't even draw a stick, then draw a stick; draw a circle on top and letter "C" on the edges. Now you have a line art flower;
- **Learn from others.** Take courses, join workshops, or participate in creation challenge activities. Doing a project with others can be fun;
- **Read, read, read.** The world abounds with books, blogs, how-to-guides, and/or articles on every topic you could think of, including how to create your coloring journals;
- **Discover and experiment.** Try out apps like Microsoft PowerPoint, Canva, Indesign, that may be new to you. Try them only if what you have don't work as needed and trying out something different would make your life so much easier;
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Nothing beats this!

## 7) Never give up!



When faced with challenges and feeling beaten, don't give up. You'll always encounter rough patches and rugged terrains in your journey but you'll get by. Soon. That, too, shall pass.

*...stick to the fight when you're hardest hit. It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit. ~Edgar A. Guest*

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