



## Creative Conversations: How Journaling Can Strengthen Your Connections to the Outdoors

There's something especially fulfilling about dragging an ink pen across a crisp sheet of paper. It's as if all of the thoughts, imagery and creative ideas floating around in your mind spill out to form an elevated, written perspective that feels both FRESH AND REFLECTIVE. Journaling is ritualistic, offering a sense of tranquility offline and distanced from our digital-crazed habits, which is why we were drawn to AllSwell as soon as we stumbled upon its intentionally designed notebooks.

AllSwell is the passion project of Laura Rubin, founder and creative director of the communications agency [Left Left Right \(LLR\) Consulting](#). Laura's goal was to create notebooks that invited more people to put pen to paper and enjoy journaling's physiological, emotional and mental benefits. She sees journaling as a way to CREATIVELY UNPLUG AND CONNECT WITH YOUR SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT, whether you're on the beach, in the mountains or sitting in your windowsill.

Sounds pretty magical, right? We thought so too, so we spoke with Laura to hear discover more about AllSwell's roots and purpose.

*Q. How did you become a journal-keeper?*

A. Journaling has always been an intrinsic part of my life. A family member gave me a diary as a gift on my 8th birthday. I started putting thoughts on paper then and haven't stopped since. A third grader isn't keeping a journal because of the known therapeutic and creative upside, it just feels good. I hope AllSwell inspires more folks to tap into that experience of being "in the flow." And yes, while the world has become undeniably digital, research does show that putting pen to paper is linked to increased wellbeing — basically a boosted brain. So if you need reasons, there are plenty of great ones available.

*Q. How was AllSwell born?*

A. AllSwell was born from a morning surf check in Montauk with uninspiring results. I decided to sit on the beach and write in a notebook instead. "Swell or no swell, all's well."

*Q. Can you tell us a bit about the AllSwell notebooks, their design and their intentions?*

A. I was jotting in a composition book on the porch in Santa Teresa, Costa Rica in between surf sessions. My friend was sitting next to me, drawing in his sketchbook. Since creativity doesn't occur in silos, it seemed natural to have one travel-friendly vehicle that provided a reasonable backdrop for both activities. So, we made AllSwell half lined (WRITE) and half unlined (DRAW), and light enough to be tossed into a beach bag, backpack or carry on. Take it with you, get it messy. It's been incredibly gratifying to see folks posting images of their well-used AllSwell notebooks on Instagram, filled up, pasted with stickers from their travels, spattered with water stains and thoroughly tattered.

*Q. Would you agree journaling is meditative?*

A. Absolutely. The physical pen-to-paper process is meditative in its own way and allows you to access thoughts and ideas that can otherwise be illusive. Everyone has a voice that's inherently their own. You don't have to be an artist to be creative.

*Q. How does journaling empower people to spend time outdoors and offline?*

A. Journaling provides the opportunity to slow down and be present in your surroundings. There are no power cord or cell tower concerns to contend with. Zero data charges apply. Try putting away your phone, take a moment to take in your immediate environment and write or draw what you see/hear/smell/feel. I find that I appreciate my experiences that much more when I stop to record them. Gratitude is a pretty great takeaway.

*Q. You're also the founder of a communications agency called Left Left Right (LLR) Consulting. What role does journaling play in your professional life?*

A. Running a communications agency can mean being connected 24/7. Journaling allows me to take a moment to express myself in an utterly private way. No "likes", no judgments, just ideas on paper. It's my daily ritual, morning and night. And while this is a personal practice some of my more successful professional ideas have come from the process. It helps me connect dots.

*Q. Where is your favorite place to put pen to paper?*

A. AllSwell was born beachside for a reason. The ocean has always been an inspirational sweet spot for me.