Several Sample Journal Entries

A few comments about the journal entries: I’m posting a few excellent examples that can be used as models.

These entries indicate quite strongly that the student is engaged in the class. Many of her entries discussed material from the reading. She is clearly grappling with the issues brought up in the class (including lectures, videos, the book, and the philosophical readings).

Journal Samples:

08/28/04

We discussed in class that logic is whatever system we use to figure things out. In addition, it was mentioned that there is an interaction between emotion and logic, and we have been trained to think based on emotion.

The discussion caused me to reflect on my recent breakup of an eleven year relationship. Though I knew logically that relationship was a dead end for a long time, emotionally, I wasn’t willing to let it go. I allowed my emotions to rule how I would deal with this faltering relationship. Rather than logically looking at the situation and walking away from it, I chose to allow the bad relationship to continue.

The outcome was the same eventually, in that the relationship ended. However, I believe had I handled the situation in a more logical way, the relationship would have ended years before and I could have possibly spared everyone involved the additional pain that occurred.

I think this class will give me the tools to find a happy balance between emotion and logic in the reasoning process.
Professor Peterson gave the class an exercise in choosing pairs of words in a sentence that states what you are trying to imply. In class teams shared what they came up with and it was amazing to me how many different ways people could use these words. It made me realize how fragile communication is and how easy it is to miscommunicate. It’s very easy to misinterpret other’s words and actions.

It’s happened to me a few times in my life. Most recently, I was telling a story about being stuck on a fence. At the time I remembered the friend I was with giving me a hard time and had misinterpreted his words and action as him being angry and annoyed with me for getting caught on the fence. When I mentioned this to him, he advised me that he wasn’t angry or annoyed. Rather, he was anxious to get me off the fence!

In my reading there was a section describing different types of evidence that can be used to support one’s argument.

I’ve been thinking about why I was always so frustrated when I would try to have in depth discussions with Mickey. I realized that while I would back my points with anecdotal, statistical, experimental, and testimonial evidence, Mickey would base his argument on “his world,” rather than on reality.

Though I would listen to his argument, and sometimes find points which could be valid, or at least question my own points, for the most part, Mickey’s assertions were without merit.

I realized it was difficult for me to enjoy deep conversations with him because he made it extremely
difficult for one to argue a point when he played by rules he made up as he was going along.

It amazed me that one could have such a high I.Q., and base all his arguments on unfounded evidence. It was a rude awakening for me to realize that Mickey was not a critical thinker.

09/18/04

There was a discussion in Chapter 6 regarding ethnocentric people, that caused me to think about the three years I lived in Puerto Rico.

I met many Americans who were also living in Puerto Rico at the same time I was. As I got to know these people on a more personal level, I realized most of these Americans were top management for American firms based in Puerto Rico. All of these folks lived in a separate community called Miramar. It was fenced in, and only Americans lived in this community. They refused to speak Spanish and claimed that Puerto Ricans should speak English because they are dominated by the U.S.

I remember being grateful that I was the kind of person who wanted to experience Puerto Rican culture and chose to live and work in the Puerto Rican community. I also reflected on how the American’s ethnocentric attitudes caused them to miss out on the experiences I was so enjoying because of their narrow-mindedness.