



One Letter Today

*Ten minutes. One pen. One page.
Write from the heart. Make someone's day.*

By Alexandra Franzen

Some people say that old-fashioned letters are "dead." I don't agree.

I believe that sending a handwritten letter is a powerful gesture. Today, perhaps more than any other time in history, letters make a significant impact. Letters are unexpected and beautiful. One letter can, quite literally, change someone's day, week, month... or life.

Since you downloaded this booklet filled with ideas on how to write beautiful letters, I'm guessing you feel the same way!

As you read through this booklet, you'll be invited to write 7 different types of letters.

1 - A love letter

2 - A fan letter

3 - A letter to re-connect with a friend

4 - A letter to say "thank you"

5 - A letter delivering an apology

6 - A letter containing your heartfelt advice

7 - A letter to your "future self"

You can write all 7 letters today.

You can write 1 letter per day for the next 7 days. Or 100 days. Or 365 days.

As you sit down to write each letter, you can set a timer for 10 minutes to encourage yourself to focus and write a bit faster. You can play music or write in silence. You can light a candle or sip a tumbler of whiskey. Or both. Or not.

Create whatever type of experience you want.

If a particular topic or type of letter doesn't resonate with you, skip it! Write a different type of letter instead.

Your letters can be incredibly brief. (Three words: *"I love you."* Done.)

Your letters can be long, sweeping and epic.

Your letters can be scrawled on a Post-It Note... scribbled on a note card... tucked into a coat pocket... swirled into a tiny scroll... dropped onto a colleague's desk... emailed, if that's necessary... or slipped into a mailbox.

The length, format and delivery method do not matter.

What matters is you, writing from the heart, saying what you need to say, and creating a positive imprint in another person's day.

Thank you so much for downloading this booklet. I hope you love it!

Happy writing...

-Alex

1 - Write a love letter

“Nothing compares to your hands, nothing like the green-gold of your eyes. My body is filled with you for days and days. You are the mirror of the night. The violent flash of lightning. The dampness of the earth. The hollow of your armpits is my shelter. My fingers touch your blood. All my joy is to feel life spring from your flower-fountain that mine keeps to fill all the paths of my nerves which are yours.”

—Frida Kahlo to Diego Rivera

Have you ever received a love letter that made your spine tingle... your cheeks flush... your heart unfurl?

No? Maybe? Can't remember?

I hope that you receive a completely over-the-top expression of love and devotion, someday soon.

But you don't have to wait, impatiently, for a love letter to come tumbling into your mailbox... or to have one slipped, surreptitiously, beneath your bedroom door.

Why not write one... yourself?

Why not....

Set a timer for ten minutes and write a love letter to a lover, a partner, or perhaps someone you haven't met yet—but hope to meet someday soon.

Not feeling particularly romantic today? Write a (platonic) love letter to a family member or friend. Or a love letter to yourself.

Here's a template to get your wheels turning...

Dear [name],

When I am near you, I feel like _____.

When I am apart from you, I feel like _____.

I adore the way you _____ and I feel completely _____ when you _____.

I don't think you realize how absolutely adorable you are when you _____.

Thank you for being my _____, my _____, and my true _____.

I love you.

[your name here]

Write your love letter and mail it (or hand-deliver it) today.

If you prefer to use email, go for it, but I'd highly recommend old-school ink and paper.

Want a few more templates? Check out: [30 mini-love notes for Valentine's Day.. or any day.](#)

Maybe a less-romantic template? Check out: [The World Of Possibility Card.](#)

Need some inspiration? Read: [The 10 Best Love Letters Ever Written.](#) (Featuring love letters by Oscar Wilde, Georgia O'Keefe and Beethoven.)

Need a musical interlude? Listen to: ["Devotion" by Jessie Ware.](#) The entire album is fabulous from start to finish!

Your love letter is going to make someone's day... completely amazing.

2 - Write a fan letter

Dear Mister Cranston,

I've just finished a marathon of watching BREAKING BAD—from episode one of the first season—to the last eight episodes of the sixth season. (I downloaded the last season on Amazon). A total of two weeks (addictive) viewing.

I have never watched anything like it. Brilliant!

Your performance as Walter White was the best acting I have seen—ever.

I know there is so much smoke blowing and sickening bullshit in this business, and I've sort of lost belief in anything really.

But this work of yours is spectacular—absolutely stunning. [...] Congratulations and my deepest respect. You are truly a great, great actor.

—Anthony Hopkins to Bryan Cranston

Read the complete letter (it's amazing) [here](#).

As a kid, I wrote tons of fan letters. I never expected a response from anyone I wrote to, and that was the beauty of it. No agenda, no attachment, no disappointment. Just a burning desire to tell someone, “You’re awesome!”

As the legendary actor Anthony Hopkins proves, just above, fan letters aren't just for kids and hormone-addled teens. Grown-ups can write them too.

It really doesn't take much (just a few lines of unabashed praise!) to lift someone’s spirits, and perhaps, shift their whole day.

Why not...

Choose someone whose work you love and respect. A writer, an actor, a musician, a producer, a local barista, a co-worker—doesn’t matter. Write them a fan letter.

Maybe you'd like to make it a totally anonymous fan letter. That could be cool.

Or, go ahead and include your name—but try not to “expect” a response.

The point of a fan letter is to create a bright spark in someone else's day with no strings attached. It's not about “getting” something in return. You're a fan. You want to say “thank you!” and “you completely rock.” That's all.

Here's a template to help you get started...

Dear [name],

Total honesty: this is a fan letter.

I don't want anything from you. I don't need a response.

I simply want to tell you that _____ has impacted my life. And I know I'm not alone.

Because of you, I have _____ and I'm so grateful for _____.

Truly, your _____ is some of the best I've ever seen. Thank you for being... you.

Please don't stop doing your exceptional work.

With deep respect,

[your name here]

Write your fan letter and mail it (or hand-deliver it) today!

Want some inspiration?

[Here is a collection of real-life fan letters](#) (mostly written by kids and teenagers. Adorable.)

[Here are some sweet, funny and touching fan letter responses](#) from celebrities. (The response from Mister Rogers is my favorite!)

Want to find your favorite celebrity's fan mail address? [Check this out.](#)

Want to fold your fan letter into an origami heart? Obviously, you do! [Here's a tutorial.](#)

Need some music to get your energy flowing? I love Kiesza's high-energy album, [Sound Of A Woman](#). Heart-pounding, dance club pop!

Have fun writing your fan letter, and remember: you don't have to send your note to a "celebrity." Non-celebs love getting praise and encouragement, too!

3 - Reconnect with a friend

My dear good beautiful Friend,

Your letter has given me so much pleasure. [...] A kind word to me now is as lovely to me as a flower is, and love can heal all wounds.

I cannot write much for I am nervous — dazed with the wonder of the wonderful world. I feel as if I had been raised from the dead. The sun and the sea seem strange to me. [...] Suffering is a terrible fire; it either purifies or it destroys. [...]

With love and gratitude, ever yours.

—Oscar Wilde, writing to an old friend on May 22, 1897.

Oscar had just been released from prison after enduring two years of hard labor. His “crime” was “gross indecency,” which was the legal term — at the time — for homosexuality.

You’ll find the complete letter inside this book: [Selected Letters of Oscar Wilde](#).

You may have hundreds (or even thousands) of “friends” on social media — but how many of those people would come to your aid if you were in real trouble? If you were alone? Afraid? Shunned by society?

How many of those people would you happily welcome into your home?

How many of those people have enhanced your life in a meaningful way?

Some, perhaps. But probably not many.

Social media is not “good” or “bad.” It can be a source of tremendous pleasure and inspiration, or a pesky distraction. It’s a tool, and like any tool, it all depends on how you use it.

For today, just as an experiment, see how it feels to log out of your social media accounts, even just for a few hours.

Instead of tweeting and like-ing and connecting in a digital setting...

Honor a treasured friend by sending a letter.

Perhaps you'd like to re-connect with an old friend.

Or perhaps you'd like to deepen a relationship with a new friend.

Or perhaps there's an online friend that you'd like to start corresponding with in a deeper way.

Here's a template to help you begin...

Dear [name],

You are my friend and you are so special to me.

You may not realize it, but you have enriched my life in so many ways.

For starters? You have _____. You have also taught me that _____ is possible, even if _____.

I admire the way you _____ and I am honored to have you in my life.

Also: I miss you. If you're open to it, perhaps we could _____ sometime soon? I'd love that.

With affection & deep friendship,

[your name here]

Need some inspiration?

[Here are some beautiful quotes](#) on friendship. (Perhaps you'd like to include one in your letter?)

Want some background music while you write? I recommend the mellow, languorous music of [Lavender Diamond](#).

Also: I would be terribly remiss if I didn't include [this charming video](#) of Fred Rogers singing, "You are my friend."

4 - Say “thank you”

To the EMU gang:

I remember noting a quarter century or so ago that an emu was a 6 foot Australian flightless bird. I thought that got most of it right.

It turned out to be one of the most widely photographed spacecraft in history. That was no doubt due to the fact that it was so photogenic. Equally responsible for its success was its characteristic of hiding from view its ugly occupant.

Its true beauty, however, was that it worked. It was tough, reliable and almost cuddly.

To all of you who made it all that it was, I send a quarter century’s worth of thanks and congratulations.

Sincerely,

—Neil A. Armstrong writing to the folks at the Johnson Space Center to thank them for their part in sending him safely to the moon. He sent this note on the 25th anniversary of the lunar landing.

Who are the people who have helped you to “walk on the moon”—metaphorically speaking?

Who are the people who lift you up, help you to achieve your goals, and support you when you’re feeling low?

Is there a special mentor, friend or family member who has always been your greatest cheerleader?

Maybe a writer, musician or colleague whose work inspires you to aim higher, and be greater?

Why not...

Write a letter to say “thank you” to someone special, or to a group of people.

Perhaps you'd like to say "thank you" to your team or department at work.

Or, perhaps you'd like to say "thank you" to your soulmate, your kids, your mom or dad, or to someone who feels like a parent to you.

Here's a template to help you get started...

Dear [name],

You make my life awesome in more ways than I can count (and—not to brag—but I can count pretty high).

But for starters, here are 5 of 'em.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I bow to your awesomeness, now and forever.

Thank you!

[your name here]

This template was excerpted from my book, [50 Ways To Say You're Awesome](#).

Want some inspiration?

Here are [6 "thank you" letters written by famous folks](#). (I love the one by David Bowie!)

Also: don't miss [Letters Of Note](#), an incredible website with hundreds of fascinating letters written by historical figures.

For a musical selection, I recommend [Haim](#)—a quirky rock band led by three sisters. Sibling love!

5 - Write an apology

Words cannot express how truly sorry we are for the anxiety, frustration and inconvenience that you, your family, friends and colleagues experienced [...] JetBlue was founded on the promise of bringing humanity back to air travel, and making the experience of flying happier [...] We know we failed to deliver on this promise last week [...] You deserved better—a lot better—and we let you down.

—David Neeleman, CEO of JetBlue Airlines, writing to customers who were inconvenienced by delayed flights during a very busy Presidents' Day weekend.

Read the complete letter [here](#).

Several months ago, I reconnected with a friend who was having a very difficult year. One of her parents had passed away, along with several other people in her inner circle, all quite suddenly and shockingly.

My heart ached as I listened to her story. I felt ashamed, too, because I hadn't been checking in on her as often as I could have. I was distracted with other things. Meanwhile, my friend was not OK.

I could have stepped up for her. I could have been a source of strength. I could have done a lot of things. I did... a couple things. But not enough.

Towards the end of our conversation, I apologized. It wasn't planned or scripted. It just felt right to do it. I told her that I was sorry for being "absent" during her time of need. I told her that I valued our friendship and that I intended to be a better friend in the future.

It is fairly easy to say "I am sorry." It is less easy to actually change your behavior—to make your actions align with your words. But putting your apology into words can be the first step.

Why not...

Write a sincere, heartfelt apology to someone you have let down, left hanging, flaked out on, shamed, harmed, or wronged.

Perhaps you'd like to write an apology to a family member or friend that you haven't paid much attention to lately.

Or perhaps you'd like to apologize to a client or colleague who hasn't been receiving your "best work" this past month.

Or maybe you want to write an apology to yourself. For speaking cruelly to yourself, like an enemy, not a friend. Or for neglecting your physical health instead of treating your body with respect.

This type of letter might be difficult to write—but please try.

Here's a template to help you begin...

Dear [name],

This is a letter of apology.

You deserve _____ and I let you down.

I [did / did not do] _____, which is unacceptable. I did not fulfill my responsibility to you. It will not happen again.

In the future, I will make a much greater effort to _____.

You don't need to respond to this note, unless you want to.

I just wanted to tell you that I am sorry—and that I intend to do better.

I value our relationship. Thank you for reading.

[your name here]

If you need a little more guidance and inspiration, [here's an interesting website to explore](#).

Also: [here are some beautiful thoughts](#) on the purpose of forgiveness.

If you'd like to listen to some music while you write, I recommend: anything by [Joni Mitchell](#). Particularly the album [Blue](#). Deep, soulful, true.

6 - Give some advice

As you grow up, always tell the truth, do no harm to others, and don't think you are the most important being on earth. Rich or poor, you then can look anyone in the eye and say, "I'm probably no better than you, but I'm certainly your equal."

—Harper Lee, author of To Kill A Mockingbird, giving a few words of advice to a young fan named Jeremy.

See the original handwritten letter [here](#).

Somewhere, out there, is a human being who desperately needs your advice.

Not because you are “perfect” or “have all the answers.” (Nobody does.)

Simply because you have walked the difficult path that this person is currently walking.

You've been there. You've done that. You've learned a few things and you can offer a few words of guidance or reassurance, as someone who is a few steps farther along.

In Japanese, the word “sensei” does not mean “expert” or “master.” It means “one who has gone before.”

For someone? You are a sensei.

Why not...

Write a letter containing a few words of advice.

Perhaps you'd like to give some advice to a child, a younger sibling or family member.

Or perhaps you'd like to share your advice online in the form of a “public letter” to your blog readers or social media friends.

Maybe you have some advice to give to a friend in need. Or a colleague. Or a client. Or even to yourself. (We often forget to take own advice!)

Here's a template to help you begin...

Dear [name],

I know that you are struggling with _____ and I would like to share some advice.

Please know, of course, that I'm speaking from my own personal experience.

In the end, you must trust your "hut" (heart + gut).

I remember what it felt like to _____. I remember how difficult it was to _____.

In the end, _____ is what helped me to [gain clarity / move onward / find peace of mind / etc].

I'm not you. But if I were you, I would:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

[outline a few steps, things to try, questions to reflect on, or things to remember]

I hope these words are helpful.

I care about you. I believe in you.

I'm here if you need someone to talk to.

[your name here]

Beautiful inspiration: Maya Angelou's [advice to her younger self](#).

Also: Neil Gaiman's [advice to authors](#).

And! Quite possibly one of the best advice columns, ever: [Dear Sugar](#).

7 - Write a letter to your “future self”

Dear FutureMe,

I hope you are a scientist by now.

—Anonymous letter from FutureMe.org

Why not...

Write a letter to yourself one month, one year, or several years in the future.

Express your hopes and dreams. Give yourself a few important reminders. Nudge yourself to do better. Offer a few words of encouragement. Make predictions. Or just say: “I love you.”

You can give your handwritten letter to a friend and ask them to mail it back to you later.

You can bury it in a time capsule and dig it up in a year.

Or email it to yourself—in the future!—using FutureMe.org. (Your FutureMe letter will be delivered to your inbox on the future-date that you determine. It can be public or totally private. So cool!)

Here’s a template to help you begin...

Dear [your name],

Right now, you are ___ [days / months / years] older than the version of “me” that is writing this letter.

I hope that you are feeling _____.

I hope you remembered to _____.

I hope that you kept your promise to _____ and didn’t get distracted by _____.

Most of all: I hope you _____.

Please know that even if _____, you still totally _____.

Love,

Me

PS. Right now, this second, I want you to _____.

Beautiful inspiration: [the public letters](#) on the FutureMe website.

A super-fun exercise: [The Future Glory](#) email from Susan Hyatt. (Write a “recap” of your year... except, pretend it’s one year in the future.)

Music for today: [“Anything Could Happen”](#) by Ellie Goulding. (One of my favorite pop songs of all time!)

And... that's that!

I hope you enjoyed these letter-writing ideas — and I hope you enjoyed the simple pleasure of writing and sending out your letters!

If you completed all 7 letters, then that means — because of you — 7 different people will receive an unexpected treasure this week: a sincere, loving, meaningful letter from you.

That's very cool.

Thank you for creating a positive ripple in the world.

Who knows where it will lead?

...

Now what? A few things to do next.

If you enjoyed this booklet, here are a few things you can do next:

- Keep writing letters.

Handwritten, digital, or both—whatever you prefer.

The legendary fashion designer [Diane von Furstenberg](#) starts every day by writing a note to someone in her community simply to say “I love you” or “thank you” or “here’s something you might enjoy...”

In DvF’s own words: *“I send one e-mail that doesn’t benefit me at all.”*

How fantastic! Why not start your morning the same way?

- **Send a love letter to someone who feels alone and afraid.**

This project—[The World Needs More Love Letters](#)—can help you get started.

- **Work and play with me.**

If you like my writing style and philosophy—and if you would like to keep writing, playing, and learning from me—you might want to scope out the books in my [Shop](#), my collection of free [articles](#) and [advice columns](#), and [Unstoppable](#): a 10-day online course on how to clear away the obstacles, fears, and distractions that stop many people from writing.

...

Books to read

Here are a few of my favorite books on writing, communication, compassion, creativity and doing excellent work.

Some are novels. Some are not. There's some poetry, too. Enjoy!

[Design Your Self](#). Karim Rashid.

[Die Empty](#). Todd Henry.

[I'm Proud of You: My Friendship with Fred Rogers](#). Tim Madigan.

[It's Not How Good You Are, It's How Good You Want to Be](#). Paul Arden.

[Michelle Kwan: Heart of a Champion: An Autobiography](#). Michelle Kwan.

[My Fight / Your Fight](#). Ronda Rousey.

[Start Where You Are.](#) Pema Chödrön.

[Steal Like An Artist.](#) Austin Kleon.

[The Art of Communicating.](#) Thich Nhat Hanh.

[The Alchemist.](#) Paulo Coelho.

[The Book of Awakening.](#) Mark Nepo.

[The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou.](#) Maya Angelou.

[The Desire Map.](#) Danielle LaPorte.

[The Essential Rumi.](#) Rumi.

[The Four Agreements.](#) Don Miguel Ruiz.

[The Right To Write.](#) Julia Cameron.

[The Subject Tonight Is Love.](#) Hafiz.

[The Usual Error.](#) Pace and Kyeli Smith.

[Workin' It!](#) RuPaul.

[The World According To Mister Rogers.](#) Fred Rogers.

[Writing Down The Bones.](#) Natalie Goldberg.

About the creator of this booklet



Hey! It's me, Alex.

I'm a writer based in Portland.

I work with clients on all kinds of [writing projects](#): websites, TEDx talks, educational programs, book proposals, blog posts, and beyond.

I am the author of three books, including a [bestselling journal](#), an [illustrated book](#) on the power of gratitude, and a love story called [Milk & Honey](#).

My words have also been used on product packaging, in [song lyrics](#) and on [paintings](#).

Other things & stuff:

My favorite human is [Mister Rogers](#). My favorite poet is [Rumi](#). My favorite spiritual leader is [RuPaul](#). I'm a Sagittarius, Type 1 on [The Enneagram](#), and very introverted. I love almond croissants, strong coffee, and all kinds of music. My hair is usually brown but currently it is blue. I have one fake tooth. I don't use social media. My personal mantra is: "[Today is not over yet.](#)" You can learn more about my current projects at: [AlexandraFranzen.com](#).

This booklet is free. Feel free to share it with a friend. Or lots of friends.

You are welcome to re-publish an excerpt from this booklet on your website, on your blog, in your newsletter, wherever you like. Please credit me as the author.

Thank you for reading.