

The Lost Art of the Handwritten Letter

A gift our generation still knows how to give

Do you remember the sound of the mailbox lid clanking shut, and the small thrill of finding an envelope with your name on it in someone's familiar handwriting? Before text messages, before email, before a single emoji, a letter was how we said the things that mattered. It arrived days later, a little wrinkled from its journey, and it was worth the wait.

Today, most of what lands in our mailboxes is bills, flyers, and requests for donations. That is precisely why a handwritten letter has become one of the most powerful things we can send. It is rare, it is personal, and it says something no screen can: *I sat down, I slowed down, and I thought about you.*

A letter is not just a message. It is a small piece of a person, carried across the miles in their own handwriting.

Why a Letter Still Beats a Text

A text is quick, and quick has its place. But quick rarely lasts. A handwritten letter carries weight in ways that are easy to overlook until you are the one holding it.

- **It shows effort.** Choosing the words, finding a pen, and walking to the mailbox all tell the reader they matter.
- **It gets kept.** Few people save a text from ten years ago. Plenty of families still treasure a shoebox of letters from a parent, a friend, or a sweetheart.
- **It slows us down.** Writing by hand is unhurried. It gives our thoughts room to settle, and many people find it calming.
- **It carries our voice.** Our handwriting, our phrases, even our crossed-out mistakes are uniquely ours. No one else can send that.

Who Is Waiting to Hear From You?

Think for a moment about the people in your life who would be delighted, and perhaps moved to tears, to find a letter from you. An old friend from your working years. A sibling who lives far away. A grandchild away at college who would never admit how much a note from Grandma or Grandpa would mean. A neighbor who has

been alone more than she lets on. A former teacher or mentor who never knew how much they shaped you.

And there is one more reader to consider: the person you will never be able to thank in person. Some of the most healing letters are the ones written to those who have passed. You may never mail them, but the act of writing can bring a surprising sense of peace.

How to Begin, Even If You Feel Rusty

Many of us haven't written a real letter in years, and the blank page can feel intimidating. The good news is that a letter does not need to be long, polished, or profound. Here is a simple way to get started today.

1. **Gather your supplies.** A pen you enjoy, decent paper or a simple card, an envelope, and a stamp. Keep them together in one spot so the next letter is easy.
2. **Start with a warm greeting.** "Dear Susan, I was thinking about you this morning..." is all it takes to begin.
3. **Share one real memory.** A specific moment, such as the summer road trip or the terrible casserole at that holiday dinner, is worth more than a page of general pleasantries.
4. **Tell them what they mean to you.** Say it plainly. Most people do not hear it nearly often enough.
5. **Add a little news and a question.** A question invites a reply, and a reply starts a conversation that can last for years.
6. **Sign it warmly and mail it.** Do not wait for the perfect version. The letter that gets sent beats the masterpiece that never does.

Today's Challenge: Write just one letter this week. Three paragraphs is plenty. Choose one person, put a stamp on it, and drop it in the mailbox before the weekend.

A Habit Worth Keeping

Our generation is uniquely positioned here. We learned penmanship in school, we remember the ritual of stationery and stamps, and we understand that some things are worth doing slowly. We can pass that gift along, not by lecturing younger people about it, but by simply sending them a letter and letting them feel the difference for themselves.

You might be surprised by what comes back. A letter tends to invite a letter, or at the very least a phone call that begins with, "I got your note, and I can't stop smiling." In an age when connection is supposedly effortless, that kind of connection is worth more than ever.

So find your favorite pen, put the kettle on, and write to someone who will be glad you did.

We'd Love to Hear From You!

When was the last time you received a handwritten letter, and who sent it? Do you still write them yourself? Share your story, your favorite memory, or the person you plan to write to this week.

Please scroll down to the Comment Box just below this post and join the conversation.