

Bringing Back Hand-Written Letters: Why and How We Should Revive This Old-Fashioned Practice in the Age of Covid-19

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Since the start of the ongoing pandemic, so many of us have been feeling disconnected to others as we cannot see our friends and family or go out and make new friends. We may have solely relied on texts, phone calls, Zoom and Facetime for our only sense of normalcy in human connection, but it doesn't always feel so personal or satisfy our needs of talking to others. Which is why I am suggesting we bring back handwritten letters. Yes, you read that right. Paper. Ink. Stamps. Snail mail.

Think about it: text's are usually short because you don't want to exhaust your thumbs writing paragraphs on paragraphs, overwhelm the other person's phone with notifications and force them to scroll endlessly to read everything. They use abbreviations and emojis, and often we do not know what the other person is actually feeling or meaning behind the text. A lot can be lost in translation.

And phone calls, yes, can be more personal. You can hear the other person's voice, hear their tone, and talk longer and in more detail. But in the end, you do not have anywhere to store that conversation or to remember it but in your mind. Phone calls are also easily accessible and don't take much effort. You can simply pick up your phone and call someone whenever or wherever you want. There is something about the easy accessibility that makes it feel less special and you don't tend to get as excited or surprised when you get a phone call.

Zoom and Facetime are a little more personal, as you can not only hear the other person, but see them as well. It is also maybe a little more special and surprising, as it can take coordination to Zoom call someone and be prepared for another person to see you. Likely the call will not be, for example, in the bathtub or crying in your car blasting Adele's "Someone Like You" with mascara running down your face. It takes slightly more effort to call someone on Facetime or Zoom, but can also be more surprising and exciting as it is not the type of call you would typically receive everyday.

So what I am suggesting is that by bringing back letter writing you may feel more connected to that other person. Writing and mailing a letter takes much more effort than other methods of communication, plus you have a reason to get a little creative! You have to either buy or make stationary paper and physically write out what you want to say while making it long enough to be worth mailing, but short enough that it can all fit. There is no autocorrect, so you have to really think about grammar and spelling. You have to buy an envelope to insert it into, a stamp to place on the envelope and actually physically walk to and place it in the mailbox. Then,

you have to wait 3-5 business days for it to reach the other person. And letters feel much more personal and sincere. You usually start letters by addressing the recipient by name using something like “Dear...” or “Greetings...” then ending the letter with a thoughtful closing remark with your name like “Sincerely...,” “Love....,” or “Forever yours...”. The other person also gets to read your unique handwriting and can smell your scent if you spray the envelope with the perfume or essential oil you wear daily. You can also place other things such as dried flowers, photos, friendship bracelets, or CD mixtapes within the letter, giving them something physical to connect with. And once you are done reading a letter, you can save it and always look back and remember the conversation you had. Letters used to be the most common form of communicating with someone long distance, but it seems to have faded with the rise of technology. Therefore, when your special someone receives a handwritten letter from you they will be all the more joyful, surprised and in awe of the time, energy and creativity you put into it.

So, how do you write a letter in this day and age? I will give you a few tips:

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https://www.etsy.com/listing/938890070/letter-writing-set-wildflowers?ref=internal_similar_listing_bot-1}

1. Go to the store and purchase a stationary set that resembles your personality. You can also make your own by purchasing plain colored paper, ink, and rubber stamps then stamping designs onto the paper.

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2. If the stationary set did not come with an envelope, purchase envelopes as well. Also purchase wax and a seal stamp if you would like to use a wax seal to keep the envelopes closed in a stylistic way.

{Insert Image 3 to left <https://amorouscottage.tumblr.com/post/621334979017932800>}

3. Purchase non-basic postal stamps. The more of your personality you make it, the more sincere it will be, even when it comes to little things like stamps.

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4. Purchase stickers, markers, and pens to make it fun and creative. You can use a fountain pen, glitter gel pen or scented marker. The possibilities are endless! Use the pens to write your letter but also to doodle some cute designs if you would like!

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5. Make sure you have their address, and ask them for it if you don't. Make sure you put a return address on it in case it isn't delivered to them properly.

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<https://www.etsy.com/listing/814754576/cottage-core-inspired-stationery-set?ref=listing-free-shipping-bundle-1>}

6. Get creative with it! You can make it however you like, so spray that perfume or essential oils on it, put those pressed dried flowers in it, paste a page from a book in it, wrap it in lace, make an artistic collage on one side, kiss it with lipstick, add character to it any way you wish!

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<https://pinkflamingolips.tumblr.com/post/158593985033/a-letter-from-you>}

7. When writing the letter itself, sincerely address the person you are writing to by name then end it with a positive closing remark. Tell them stories and about your life, but make sure you are asking them questions too so they have something to answer when writing you back. Keep it positive, sincere, and maybe open up and tell them deeper things than what you would normally write over text or phone call.

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8. Make a few drafts of the letter before the final one to get it right as you don't want to send a letter with a lot of white-out or crossed out words. Also use good handwriting so they can understand you, but remember to never put very private information such as social security numbers, bank account numbers, etc. in case the letter gets stolen or lost during the mail process. Most of all, remember to just have fun with it and enjoy creating and maintaining genuine connection with others through the old-fashioned practice of writing handwritten letters.