



## The Power of The Unsent Letter

*Full of rage at someone but not sure you can tell them?*

*Feeling hurt and let down by a partner but fearful of telling them straight?*

*Need your voice to be heard without being judged?*

*Wish you could tell a parent exactly how they made you feel?*

*Have a request to make that you can't say out loud?*

When you have issues with a person in your past or present life it is often helpful to be able to express your ideas and feelings without having to worry about how that person is going to react.

Unsent letters are powerful because they're for **your eyes** only so you're genuinely able to express all that lies unexpressed in your heart without needing to explain all of the details.

The unsent letter is a form of writing therapy that encourages you to address a letter to someone you don't feel you can talk directly to – perhaps a former lover, a friend you've fallen out with, or perhaps someone who has died. It's a way of putting into words a deeply held thought or feeling that has somehow been damaging you in some way, or holding you back.

The idea is that you write about your feelings openly – so they're 'out there' – but you don't have to send the letter. The point is to articulate and process your feelings rather than openly hurt someone else by sending the letter.

So you can rage about a vexatious issue connected to a significant person in your life, and it's you who ends up feeling better. The unsent letter can be written by hand, or typed as an email – whichever you prefer. Just don't press send!

# The Wander with Purpose PROJECT

Here's an example of what you might start off with in a letter to such a person:

Dear (fill-in-the-blank),

*I'm writing you a letter because I find it impossible to talk with you directly. When I've tried to tell you how I feel about the way you treat me, you've consistently interrupted me, blown up, and shut me down. By writing this letter, I am giving myself the opportunity to just say what I need to say, without someone else getting in the way of my doing that...*

After you've gotten your feet wet, I would suggest covering the following areas for an abusive person in your life:

- *What that person did to you specifically which has caused you hurt and suffering (i.e., their words and/or behaviours towards you)*
- *How the way they mistreated you impacted your life until now (i.e., what sorts of decisions you made and the types of relationships you entered into based on what they taught you to believe about yourself)*
- *Make a declaration to them that you're putting all of their abuse back onto them and freeing yourself from it's effects from now on*
- *Tell them everything you have ever wanted to say to them about how they treated you but were too afraid to do until now*

Once you've finished this letter, I would suggest that you then write a very warm, loving, and compassionate letter to **your inner child** from **your highest adult self**. You might say things like this:

- *I am so sorry that you were abused by (the person who abused you).*
- *I am sorry that no one protected you from him/her in the past, but I want you to know that I am here to protect you now.*
- *It's okay to feel angry, hurt, and afraid. It's okay to feel anything that you feel towards this person and what they did to you in the past.*
- *I want you to know that you're not alone anymore. I am here and I am taking care of you and making sure that no one treats you like that anymore.*

# The Wander with Purpose — P R O J E C T —

Sometimes, you'll use this letter-writing tool as a method of figuring out where you're at in a particular relationship and what your next step should be. For example, you may be contemplating ending a friendship that is no longer serving you. In this case, your letter might look something like this:

*Dear (fill-in-the-blank),*

*I feel that my needs for friendship are changing as I continue to change and grow. Over time, I have come to realise through experience that you cannot meet many of my needs in a friend so I think I need to let you go.*

*I guess I've hung onto you because you paid attention to me and wanted to be with me and were kind to me. I was lonely and you were a good companion- for a while. But as time has gone on, I am feeling increasingly suffocated by your attention and feel like it is now "too much". It doesn't feel healthy to me and I feel the need to take some space.*

In this type of letter, I suggest adding some closure statements because you are in essence, ending the relationship. A really good way to find closure is by thanking that person for the gifts they gave you by knowing them. Things you may include would be: a listening ear, taking time to spend with you, and doing fun activities together. Even if you no longer want the relationship to continue, it can feel really good to end things by 'dwelling on the positives' about the good times you had with that person.

**Unsent letters are powerful because they're for your eyes only so you're genuinely able to express all that lies unexpressed in your heart without needing to explain all of the details.**

**As a result, they tend to inspire helpful insights into patterns and relationships, and trigger an immediate and extremely welcome sense of relief.**

**In the space that follows, a fresh perspective can be gained and a deep level of healing can occur.**

**With love, Sietske**