

Purposeful Connections

The benefits of letter writing!

Five Fantastic Reasons to Embrace “Snail Mail”–

1 **Increases clarity and broadens perspectives**

When we are *only thinking* about something, it’s easy to get “stuck in our heads” – looking at a situation in just one way. However, when we *put pen to paper*, we are actively engaging a *different part of our brains*. Moving back and forth between thinking and writing utilizes multiple brain functions – opening our minds and giving us greater perspective.

2 **Eases feelings of loneliness and isolation**

Writing a letter is a meaningful alternative to a visit. It *allows us to feel connected* to others even when we aren’t together in person.

3 **Develops a sense of accomplishment**

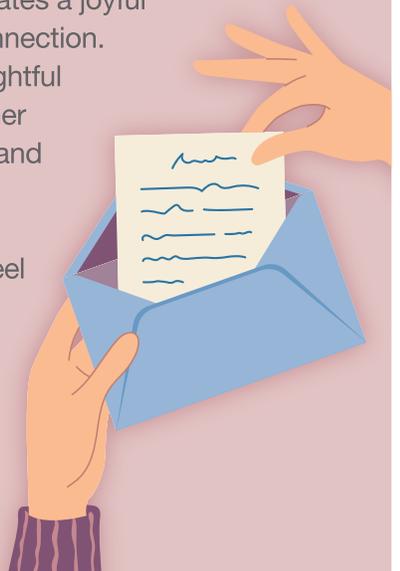
Text messages can be whipped off in a matter of seconds, often without much effort or attention on the part of the sender. A handwritten letter is a *far more thoughtful form* of communication. It requires our time and effort, which leaves us with a sense of *satisfaction and accomplishment*.

4 **Strengthens friendships and family bonds**

The recipients of our handwritten letters will feel special and *will appreciate the thoughtful effort* invested in physically writing, stamping, addressing and mailing the letters. Each time we send a letter, we are telling the receiver that he or she is very important to us. Plus, unlike disposable digital communications, our loved ones can keep and treasure letters forever!

5 **Creates joy for both the receiver and the sender**

Each letter we send creates a joyful and compassionate connection. The receiver gets a delightful surprise in the mail, rather than just the usual bills and junk mail. And, our own happiness gets a boost by the anticipation we feel knowing that our letter is on its way and will soon make someone’s day! That’s a *win-win!*



TIPS to be **BETTER** about writing **LETTERS:**

Buy some new stationery. Having a supply of cheerful, beautiful note paper will make letter writing fun and inviting.

Always have stamps on hand. Our best intentions can easily be derailed if we have run out of stamps or envelopes to mail our letters.

Keep address listings up-to-date. Record addresses *in one place*, in an address book or on your computer. As soon as you learn of an address change, delete the old and replace it with the new one.

Stay consistent. As with any habit, it takes repetition. Cultivate a time and space to nourish this very thoughtful, healthy and rewarding practice.

Remember – Our letters can be thought of as messages sent into the future – meaningful ways to tell our loved ones how we feel about them. Special letters can be read and reread at milestones such as graduations, marriages and funerals; serving to keep memories alive through multiple generations.



TAKE OUR **Live Well Letter Writing CHALLENGE!**

1 CHOOSE 3 PEOPLE

If three people don't immediately come to mind, here are some ideas:

- someone who has experienced a recent loss, or is battling an illness
- a young person who has moved away from home for the first time (off to college, starting a new job in a different state, etc.)
- someone from your past who made a difference in your life, or who brings back fond memories

2 WRITE THE FIRST LETTERS

Send each of your 3 people an initial letter. Tell them they are important to you, and you'd like to keep in touch and offer them encouragement throughout the coming year.

- Let them know there is no expectation for them to write back, although responses are welcome

3 SEND FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

Write each of your recipients three (or more) letters throughout the year.

- Marking the writing dates on your calendar ahead of time can help you to remember – you'll then write all 3 letters on those designated dates
- There's no reason to stop when the year is over. Keep writing as long as you wish!

- 1. Letters create meaningful connections**
- 2. Keep stamps, paper & envelopes on hand**
- 3. Letter writing is good for you**