



The Love Letter A Technique for Emotional Literacy

One of the most effective tools of emotional literacy is to write a “love” letter when you are upset with someone. The purpose of the letter is to resolve whatever emotions are standing in the way of the expression of love. That’s why we call it a “love letter.”

The love letter technique taught at seminars by Dr. John Gray* is the ultimate way for sharing and expressing the complete truth for resolving emotional conflict both within yourself and in your relationships. It is not only a powerful tool for emotional healing, but through practicing it, you will learn more about your own feelings and what it really means to tell the truth. It’s been reported by people who have successfully learned to practice the love letter technique that in a matter of minutes, they are able to resolve emotional conflicts that would otherwise have seemed impossible and been repressed.

The Love Letter Format

Begin by writing your anger, resentment and blame and allow yourself to move through the other levels until you get down to the love. Each letter has five parts - and the following lead-in phrase may help you if you become stuck at one level and need to move into the next.

1. Anger and Blame

I don't like it when...
I resent...
I hate it when...
I'm fed up with...
I'm tired of...
I want...

2. Hurt and Sadness

I feel sad when...
I feel hurt when...
I feel awful because...
I feel disappointed because...
I want...

3. Fear and Insecurity

I feel afraid...
I'm afraid that...
I feel scared because...
I want...

4. Guilt and Responsibility

I'm sorry that...
I'm sorry for...
Please forgive me for...
I didn't mean to...
I wish...

5. Love, Forgiveness, Understanding & Desire

I love you because...
I love you when...
Thank you for...
I understand that...
I forgive you for...
I want...

When we resist negative emotions we don't heal. No one ever wants to hear them but they are the emotions we

need to work on most. When these emotions came up previously we lost love, so we learned to push them away. If you enable yourself, children, spouse, and friends to feel safe expressing all their feelings, conflict can be minimized and there can be a healthy release of feelings.

Remember, If you want to feel better, write a love letter!

* Dr. John Gray, author of Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus.

Eating Disorders in Children-Prevention Starts with Parents

Here are ten steps to help keep your child protected from eating disorders and an unhealthy image about themselves:

1. Don't follow fad diets, ever.
2. Never criticize someone's appearance, especially a child. Phrases like “bubble butt” or “thunder thighs” may feel like harmless joking, but they send children harmful messages about body image.
3. Correct your children if they criticize someone's appearance and let them know those comments are hurtful.
4. Emphasize the importance of fitness, rather than thinness.
5. Praise your children for their personal qualities and their accomplishments, rather than focusing on their appearance.
6. Talk to your child about the normal body changes expected at puberty. Girls often misinterpret the development of curves as “getting fat” and the cycle of dieting begins.
7. Tell you children the truth about unrealistic images they see in magazines and on television. Let them know that many models and actors achieve their “look” through unhealthy eating, plastic surgery and drug abuse, and that most photos they see are touched up to make the models appear thinner and healthier than they are.
8. Take care of yourself in healthy responsible ways. Be a good role model.
9. If your child or teen insists on dieting, make sure you consult with the child's physician or a dietitian.
10. Seek immediate medical help if you suspect your child is developing an eating disorder or harmful self-esteem issues that could lead to an eating disorder.

What Makes Kids Care?: Teaching Gentleness in a Violent World

In a world where violence and cruelty seem to be common and almost acceptable, a lot of parents wonder what they can do to help their children become 'kinder and gentler'—to develop a sense of caring and compassion for others. Raising kids who care isn't a solution to violence by itself, but you might worry that being exposed to a lot of violence — whether it's on television or on the streets — could make your children 'hard' and uncaring.

Parents, of course, can't completely control all of the things that affect their children's lives — after all, children spend a lot of time out in the 'real world' which can often be harsh, uncaring, or just plain unhappy — and children have their own personalities and characteristics that parents can't change or control. But there are some things that a parent can try to help encourage their children to become caring, just and responsible.

Studies have shown that children respond quickly and with concern to a classmate, friend, family neighbor, or to a stranger, who is being hurt. It's well known, too, that children have a natural affinity for animals and a desire to help them.

One study, by Ziporah Magen, Ph.D., and Rachel Aharoni, Ph.D. found that teenagers who were involved in helping others felt very positive about their lives and had high hopes for their own futures. 'It was a wonderful feeling,' reported one student in this study. 'My feeling as free as a sparrow made me feel glad and happy and that life is an exciting thing.'

What Can Parents Do?

Let them Know How You Feel

The most important thing you can do is to let your children know how much it means to you that they behave with kindness and responsibility. When you catch your child doing something that you think is thoughtless or cruel, you should let them know right away that you don't want them doing that. Speak to your child firmly and honestly, and keep your focus on the act, not on the child personally: something along the lines of 'What you did is not very nice' rather than, 'YOU are not very nice!'

It's important to let your children know how deeply you feel about their behavior toward others. If they see that you have a real emotional commitment to something, it's more likely that the issue will become important to them, too. This emotional reaction needs to be accompanied by information: some explanation of why you disapprove; for example, 'Look, Joey is crying. He's crying because you took his toy away. That wasn't a very nice thing to do!' or 'It hurts the cat when you do that; that's why he scratched you. It isn't kind, and I don't want you to do that anymore!'

Be frank, honest and upfront with your kids about what kind of behavior you do and don't like. Also, keep it short and to the point; the idea is to teach them, not the make them feel guilty!

Role Modeling

Actions speak louder than words.

If you are consistently caring and compassionate, it's more likely that your children will be too. Children watch their parents, and other adults, for clues on how to behave.

Keep in mind that if you say one thing and do another, your children will pay a lot more attention to what you do. The old warning 'Do as I say, not as I do' simply does not work, particularly when it comes to teaching about caring.

Not everyone has time to devote to volunteer work or money to donate to causes, but there are small acts of caring that can be part of your family's life. These acts of caring don't have to be grandiose. Doing a favor for a neighbor, taking a stray animal to a shelter, giving money and a kind word to a homeless person, helping out when a group of teenagers are cruelly teasing a classmate; there are all kinds of small acts of compassion that your children can watch you do, and even take part in themselves.

Try to surround your children with other people who are kind and caring, so that they have several role models.

Another thing you can do is try to find organized ways for your children to get involved. Let them know about places in the community where they can volunteer, and encourage them to join. Many volunteer organizations and churches have special programs for young people and even for children.

You and Your Child

If you treat your children with respect for their dignity, with concern and with regard for their achievements — you help them understand that all living creatures should be treated with dignity and concern.

One part of this is to reward your children for acts of kindness. Psychologist Julius Segal, Ph.D., points out that just as it's important to let them know how strongly you feel about their unkind acts, it's important to let them know how highly you regard their kind ones. For instance: 'I saw you take care of the boy who fell on the playground. That was very kind of you, and it makes me feel very proud.'

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