

Introduction

Why write about my own traumas? Or why even write down my emotions at all? I have often wondered whether my own personal experience affects my writing. Through writing the six letters in my current archive, I have found a genuine and close connection to myself as a writer and have found a newfound love for my own writing. By writing my current thoughts and feelings down on paper I have found a way of fully being able to capture my thoughts and feelings to their full potential. I am a very open person and am not afraid to express my thoughts and feelings. I do, however, struggle with expressing feelings of grief, anger, and sadness around others. I do not like to be negative around others, and these feelings often feel like negative or sad feelings. Each of the six letters in my archive have allowed me to share parts of myself that are not easy to showcase. Here is why I chose each letter in my archive and why each letter means so much to each of me. I will also explain what the symbols in my book's cover mean as well. (Side Note: The letters I have decided to order in the order in which I wrote them.)



The Letter to my Late Cousin Pam

Oh Pam!
How I miss you!
Pam was a cousin of mine from my mothers' side of the family. She saw me grow up from a baby to age ten. Unfortunately, she died right around when I turned ten, 2013, from breast cancer. In my letter to her, I explain the

significant impact she had in my life during adolescence and describe how important to me she was. I give insight into what she did for me and how close we were. To showcase this, I talk about personal anecdotes between the two of us. I also fill her in on my current life and the challenges I have faced along the way. This is where the emotions I usually do not express much show up in the letter. I tell her about my parents' divorce, my first break up, and the worst of my traumas how my dad died earlier this year. I found it easy to write to her and almost freeing Writing to her was like writing to a close friend you have not seen in years. It just flows without hesitation.

In the cover of the book, I highlight Pam's importance to me. Next to her name I write "One block of my life" because she only got to experience part of it and under is a small picture that reads, resilience plus heart drawing plus care. There is a meaning here. She faced many medical problems and bounced back the best she could every time, hence resilience. Through her hardships, she never failed to love me.



The Letter to my 15- Year-Old Self

Oh young me! How innocent! How Naïve! My 15-year-old self experienced a trauma many children face. A divorce between two parents! Except, mine was not a typical divorce. My dad threw

my mom in jail for two days framing her for domestic violence. All this craziness during my freshman year of high school too. If starting high school was not stressful enough, I also had family issues going on as well. Here, I let myself tell my younger self it is okay to be naïve. That was hard to write because I often blamed myself a lot for not seeing the situation that occurred between my parents and for being as naïve as I was. I realize now that I only dealt with the emotions I could at the time and as I reflect on this experience realize I was naïve for a reason. It was difficult to let the blame I had for myself go. I am still struggling with that currently.

In the cover of the book, I wrote next to my 15-year-old self “a significant part of my adolescence” because the most tragic part of my young life was my parents’ divorce. There is a picture of a heart with a bandage, underneath the words 15-year-old me, and the words innocence plus struggle under the

heart. This shows how my heart was broken by my parents' divorce and repaired over time. I was innocent then and still had my own struggles to face.

The Letter to my Dad

Oh Dad! How mixed my emotions are regarding you and your death! My Dad just passed in August and I for the third time in my life felt genuine anger because of it! My Dad did not die naturally. He died due to his own hand. Not only did he die from suicide, but he also died exactly one week before my last semester of undergrad in college. In my letter to him, I yell at him the whole time and this is the only letter in the archive in which profanity is used. How mad I was at him for what he did! I used imagery here against him and tried



hard not to cry as I wrote it. This was the hardest letter to write in my entire archive and still makes me emotional today when I read it. I blamed him for our broken relationship and for my anxiety. I never yell at anyone or blame them vehemently for their actions, but I did for him.

In the cover of my book, there are the words 'some good, some bad, LOTS of anger' by my dad's name. This shows how we had good times as well as bad

times and because of his death I feel a lot of anger. The picture below has the word sadness plus an upside down heart plus the word intelligence. So, this

means my dad turned my heart and world upside down as well as breaking my heart. Only through the sadness of how he left am I able to gain the intelligence as to how to move on.



The Letter to Future Me

Oh, how I want it to be the future! I relish my future! My future will be one of hope and of less stress, I hope! In my letter to my future self, I remind

myself how I can get through hard things. I have been through so many hardships at this point that I know there is always good things to come after difficulties. Here, I remind myself that there is no battle I cannot win. If I work hard enough, I can conquer anything. This was hard because I let myself love myself. I am my own worst critic, and I know that. So, I finally let go of that notion and allowed myself space to just love me. All and everything about me. This is the only letter I have verbally said to myself over and over but never wrote down. I think I did this, so it could change and I could remind myself to love myself. Some examples of quotes I say to myself again from this letter will be in the book.

On the cover of the book, there are the words, "will rewrite the script" which mean my future will make the past problems go away and rewrite my life for the better. Underneath is a picture containing the word pure plus a heart plus the word care. This means my pure love for myself will lead to my own self-care.



The Letter to my Mom's Boyfriend, Dale

Oh Dale!
How much I love you so much!
Dale is my mom's boyfriend, and he treats my mom like a queen. He genuinely cares about her, unlike my dad, and does things to show her he is loved. In the letter to him I tell him how much I appreciate him as a dad figure to me in my life. He would never say it himself because he does not want to

replace my dad, but he now knows how much I love and care about him. I also open up to him how if I get in grad school, which I did, how I was nervous to pay for it. I do not know why I decided to tell him this, but I think it is because I trusted him with that information in that moment over anyone else. Including my mom. So, that is the element that made this letter hard to write. I had never said before that Dale felt like my real dad, but here it is now.

On the cover of the book, are the words, "the 'Dad' I always needed" which indicates the impact Dale had on my life as a father figure. Underneath is a picture of the word me plus a rainbow heart plus the word mom. This means

that Dale loves my mom and I endlessly regardless of our faults. He loves the whole and complete us.



The Letter to AJ

Oh AJ! You were such a sweet soul and will be missed dearly! AJ recently died from what I believe is something like my dad. I shared two classes with AJ in college. A musical theatre class and a communication class. I have not talked to him in over a year, so when I heard he passed, I was immediately devastated. In my letter to him, I write

about how talented he was and how much I cared for him. I also stated that I am sad he most likely died the way he did and explain how much potential he had. Here, I allow myself to be sad as I wrote. I also cried while writing the letter because yet another important person in my life died recently. I thank him for being my friend and wish him well.

On the cover of the book, are the words “taught me, about me” because since AJ was unapologetically himself, I felt like I could be the same around him. Underneath is a picture of a microphone plus a heart plus a smiley face and sad face. This means he loved to sing with me with love in our theatre class.