

To: Shayaan

I've always loved writing letters and I had thought earlier that I'd write you one for your birthday since friends do not really write letters to one another. But since the cat is out of the bag, what better than to write you a letter.

Dearest Shayaan,

When I think of you it's not butterflies that I feel (although you have made me feel those too lately), rather it's this calm sensation that I feel. When I think of you I feel what I feel when I stand amongst the murmurs of the mountains. When I think of you I feel what I feel when the water on the beach slightly runs against my feet. When I think of you I feel warmth. When I think of you I feel what I feel when I sit under the winter sun. When I think of your existence, it feels calm, reassuring and stable.

You are not an adventure to me, you are like what ghar feels like after you return from a long vacation. You are not the ups and downs of the sea waves crashing into the cliffs; you are that gentle stream I feel like sitting across forever. You feel like the gentle grass touching one's skin.

You've asked me time and again why I like you. Honestly I've asked myself that question too. Every time I ask myself this my mind says that I like you because of the human you are. You are not like other people I know. You are not shallow. You think, you actually truly think and that is the most attractive thing about you. You know I've always believed that one of the best traits a person could have is just being an active, present listener. And god do you listen. You listen like every word matters. I have never fathomed the idea of such an individual existing jo kahey: "Mein sun raha hon, I'm listening".

I like you for how you are always open to learning. You are always eager to learn about people, to learn the ways of others. You Shayaan, value human connection, you value the little mundane things most do not. That was something I liked about you from the very start. You notice and you observe the mundane. You observed how my expressions changed the first time we met, you noticed how I liked those earrings without me having to say a word. Since then you've noticed every time I've told you I'm fine when I'm not. You notice things around you, and somehow in all of that you just exist so beautifully in cohesion with the present.

I like you because you have these values that are unlike anyone else I've met our age. I always knew values would form a major base of my connection to someone one day. The way you ask me to have tawakkul time and again. The way you'd ask me to pray for you and would pray for me. The way you're connected to family values, to putting effort for your family. This level of respect jo tumhari aankhon mein mujhey pyaar sey pehley nazar ati hai. I like you for your sense of right and wrong and how you've maintained that with me. The second you told me you wanted to do this right away any doubts I had immediately evaporated because you are grounded in your values and I like that.

I like you because of how motivated you are, for this shimmer of wanting to better, wanting to be more both personally and professionally that's always there in your eyes.

I like you because you're not fake, you are real, you are genuine. This genuinity is what draws me to you more and more. You are not scared of vulnerability or from showing weakness. You do not pretend to care, you truly care. You care about these little things and that is so beautiful.

I like you for the effort you put in. You show up when you've given your word. You are dependable and you are someone I have trusted with more than I've ever trusted anyone. When you've given your word you stick with it which is why i know you'd stick with me.

I like you because you make the effort to understand. This art of observation that you possess, you then use it to understand. You don't just listen, you actively understand me. You know what I'll say before I've uttered the words simply because you choose to understand me. Ye bare minimum nahi hai Shayaan. You do not judge me for my flaws. You see all of them. You've been the only person to see all of them and you not only acknowledge them, but you accept them too.

I like you because you are realistic. You are aware of the ground realities and you do not let the scare you. You don't choose the easy way out, you choose the right way however difficult it may be. I like you for your value of commitment and how you make the conscious choice to choose me. You are worth choosing to me everytime

I like you because you bring out this version of me jo behtar hai. You never make me doubt myself, question myself. You believe in me like no one ever has. You trust me with your heart like no one ever has. You motivate me to be more, to reach out to fulfill what I'm capable of. You bring me closer to my values. You've never asked me to change for you, or to become some different version of me. Instead you've always put the effort to meet me half way.

I could go on and on Shayaan. I also like you for how you just go with my craziness. I like you for how you are so patient with me when you could be easily annoyed and yet never are. I like you for your smile and for how your eyes soften and your voice becomes gentle when you speak to me. I like your nerd glasses; they make you look so nice. And I really like your hair. I really like how you just find me beautiful in even my worst, it makes me realize how you are so much the opposite of materialistic.

In the end, Shayaan, I like you. Tum mujhey bohot pasand ho. I want to know you more and I want to be the person who stands by your side through every stage of life. I want to be there for the good, bad and ugly. I want to be there when you are strong and when you are weak. I want to be there when you have nothing and when you have everything. I want to see you succeed and become everything you are capable of and have everything you are deserving of. I want you in my life, long term. I intend to make this work. Shayaan, I'm all in.