

# The Legacy Letter Template

## What is a Legacy Letter?

A legacy letter is a written expression of your values, lessons, and love for someone important in your life. Unlike a will (which distributes possessions), a legacy letter distributes wisdom.

**You might write a legacy letter to:** - Your children or grandchildren - Your spouse or partner - A mentee or student - A younger family member - Your future self

**When to write it:** - Don't wait for a crisis. Write it now, while you can. - Update it annually or after major life events. - Some people write versions for different ages (when my child turns 18, when they become a parent, etc.)

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## Template 1: The Foundation Letter (For Children/Younger Generation)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

### On Being Good

If I could give you only one truth to carry through life, it would be this:

**You are already good.** You don't have to earn it. You don't have to prove it. Goodness is your foundation, not your destination.

The world will try to convince you otherwise. It will measure you by achievements, possessions, status, and success. But those things don't make you good. They're just things you do.

**Remember this:** You are not your job. You are not your grades. You are not your mistakes. You are not even your accomplishments.

You are the person who chooses—every day—to be honest, kind, courageous, and true.

### On Doing Good

Being good is the foundation. Doing good is the building.

Here's what I hope you'll build:

**Build relationships** rooted in loyalty. Show up for people, especially when it's inconvenient. The people who stay through your storms are your true crew.

**Build integrity** through small choices. It's not the big heroic moments that define you—it's the thousand tiny decisions when no one is watching.

**Build service** into your identity. Ask regularly: "How can I help?" Then do it without needing credit.

**Build humility.** The janitor and the CEO are equally valuable humans. Treat them that way.

**Build courage.** Speak up for what's right, even when your voice shakes.

### The Hardest Lesson I Learned

[Share one difficult experience that taught you something crucial]

I learned: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish I had known: \_\_\_\_\_

I hope you'll remember: \_\_\_\_\_

## **What I'm Most Proud Of (About You)**

[Be specific. Not “you’re smart” but “the way you stood up for that kid being bullied showed me who you are”]

I see you when \_\_\_\_\_

I’m proud when \_\_\_\_\_

You’ve taught me \_\_\_\_\_

## **When You Face Your Storm**

Not “if”—“when.” Because you will.

When the storm comes, remember:

**Your anchor holds.** Return to your values. They don’t change just because life gets hard.

**The storm reveals, not creates.** It will show you who you’ve been building yourself to be. Build yourself strong before the storm, not during it.

**You have a crew.** [List 2-3 specific people they can call] Call them. Let them help. You don’t have to weather storms alone.

**This will pass.** Storms are temporary. Your character is permanent.

## **The Three Questions I Want You to Ask**

When making any important decision, ask yourself:

1. **“Would I be proud to explain this choice to my grandmother? To my future grandchild?”** (The Three-Generation Test)
2. **“What would my best self do right now?”** (The Integrity Test)
3. **“Is this building something lasting or just chasing something temporary?”** (The Legacy Test)

## **What I Want You to Know**

[This section is for whatever you need them to know that hasn’t been said]

I forgive you for: \_\_\_\_\_

I’m sorry for: \_\_\_\_\_

I should have told you: \_\_\_\_\_

I need you to know: \_\_\_\_\_

## **On Forgiveness & Failure**

You will fail. You will hurt people. You will make mistakes.

**Here’s what matters:** Not whether you fail, but whether you return to your goodness afterward.

Failure is not falling down. Failure is staying down.

**When you mess up:** 1. Admit it honestly 2. Apologize sincerely 3. Make it right if you can 4. Learn from it 5. Return to your compass

You are not your worst moment. You are what you do after it.

## **My Hope for Your Life**

I hope you'll be happy, but more than that, I hope you'll be good.

I hope you'll be successful, but more than that, I hope you'll be faithful to your values.

I hope you'll be loved, but more than that, I hope you'll be worthy of that love.

I hope you'll build a legacy worth leaving.

## **The Legacy I'm Trying to Leave**

[What are you building? What do you want to be remembered for?]

I'm trying to: \_\_\_\_\_

I hope you'll remember me as: \_\_\_\_\_

If I've done my job, you'll: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Your Compass**

**Be good.** Let integrity be your anchor.

**Do good.** Let service be your rudder.

When you're lost, return to this compass. It will always point true.

## **Final Words**

[End with your personal message]

I believe in you not because of what you achieve, but because of who you are.

You are already good. Now go and do good.

With all my love,

[Your name]

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## **Template 2: The Values Letter (For Any Recipient)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To \_\_\_\_\_,

### **The Values That Guide Me**

These are the principles I try to live by (though I don't always succeed):

1. [Value 1]: What it means to me: \_\_\_\_\_ When I lived this well: \_\_\_\_\_  
When I failed to live this: \_\_\_\_\_
2. [Value 2]: What it means to me: \_\_\_\_\_ When I lived this well: \_\_\_\_\_  
When I failed to live this: \_\_\_\_\_
3. [Value 3]: What it means to me: \_\_\_\_\_ When I lived this well: \_\_\_\_\_  
When I failed to live this: \_\_\_\_\_

## The People Who Shaped Me

I am who I am because of:

[Person 1]: They taught me: \_\_\_\_\_ [Person 2]: They showed me:  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Person 3]: They gave me: \_\_\_\_\_

I hope to pass on what they gave me by: \_\_\_\_\_

## What I've Learned About Living Well

On relationships: \_\_\_\_\_

On work: \_\_\_\_\_

On hardship: \_\_\_\_\_

On joy: \_\_\_\_\_

On integrity: \_\_\_\_\_

On legacy: \_\_\_\_\_

## My Mistakes & Lessons

I wish I had: \_\_\_\_\_

I regret: \_\_\_\_\_

But I learned: \_\_\_\_\_

And now I know: \_\_\_\_\_

## What I Hope You'll Carry Forward

From my life to yours, I hope you'll carry:

- The value of: \_\_\_\_\_
- The practice of: \_\_\_\_\_
- The commitment to: \_\_\_\_\_
- The courage for: \_\_\_\_\_

## If You Remember Only One Thing

[Your one core message]

Remember this: \_\_\_\_\_

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## With Gratitude and Love,

[Your name]

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## Template 3: The Gratitude Letter (Honoring Someone Who Carried Burdens for You)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

## **What You Carried for Me**

I'm writing this to acknowledge what you sacrificed, what you gave, and what you built—so I could be here.

**You carried:** - [Specific burden 1] - [Specific burden 2] - [Specific burden 3]

**Because of you, I was able to:** - [Opportunity 1] - [Opportunity 2] - [Opportunity 3]

## **What I Didn't Understand Then**

When I was younger, I didn't fully understand:

- The cost of: \_\_\_\_\_
- The sacrifice of: \_\_\_\_\_
- The strength required for: \_\_\_\_\_

Now I understand that: \_\_\_\_\_

## **What You Taught Me**

You never sat me down and lectured. But you taught me:

**By your actions, you showed me:** \_\_\_\_\_

**By your choices, you demonstrated:** \_\_\_\_\_

**By your character, you proved:** \_\_\_\_\_

These lessons shaped who I am becoming.

## **The Legacy You're Building**

You may not think of yourself as leaving a legacy, but you are.

**You're building:** - In me: \_\_\_\_\_  
- In our family: \_\_\_\_\_ - In everyone who knows you: \_\_\_\_\_

Your legacy is not what you leave behind when you die. It's what you build every day you live.

And you're building something beautiful.

## **How I Hope to Honor You**

I want to honor what you gave me by:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

I will carry forward your values by: \_\_\_\_\_

## **What I Want You to Know**

[The words you need to say before it's too late]

Thank you for: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm sorry I didn't: \_\_\_\_\_

You should know: \_\_\_\_\_

I hope you're proud that: \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Ripple of Your Goodness**

Your goodness doesn't end with me. It ripples forward.

Because of what you gave me, I am now able to give to [others].

Because of how you loved me, I now know how to love [others].

Because of who you are, I am becoming who I want to be.

That's the power of your legacy.

**With Deep Gratitude,**

[Your name]

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### **Template 4: The Crisis Letter (To Be Opened in Specific Circumstances)**

Some people write letters to be opened during specific moments:

- “Open when you’re facing a hard decision”
- “Open when you feel like giving up”
- “Open when you experience loss”
- “Open when you become a parent”
- “Open when you question your worth”

**Format:**

**Date Written:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To Be Opened When:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

If you’re reading this, it means [describe the situation].

**First, know this:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What you’re feeling is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What I want you to remember:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Here’s what helped me when I faced something similar:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The question to ask yourself right now is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your compass hasn’t changed:** Be good. Do good.

Even in this moment—especially in this moment—return to what you know is true:

- You are: \_\_\_\_\_
- You can: \_\_\_\_\_
- You will: \_\_\_\_\_

**This storm will pass. Your character will remain.**

**I believe in you.**

With love,

[Your name]

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## Tips for Writing Your Legacy Letter

### 1. Be Honest, Not Perfect

- Write about your failures, not just successes
- Share your doubts, not just your certainties
- Be the real you, not the Instagram version

### 2. Be Specific, Not Generic

- Instead of “You’re special,” write “The way you helped that elderly neighbor showed me your heart”
- Instead of “Be good,” write “When you face [specific situation], remember [specific value]”
- Use real stories, real examples, real moments

### 3. Write from the Heart, Not the Head

- Don’t overthink it
- Write like you’re talking to them
- Let emotion guide you—it’s okay to cry while writing

### 4. Focus on Character, Not Achievement

- Not “I hope you get into a good college”
- But “I hope you become a person of integrity”

### 5. Make It Actionable

- Include specific practices, questions, or frameworks
- Give them tools, not just philosophy
- The “Be good, Do good” compass is a perfect example

### 6. Update It Regularly

- Write a new version every year
- Add sections as life teaches you new lessons
- Keep earlier versions—they show your own growth

### 7. Consider Multiple Letters

- One general letter
- Letters for specific ages or milestones
- Letters for specific crises

### 8. Tell Them It Exists

- Don’t leave it to be found after you’re gone
- Tell them: “I wrote you a letter. It’s in [location].”
- Or give it to them at a meaningful moment

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## What to Do With Your Legacy Letter

**Option 1: Give It Now** Meaningful occasions: - Graduation - Wedding - Birth of their child - Difficult transition - “Just because”

**Option 2: Store It Safely** Tell someone where it is: - With your will - In a safe deposit box - With a trusted friend who will deliver it - In a sealed envelope marked “Open when...”

**Option 3: Create a Tradition** - Write a new letter every year on their birthday - Create a “legacy box” they open at 18, 25, 30, etc. - Write letters for them to open during specific life stages

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## The Most Important Thing

**Don't wait.**

Don't wait for the perfect words.

Don't wait for the right time.

Don't wait until you're older, wiser, or better.

Write it now. Imperfectly. Honestly. From the heart.

The people you love need to know: - What you value - What you've learned - What you hope for them - That they are loved

Don't let these words stay unwritten.

**Your legacy is not what you leave behind.**

**Your legacy is what you build while you live.**

Start building today.

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*For more resources and templates, visit: <https://github.com/sattaru>*