

Legacy Writing Workshop
First United Church
October 5, 2025

Writing format:

- ❖ These letters are normally short and are only one page – but determine what works better for you and the person who will receive the letter.
- ❖ Decide who the recipient of this letter will be.
- ❖ Paragraph #1 – Write about the history and context of what you want to say.
- ❖ Paragraph #2 – Tell the story of what you wish to share.
- ❖ Paragraph #3 – Share what you have learned from your experience.
- ❖ Paragraph #4 – Offer a blessing to the recipient of the letter.

First Writing Session Prompts

- ❖ Tell about a time in your life when someone was particularly kind to you and how it made a significant difference in your life. OR
- ❖ About a meaningful experience that has taught you an important life lesson.

Second Writing Session Prompts

- ❖ Write about an important event in your life that shaped your spiritual beliefs
OR
- ❖ Write a letter to you FROM God

Resources:

Your Legacy Matters, harvesting the love and lessons of your life, Rachael Freed, Minerva Press, 2013.

the legacy workbook for the busy woman, Rachael Freed, Minerva Press, 2012.

“Why does anybody tell a story? It does indeed have something to do with faith, faith that the universe has meaning, that our little human lives are not irrelevant, that what we choose or say or do matters, matters cosmically.”

Madeline L’Engle as quoted by Rachel Freed in Your Legacy Matters.

“I see letters I have received as sacraments, holy things, paper tabernacles that contain the love of my friends.” Edward Hays in Secular Sanctity as quoted in Spirituality and Practice.

Legacy Writing
Exploring Values as I age...
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These are ideas that you might choose to use as writing prompts.

List prompts:

- ❖ 3 things I most like to do in my life now
- ❖ 3 things that I most enjoyed twenty (or forty) years ago
- ❖ 3 things I fear as I age
- ❖ 3 things that frustrate me about aging
- ❖ 3 most important relationships in my life today
- ❖ 3 life-changing decisions I've made in my life so far
- ❖ 3 things that matter most to me at this time in my life
- ❖ 3 things I've learned (harvested) from an earlier time in my life
- ❖ 3 things I still want (yearn for) in my life today
- ❖ 3 things or people you've forgiven in your life
- ❖ 3 ways I want to give back/forward at this time in my life
- ❖ 3 wishes for my end-of-life care

Other topics:

- ❖ Who are you at this time in your life?
- ❖ What matters most to you now?
- ❖ What are some of the qualities you value most in your relationships with others?
- ❖ What are important learnings you've harvested from earlier seasons of your life?
- ❖ How are you connected to past generations – ancestors?
- ❖ What childhood memories do you recall and want to communicate with others?
- ❖ What stories of your life do you want to tell and preserve?
- ❖ How do beauty and gratitude inform and enrich your life?
- ❖ What did 'time' use to mean to you, and what does it mean now?
- ❖ What can you give birth to now to help you age and approach the end of your life with a sense of completion?
- ❖ What are your present thoughts about aging, dying, and death?

Writing Prompts for Legacy Letters

Writing a letter to your child / grandchild / loved one for a special occasion (it could be about a time when you were that age or in a similar situation.

Write a letter about the aging process.

Write a letter about your spiritual journey.

Write a letter about who you are as Mother / Father / Grandparent / Aunt / Uncle.

Write a letter about who you are or were as a working person.

Write a letter about your travels.

Write a letter about your family relationships.

Write a letter of apology.

Write a letter about your friendships.

Write a letter about a significant growth or learning experience.

Write a letter about an “angel” that saved you from taking the wrong path.

Write a letter about how to make something very ordinary and secular something spiritual.

Write about your ancestors.

Write a letter to a deceased ancestor expressing your knowledge of them and your gratitude for their life.

Write a letter to your younger self.

Write a letter to yourself as you believe you will be five years from now.

Write a letter to yourself each year on your birthday.

Write a letter...

There is no end to the topics that you can write about. Have fun with this and share your life with someone or with many people. Use these letters as the basis for a memoir if you like. Let me know what you do with this and what the results are.

Thank you!

Legacy Writing
What is precious about my life
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What I'll Miss When I'm Gone: These Things I Love
By Vicki Pearson

I love the streets of London
and Bellagio and San Francisco
the fjords of Norway,
The backroads of Vermont,
Arizona's Oak Creek Canyon,
the North Shore of Lake Superior,
the grand, Grand Canyon,
and Porto Fino.

I love white sand beaches,
farmer's markets and art fairs,
coffee houses and flower shops,
bookstores and art galleries...
and I love cabins in the woods.

I love long walks and good talks,
driving in the country,
cross-country skiing,
practicing yoga,
seeking seashells and small smooth stones,
gazing into a blazing fire,
and know I have a great book to read.

I love kitchen conversation and good coffee,
park benches and jig-saw puzzles,
kaleidoscopes and family pictures,
notes and letters from long-lost friends,
Christmas trees full of ornaments and lights
and singing Christmas carols.

I love mornings' first light and sunsets,
a starry night and a full moon in the velvet
sky,
lightning and thunderstorms,
rain on the roof and sun on my back,
the splendor of autumn,
gentle snowfall, waving wheat fields,
soaring eagles, gold finch
and scarlet cardinals.

I love the sounds of waves lapping at the
shore,
fountains and waterfalls,
wind chimes and music boxes,
refrains of majestic choral music
and wind in pine trees.

I love the smell of fragrant spring blossoms,
the desert after rainfall,
cookies baking, clean sheets,
a beach fire in September
and lemons, freshly cut.

I love the taste of crisp, crunchy apples,
hot tea, warm oatmeal-raisin cookies,
almonds, pistachios, caramels and crème
brulee,
spicy jellybeans, licorice and popcorn for
dinner,
bright, red juicy strawberries
and kumquats.

Legacy Writing Sample
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Dear Drew,

Living so far away from each other, I've never had the chance to spend much time with you, but I want you to know your grit and bravery following your surgery when you were eight years old have been instructive to me. Before each MRI you were asked: "Do you want valium, or can you hunker down?" You always chose to hunker down. I'm sure you have had to hunker down many times as you worked your way through graduate school and learned to navigate with sight in only one eye. As I age, I find new challenges and thinking of your courage gives me strength.

Now, as you approach marriage, I want to share with you a regret: your grandpa and I never talked about our dreams or our annoyances with each other. As a result, we grew apart. Unshared dreams and unshared annoyances breed resentment and emotional distance.

May you be blessed with courage and grit to always share your dreams and annoyances with your wife and may your marriage be blessed with the closeness that comes from accepting each other's differences.

With love, Gram

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Dear Children,

When I was in my third year at McGill University, I experienced a crisis of faith. I lost my way.

I was born into a Jewish home, filled with tradition and I received an orthodox education at the Hamilton Hebrew Academy from kindergarten to eighth grade. I was a happy child who felt surrounded by love, acceptance and faith.

However, while studying at McGill, I began to learn about the heartache, tragedy and pain in the world. Through my social work education and practicum, I no longer saw the world through rose-colored glasses. In fact, the glasses that I wore caused me to see the world as confusing, disillusioning and concerning. It was difficult for me to navigate with my new “perspective”; however, I now realize that this crisis was the impetus for enormous growth, change and personal development.

The reason I am writing to you about this “crisis” in my life is to share an important lesson that I have learned. It is through our difficult times (not our joyful times) that we transform into the person that we are becoming. Our pain and sorrow are gateways into seeing the world (and ourselves) through a new lens. Never be afraid and always know that you will avoid suffering by seeing the world in this way.

May you be blessed to embrace your moments of crisis and see their aftermath of pain as a gateway into an entirely new (and wonderful) perspective.

I love you forever,
Mom

Taken from: Your Legacy Matters, by Rachael Freed, p. 163