

CLEARING LETTER

Are you holding onto a grudge or resentment towards your spouse? Do you know what it is costing you? Are you willing to forgive him or her so you can move forward in peace and happiness?

I'm going to ask you to write a letter to your spouse. The letter is confidential and not to be shared, even with him or her. The purpose of this letter is to accept or forgive him/her and let go of judgments, resentments, and expectations related to real and/or perceived wrongs that keep you from feeling the love that is deep inside you.

Procedure:

1. Write the letter, one section at a time.
2. Go through all the steps. Some will be more important to you than others.
3. Balance the parts of the letter in length (up to two pages per section).
4. Don't try to make it perfect. Just write down whatever comes.
5. Don't stop writing until you get to the love.
6. Don't reread the letter as you write.
7. It isn't necessary to write about every experience or include every emotion you have ever felt towards your spouse.

Section One: Anger and Blame

Write your feelings without trying to be too rationale. The more specific you are the bigger the release will be. Don't try to explain or organize your feelings, just express them. When you feel stuck, use such statements as:

"I hate it when..."

"I have resented you for..."

"I get frustrated with you when..."

Section Two: Hurt and Sadness

In this section, acknowledge your vulnerable feelings—the part of you that has been hurt or disappointed or feels sadness within your relationship. Some helpful phrases are:

"I feel sad when..."

"It hurts me when..."

"I feel disappointed that..."

Section Three: Fear and Insecurity

Allow yourself to express the fears and insecurities you normally bury under a confident and strong front. These may be feelings you never talk about. Don't edit them. They are vital to the healing power of the love letter. The more you let them out, the stronger you will feel afterward. Some helpful phrases are:

"I'm afraid that..."
"It scares me that..."
"I'm worried that..."

FORGIVNESS LETTER(Continued)

Section Four: Remorse and Responsibility

Now that you have expressed a number of negative emotions, you should be ready to feel some sorrow as well as take more ownership for your part in your relationship problems. Acknowledge your remorse and take responsibility for your contribution to the conflict or situation.

"I'm sorry for..."

"I recognize I hurt you by..."

"Please forgive me for saying/doing..."

Section Five: Intention and Wishes

This is the time to focus on changing the situation. What do you want to have happen? How would *you* like to be different in the future? How do you want your relationship to be different? This is a chance to let your hopes and dreams out:

"I would like..."

"What I want to be different..."

"I am committed to..."

Section Six: Love, Understanding, Forgiveness, and Appreciation

If you have written the other five parts of the love letter, you will begin to feel your heart opening. You will experience more of a sense of goodwill and a renewed connection with your spouse. Write down any thoughts or feelings of love, understanding, forgiveness, and appreciation for your spouse.

"I love the way you..."

"I admire..."

"I love you because..."

"Thank you for..."

"I'm grateful that..."

Section Seven: Unconditional Acceptance

Imagine that you wake up tomorrow morning and realize that this individual is totally acceptable to you. He or she still possesses all the qualities that once embarrassed or irritated you. But you just accept them. Far more important than what irritates you is your willingness to honor this person and appreciate him or her for who he/she is. Write down what this is like.