

Workshop: How To Write A Goodbye Letter

- I. Open with prayer or moment of reflection (1 minute)
- II. Moderator overview (7 minutes)
 - a. Discuss the lost art of letter writing and the healing benefits of writing
 - b. Discuss the expectations of the workshop:
 - i. Closure
 - ii. Sense of 'doing' something positive and constructive
 - iii. Empowerment to start closing the door on grief or hardship
 - iv. A way of reflecting on one's own life and life path
 - v. A completed (or close to complete) letter to a loved one
 - vi. 5 stages of grief: Denial – Anger – Bargaining – Depression – Acceptance
 - vii. The thought that everyone has a story (letter/poem/picture/song) to write
 - viii. Confidentiality of identities and what is shared within the workshop
 - c. What the LGL project is (check website Mission Statement on HOME PAGE)
 - d. Suggestions to whom the letter can be written: spouse, parent, child, sibling, pet, self, child going off to college, loved one being deployed, ex-spouse, addiction, child to be married
 - e. Ask for other suggestions of possible recipients
- III. Starting the process (10 minutes)
 - a. Pass out 3" X 5" cards and ask participants to think of the person to whom they are writing, write down a specific incident that comes to mind
 - i. Example: I remember when I was 15 and you taught me how to...
 - ii. Example: It wasn't a big deal to you, but it was a big deal to me that summer we spent in Wisconsin and we and talked about...

- iii. Example: You always shared your secrets with me and that made me feel...
 - iv. Example: I remember the first time we met and...
 - b. Each share what's on his/her card, if willing
- IV. Discussion and practice: Tips/Steps on how to write a Last Goodbye Letter (10 minutes)
- a. Step 1: Already done! Write a specific incident that comes to mind when you think of the person.
 - b. Step 2: Expand on Step 1 by taking a minute to think about how you felt *then* and how you feel *now* about this incident and write it down on that same card.
 - i. Example: You gave me the confidence to try hard at something for the first time in my life
 - ii. Example: That was the beginning of my love for the outdoors and it set my life on a course that it wouldn't have taken without you
 - iii. Example: You made me feel important and grown up and that what I had to say really mattered
 - c. Step 3: Repeat Steps 1 and 2 for additional thoughts on separate cards as necessary (as workshop time allows)
 - d. Step 4: Close your letter with a few short words that you feel describe the recipient
 - i. Example: You are important to me because you are beautiful inside and out
 - ii. Example: Your laugh makes me smile
 - iii. Example: You always make me feel safe
- V. Discuss pitfalls/cautions (2 minutes)
- a. Don't think you have to say EVERYTHING in a letter

- b. Maybe a 'letter' isn't a letter.
 - i. Drawing
 - ii. Word collage
 - iii. Poem (rhyming or otherwise)
 - iv. Song
 - v. Video
 - c. Ask for other ideas
- VI. Finalize your letter: Everyone try writing a letter building from the thought(s) on their 3" X 5" card(s)
(15 minutes)
- VII. Discussion: You've got the letter, now what? How to give it to your loved one. **(3 minutes)**
- a. Caveat: Don't dictate how the other person must read or react to your letter. It may be too emotional for the other person to read it in front of you.
 - b. Discuss how to 'give' the letter if the loved one is deceased
- VIII. People share letters aloud if they wish **(10 minutes—varies)**
- IX. Wrap up **(2 minutes)**
- a. Invite people to submit their letters to the LGL project online at LastGoodbyeLetters.com and click the SUBMIT YOUR LETTER in the purple bar at the top.
 - b. Close in prayer if appropriate
 - c. Hand out the outline of How To Write A Goodbye Letter – 7 Steps for future letter writing
 - d. Thank people for coming

Total workshop length: one hour