

Three Easy Steps to Writing Your First Gratitude Letter

Choose your recipient

Spend a few moments thinking of someone who made your life better: consider relatives, friends, teachers, mentors, the barista who gets your coffee right each morning. You may want to write down *all* the names that come to mind... Just looking at a list of the people on your “home team” can start boosting your mood.

Step 1 – “See”

Brainstorm the specifics of why you are grateful for this person! How exactly has the path of your life changed for the better, because it happened to cross theirs? What important lessons have they taught you? If you had a problem and just one Phone-A-Friend, what kind of problem would this person help you solve? Take your time on this step - revisiting your positive memories and stories is rewiring your brain to more easily seek positive perceptions of the people around you, even before you put pen to paper.

Step 2 – “Say”

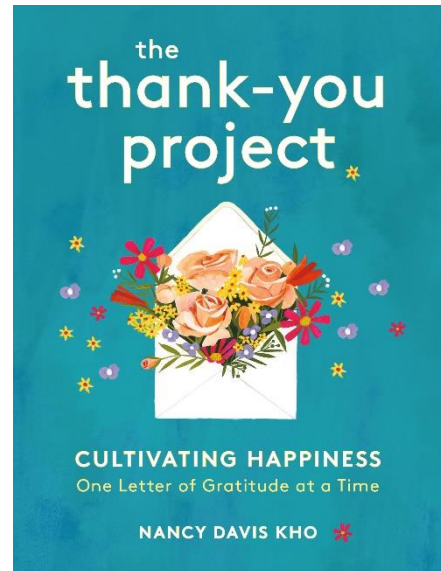
Time to “say” why you’re grateful, by writing it all down. Here’s a format to experiment with until you find what feels right for you:

- *First paragraph:* Why you’re writing this letter; a little context for why they’re holding it in their hands.
- *Second paragraph:* What sparked a relationship between you two? How did you meet that first time? Alternatively, what’s a favorite early memory of your relationship?
- *Body paragraphs:* The specifics of how your recipient helped, shaped, or inspired you. Use sentences like, “I remember once you did... and here’s why that was so meaningful to me,” or “You made a difference when you helped me to...” or “You may not realize it, but you inspire me by...”

Step 3 – “Savor”

Make sure to make a copy of your finished letter before you mail it! On days you feel low, rereading and savoring your gratitude letters can be a powerful reminder that others have helped you overcome dark days in the past.

Read More in [The Thank-You Project: Cultivating Happiness One Letter of Gratitude at A Time](#) (Running Press), by Nancy Davis Kho - available in bookstores, online, and for audio download!



Thank-You Letter Outline

Dear _____,

Why are you writing this letter?

How did you two first connect?

Specific reasons you're thankful for the recipient; how have they helped you?

Closing thoughts - when will you see/talk to them next?

With thanks,
Your Name

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