

Love Letters for Your Body

Loving Your Body When It Doesn't Work
Properly

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How to Read This Book

I am excited for you to gain a deeper appreciation and love for your body, as I did while writing this book. If you are wondering how this book will help your relationship with your body and why you should read it, the next chapter, "How This Book Can Help You," will answer that question.

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to read this book. You can choose to read a specific body part that needs your attention or explore each body part and read from the beginning to the end of the book.

Each love letter explains in simple terms the essential functions each body part and system does for you daily. After each letter, there is a blank page, allowing you to write a letter to each body part or system.

Feel free to write in your journal if you don't want to write in the book.

If you find it challenging to write a whole letter, that's okay. You can start by writing one thing that you are grateful for.

Also, I didn't include every body part because it would make this book very long. If a body part you need to heal is not included in the book, I hope the letters provide positive examples of writing a love letter to that specific part.

Thank you for reading my book, and I hope it helps you as much as it continues to help me.

How This Book Can Help You

When I wrote my first book, *Dear Lyme Disease*, I was searching for alternative ways to heal and restore my body. I discovered writing letters to my “disease” and my “pain” enabled me to listen, become more aware of my body, and learn how to navigate healing and health differently. I observed the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of my relationship with pain and illness without judgment and began writing.

My letters helped me communicate my thoughts and feelings about what I was experiencing. I found clarity and forgiveness and wrote a new story with a new perspective. They also helped me create a healthy, uncomplicated relationship with my pain, disease, and my body.

Writing letters to my body was a unique and powerful way to promote emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical healing. It was a reminder to encourage a deeper connection within myself, fostering self-awareness, acceptance, and gratitude, especially since I didn't particularly like my body because it didn't work properly.

I shifted my perspective, focused on what my body still did, and remembered everything each body part did daily to keep me alive.

Before you begin, I want to share several ways in which writing letters to your body can help you heal:

1. Enhances Body Awareness

Writing letters to your body lets you pay close attention to its signals and needs. Addressing different body parts helps you become more attuned to how you feel physically, leading to better self-care practices.

2. Promotes Self-Acceptance

Writing to your body helps you develop a more compassionate and accepting relationship with it. This is particularly beneficial if you are struggling with body image issues. Expressing gratitude and acknowledging your body's efforts can foster a more positive self-view.

3. Process Trauma and Emotions

Writing letters to the affected parts of your body is a way to process complex emotions. This practice allows you to address pain, fear, or resentment and can be a step towards emotional healing.

4. Reduce Stress and Anxiety

Writing to your body is a calming activity that helps reduce stress and anxiety. By focusing on different parts of your body, you engage in mindfulness, alleviating tension and promoting relaxation.

5. Encourage Healing and Recovery

Expressing your intentions to your body to heal and recover through writing letters is a powerful motivator to continue hope and foster a more profound connection within yourself. Writing about your hopes and goals for your body reinforces a positive mindset, which is crucial for physical healing.

This practice contributes significantly to emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical healing by enhancing body awareness, promoting self-acceptance, and providing a method for processing emotions, ultimately supporting overall well-being.

Writing by hand is an excellent tool to get your thoughts out of your head and onto paper, shifting your mindset into a higher vibration to start healing.

It also helps with the following:

- Reduce stress
- Manage Depression
- Reduce anxiety
- Calm your fears
- Provide an opportunity to practice positive encouragement and self-talk

- Speed up a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual healing
- Improve your mood
- Increase feelings of well-being
- Improve your memory
- Raise your awareness and insight

Before we start, I want to share my story and relationship with my body, how far I have come in my healing journey, and why this book was so important to write.

My Story

As I write this book, I am finally at a point where I am cultivating a deeper appreciation and love for my body beyond physicality. I focus on what my body can do instead of what it no longer does. It has not been easy; my body has been through a lot, from being a dancer and a competitive athlete to re-learning how to use my muscles to walk, write, and re-train my brain to remember words for everyday things.

In 2015, I became extremely ill with chronic Lyme Disease and viral meningitis. My whole body was significantly impacted. My immune system and thyroid were attacked, causing me to catch other infections and autoimmune diseases that caused my muscles to atrophy and my whole body could not function properly.

I was in chronic pain for almost nine years. I hated my body for not working like it used to. Through my healing process, I discovered writing and the practice of gratitude. I was fortunate to learn how to shift my mindset and focus on the fact that my body was still functioning but in a different way.

I slowly started seeing my body from a new perspective. Instead of being frustrated and angry about what I could no longer do, I learned to focus on its strengths and not its weaknesses.

I started feeling better mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually by expressing gratitude for my body, especially the parts that hurt the most and did not want to work as they once did. Gratitude was one of the most beneficial healing tools I found to help me remember to love my body and begin to heal.

Gratitude helped me understand how incredible my body is and to deeply appreciate each function that each body part is responsible for.

Most importantly, I learned to have a new, healthy relationship with my body, even with pain.

Have you ever thought about how remarkable your body is and thanked it for all it does?

When I became ill and had chronic pain, I didn't know how not to focus on what I couldn't do and what was missing in my life. I loved the life I had. I wanted everything to go back to how it was. So, I continued living in the past, focusing on what I thought mattered the most: the strength of my body and being a competitive athlete, my successful career, financial status, freedom, and even my social status of being "liked."

Unfortunately, I set myself up to measure my worth by my deficits rather than my happiness and health. Then I sank deeper into the victim role and had to start swimming fast toward shore, or I would drown in my self-defeat and stubbornness.

While dwelling on my past, I overlooked everything that remained great in my life; love and support from friends and family continued, my determination remained strong, and my faith remained a firm foundation.

In my search for new tools to help me move forward in my healing, I kept stumbling across the concept of gratitude as a healing tool. It opened my eyes to see past what I lost and start appreciating the value of what I had. Gratitude helped me understand the value of everything in my life and not take it for granted.

When you live with a “negative” health diagnosis and pain daily, it can be challenging to think about anything more than wanting to feel better and missing the life you had. But, as you start shifting your thoughts onto the positive in your life and appreciating what you currently have and can do, you will attract more positive energy. When that happens, you will feel the shift within you.

Focusing your thoughts on gratitude and being thankful positively changes your relationship with your physical, emotional, and spiritual health, impacting your well-being.

With each new day, you can focus on feeling a lack or abundance. You can choose to complain or be grateful. Although it is not always easy, the option is yours.

Gratitude is a powerful tool that transforms your life, bringing more positivity, happiness, and health. In this book, you will embark on a journey to express daily

gratitude to each part of your body, each system that keeps us functioning, and our body as a whole.

By acknowledging and appreciating the intricate work of your body, you will cultivate a deeper connection with yourself and promote holistic well-being.

Gratitude for your body is also a powerful tool in managing chronic pain through several mechanisms:

1. **Shifts Focus:** Focusing on gratitude helps shift attention away from pain and discomfort. By consciously appreciating parts of the body that function well, you can divert your focus from areas experiencing pain.
2. **Positive Emotional States:** Gratitude fosters positive emotions such as happiness and contentment. Positive emotions counteract the stress and anxiety often associated with chronic pain, reducing the overall perception of pain.
3. **Reduces Stress:** Chronic pain is often exacerbated by stress. Practicing gratitude lowers stress levels by promoting relaxation and well-being. Reduced stress leads to lower levels of pain perception.
4. **Improves Mental Health:** Chronic pain takes a toll on mental health, leading to feelings of depression and helplessness. Gratitude practices improve mental health by enhancing feelings of hope,

resilience, and positivity, which indirectly help manage pain.

5. **Enhances Coping Skills:** Cultivating gratitude enhances coping mechanisms. Practicing gratitude regularly tends to develop a more optimistic outlook and better critical thinking skills, which are crucial for managing the challenges associated with chronic pain.
6. **Promotes Mind-Body Connection:** Gratitude practices often involve mindfulness and a deeper connection with one's body. This increased awareness helps tune into your body's needs and respond more effectively through gentle movement, stretching, or relaxation techniques that can alleviate pain.
7. **Encourages Self-Care:** When you feel grateful for your body, you are more likely to engage in self-care activities that support your health and well-being. This includes better nutrition, regular exercise, adequate sleep, and other behaviors that help manage chronic pain.

Chapter 1: Your Head

A Love Letter to My Brain

My Dearest Brain,

Thank you for being such an essential part of my body since I started developing within my mother's womb. You have helped me process the world around me, think, feel, and dream. You allowed me to learn, grow, love, and laugh. You help me understand complex problems and graduate with multiple degrees and certificates. Every thought, every memory, every spark of creativity is because of you.

I appreciate your resilience and strength. You helped me heal from physical, emotional, and mental trauma that I thought I might never overcome. When Lyme Disease and meningitis threatened to cloud our existence, you fought with tenacity and grace. You guided me through the darkness and showed me the light on the other side. Your power to heal and adapt is nothing short of miraculous.

I am so grateful for all the critical functions you are responsible for, such as regulating my vital organs, sensory processing, motor control, cognitive functions, emotional regulation, hormonal control, sleep cycles, and social interaction and behavior.

I have not always cared for you as well as I should have. I have subjected you to stress, neglect, and poor choices without fully understanding their impact on your well-being. I apologize for all the times I deprived you of rest, nourishment, and peace. Please forgive me for the times I

took you for granted. As I age, I realize how critical you are in my life.

I apologize for being upset, angry, or frustrated with you when you weren't working as well as I think you should have. I promise to listen to you more, nurture you with healthy habits, and focus on what you are doing, not what you aren't doing.

Thank you for everything—every moment of clarity, helping me heal, and guiding me through life's complexities.

With all my love and gratitude,

Wendí

Write a love letter in the space provided