



Why create messages at the end of life?

People who are very sick sometimes ask themselves: Did I love enough? Did I have a good life? Was I important? Did I help others? Will people remember me? Will my family and friends be alright? What will people remember about me? Do the people I love know how I feel about them?

Saying kind things to the people we love is a special gift. Words are very powerful. Saying "thank you" and "I love you" can be very meaningful. People often value expressions of love more than material things.

When people think about what is most important to them, they often say it is their relationships with others. Leaving a message of love may bring you some peace and can help people feel some comfort after you die. It can help them feel connected to you, even though you are not physically here anymore. Leaving a message is an opportunity to share about yourself and what is important to you, as well as express your feelings about the people in your life.

We hope this guide will help you create your own special messages to the people in your life. These messages might be handwritten, typed, audio recorded, or video recorded. Messages may be a letter or a card. You do not need to create these messages alone. Ask for help if you need it. You may ask a friend, family member, counsellor, social worker, spiritual care provider, or anyone else you would like to help.

Leaving messages is a personal choice. If you decide to let the people in your life know you loved them in another way, this is okay too. This is an important time in your life, and it is best to do what feels right for you.

Tips to get started:

- Recognize that this goodbye may be difficult for you and the person receiving this message.
- Be yourself and write from your heart in your own style.
- Think about if you want to create one message to share with several people OR personalized messages for each person.
- Be honest and open: share your feelings about the person and what they mean to you. Let them know how much you have valued your time together.
- You can add things like photos, poems, songs, quotes, compliments, prayers, or scriptures to your messages.
- Avoid writing angry or hurtful messages. Focus on something positive, kind, or a loving memory.
- Avoid asking people to promise to do something (example: "Promise me you will ____") and consider saying something like, "I hope you get a chance to ____ if you want."





Things you might want to include:

- Share reflections about your life.
⇒ Important memories, milestones, achievements and accomplishments.
- Share life lessons and advice.
⇒ Things you learned from difficulties and mistakes.
- Express gratitude and thanks.
⇒ Who and what you are thankful for in your life.
- Share your personal values.
⇒ What your core values are, how they have changed, and how they have influenced you.
- Describe your favourite stories or memories.
- Say “I love you”, “I’m sorry about ___”, “I forgive you”, and “I’m proud of you”.
- Share your hopes and dreams for those you are leaving behind.
- Say goodbye: Meaningful goodbyes are important for both you and the person(s) receiving your message. Consider closing with a message of support, encouragement or gratitude.

Other questions to consider:

- What gives you strength?
- How do you think you have touched other peoples’ lives?
- What is the best advice you have ever received?
- What is the wisest thing you have ever done?
- What do you hope people will remember about you?
- Are there things that you feel still need to be said to your loved ones?
- What do you want people to know about you?

You do not have to write your messages alone unless you want to.

You may ask a friend, family member, counsellor, social worker, spiritual care provider, or someone else to help you.

Remember: You do not need to answer all of these questions. You may have other things you want to share, or there may be other things people in your life want to know.

