Letter to Future Self

Goals and Motivation: Writing to the Person You Will Be

A letter to your future self is a note you write today and read months or years from now. Writing it helps you get clear on what matters to you, what you hope for, and what you want to remember. Research by psychologist Hal Hershfield, who studies how people think about the person they will become, helps explain why it can be useful.

1 Before you write

Choose when you will read the letter: in one year, in five years, or on a date that means something to you. Set a reminder on your phone or calendar so you do not forget.

Today's date:

I will open this letter on:

Why does this work? *Many people picture their future self a bit like a stranger, which makes it easy to put off things that would help that person later. In Hershfield's studies, people who felt closer to their future selves tended to make more long-term choices, such as saving more money. Writing to that person in your own words is one way to feel more connected to them.*

2 Things to tell your future self

- What your life looks like today: where you live, how you spend your days, and who you spend them with.
- What is on your mind right now, both your worries and what you are looking forward to.
- A goal you are working toward and why it matters to you.
- One thing you hope you are still doing, and one thing you hope you have let go of.

3 Questions to ask your future self

- What are you most proud of since I wrote this?
- Did you keep working toward the goal I described? What helped, and what got in the way?
- Who are the most important people in your life now?
- How are you looking after your body and your mind?
- What do you wish I knew right now?

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*

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4 Your letter

Dear future me,

From,

5 When you open it

What has changed since I wrote this, and what has stayed the same?

Be kind to yourself when you read it, whether or not things went the way you planned. Then think about writing the next one.

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