



Gift of a Letter

Alexandra Stoddard

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This enchanting book is dedicated to one of the most intimate and touching of human experiences -- the letter. With charm, grace, and enthusiasm, Alexandra Stoddard describes the art and the pleasure of writing letters and the surprising joy it can bring to writer and recipient alike. A letter that takes only a few minutes to write may be treasured for years. Its contents are a true expression of heart, mind, and spirit. Brimming with anecdotes and ways to bring letters into your life, Gift of a Letter inspires and satisfies.

Gift of a Letter Details

Date : Published November 1st 1991 by William Morrow Paperbacks (first published January 1st 1900)

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Author : Alexandra Stoddard

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From Reader Review Gift of a Letter for online ebook

Mary says

For a little book (123 pages) I took a long time to read it. Not that the subject matter was boring, I just wanted to take in all it had to offer. A handwritten letter is a special gift we give to those we care about.

Simon says

The book, *Gift of a Letter*, by Alexandra Stoddard, provides a timeless analysis of the value of hand-written communication for both the writer and the recipient. She intimately describes the value of a letter in revealing deep truth and loving thoughts and compares letter writing to "sending your ship out." as the vulnerability and permanence are fixed. She encourages leaving the misspelled words, cross-outs, and additional expressions of truths because a letter written from the heart, i.e., a "spontaneous letter," is an "extraordinary gift." She further reports that a correspondence with, "... only one line is sufficient."

Ms Stoddard refers to and quotes many famous letter writers including Samuel Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, Elizabeth Barrett, E.B.White, etc.; provides appendix listing famous letters she has enjoyed; and warmly discusses the writings of Virginia Wolf throughout the book. She states that, "Surely letter writing must be a part of the pursuit of happiness."

Who can deny the pleasure of receiving a hand written correspondence from someone you personally know even if it says only, "I'm thinking about you..." Ms Stoddard challenges, "dare to begin," "it is never too late," that "no news is not good news," and provides advice concerning how and what to write including comments concerning quality of hand writing.

I recommend this book for any wondering about taking up the valuable habit of letter-writing. Letters allow you to purposefully communicate your true intent and may be read and re-read by the recipients at their leisure. This is an easy and educational read.

Estela says

It's a book that gives you inspiration to sit down and write a letter. There are a few examples of letters written by famous people to get you into writing. It is not a book on how to write a letter. Alexandra also goes into her personal letter writing examples. I found it funny that postage has changed quite a bit since this book was written, 25 cents. I miss that.

Melanie says

Letter-writing has been one of my joys since I was a young teenager. Alexandra Stoddard's book celebrates the tools of letter-writing - the fountain pens, the ink, the stamps on the envelope - and the sheer wonder of

touching another person with your words and your loving intent.

Ann says

I received this book from my Grandmother this spring when she was cleaning out her apartment in preparation for a move to the Nursing Home. I will always treasure this little book because it came from Grandma Jeanette. In this age of email, Facebook messages and texts, I still prefer to write letters to stay in touch! Really interesting read with good advice for corresponding with others.

Elizabeth says

Such a sweet and lovely little book about correspondence. I read it for the first time in high school - maybe even junior high - and it made a tremendous impression on wee aesthete E. I may actually be able to blame my paper habit in its entirety on Alexandra Stoddard.

Christina says

A long time to finish, despite its brevity. Stoddard's wisdom and reflections on the impact of a letter, how it's an excellent treasurable document/memento preserving friendship and love, what rules don't apply when writing to friends, and little ideas to make the ritual of setting pen to paper as magical and enjoyable as it can be.

Nancy Peyton says

I LOVED this book because it makes communicating by the written word fun, interesting, thoughtful and hopefully, habitual.

Rena says

This book has revived my enthusiasm for writing letters. I highly recommend this book for anyone seeking a reason to start writing or to continue writing letters. It truly makes all the difference to a person.

Elise says

Perfectly delightful and enchanting indeed.

Laura Lee says

Really enjoyed this, touched me . Wish people still wrote letters like they used to.

Kristen Gebbia says

I ALMOST abandoned this book. Now that I've finished it I'm glad that I didn't. While slightly outdated in a few respects, Alexandra does give some good ideas for letter writing. Most importantly though, she inspires you to want to sit down and write a letter. I think a shopping trip for new stationary and pens is in order now. And I've already been to the post office to purchase the commemorative stamps instead of the basic flag ones. So yes, the book is effective.

Rift Vegan says

A fun little book. I *almost* wish it was more organized and less "conversational"... but that would probably take away the charm. Will be re-reading this one soon.

We definitely need more letters and mail in our lives! Please message me with your address; I would love to send you a handmade postcard!

Greg says

Alexandra Stoddard's *Gift of a Letter* is a lyrical, often moving paean to the (almost) lost art of letter writing. It is a book to be read slowly and thoughtfully. And then to be acted upon.

I enjoy reading historical biographies, such as McCullough's *John Adams*, many of which use as source material the letters written by the subjects and their contemporaries. I am frequently astonished by, and envious of, their ability to express themselves in their letters to loved ones and associates. Stoddard's book is an introduction to following in their footsteps. It is less formulaic than it is appreciative, but there are, nonetheless, abundant insights into letter writing. Stoddard writes movingly of the need for handwritten letters, the blessing that they are to recipients, and the perfect tools (pen and paper) for writing with dignity and elegance. As she says:

"A letter is a gift. It can turn a private moment into an exalted experience. Unlike the phone, a letter is never an interruption. A letter doesn't require immediate attention; it can be saved and savored for the appropriate time and place...[A] letter is a treat with no strings attached."

Stoddard's book has led me to find personal stationary, and to when and how to initiate correspondence with a number of people, both family and friends, in my life. That, too, is a gift.

Emily says

Just the thing to read before hopping on a private jet to New York. The overall message of the book is to just get writing, which comes across convincingly. It is short to read, which is a plus.

One things I was not a fan of was the stationary stores she focuses on are are not practical for most people to visit (in New York, USA; London, England; or Paris, France). However, that deficiency was likely because the author lives in the United States and the book was published in 1990.
