

Writing Greeting Card Messages

"What's so often missing from our lives today is the richness of shared humanity, those moments when we feel really connected to other human beings. The act of writing personal notes not only feeds our own soul, but also lets us share ourselves with others--offering hope, affirming life, connecting."

-- From *Personal Notes: How to Write from the Heart for Any Occasion* (St. Martin's Press), by Sandra E. Lamb

Always add your own message to that of a greeting card, even when the printed verse on the card seems perfect. Your own words - hand-written--make the message really personal, add your own voice, and help to make the connection you want when sending a message for a joyful occasion, or a sad one.

When you're signing a greeting card being sent by the members of your book club, or your department at work, creating your personal message in your own "voice" is a bit harder. Connecting with the person you are writing to will be easier if you:

- 1) **Focus** on the person to whom you are writing, and your relationship to her/him.
- 2) **Reflect** on the occasion about which you are writing, and it's effect on the person you are writing to, or how she or he feels about it. These two steps create a circle of light in which you will be able to write.
- 3) Put yourself and **how you feel** about the person, the event, and the person's reaction to it into this circle. Now you simply have to connect the points of light, or thoughts, within the circle to write your message.

Here are some typical occasions and events for which you may want to send a greeting card with your written message. These messages can help you get started.

Get Well
Birthdays
Weddings
Birth and Adoptions
Welcome

Holidays
New Year's Day
Rosh Hashana
Hanukkah
Christmas
Kwanza
Employee Leaving
Retirement

The first example is taken from Chapter 8 of *How to Write It: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write Second Edition* (Ten Speed Press).

Get Well

DECIDE TO WRITE

Send a greeting card or personal note that includes a personal message of comfort, hope, and encouragement when

- . An accident or injury strikes a relative, friend, business associate, or neighbor
- . The relative of a friend, business associate, or colleague is ill or injured
- . Periodically during a long convalescence

THINK ABOUT CONTENT

- . Write as soon as you hear and confirm the news.
- . First and foremost, think about offering encouragement.

- . Rely on your relationship with the recipient to dictate your message.
- . If possible, learn something about how the recipient views his or her situation before writing.
- . Focus on the recipient and don't misdirect your message toward your own feelings.
- . Express simply that you were sorry of hear about the accident or illness.
- . Make a statement about your concern.
- . Try to relieve any possible anxiety about things other than the recipient's recovery.
- . Keep the message sunny and upbeat.
- . Be short and concise.
- . Consider the religious preferences, ethnic mores, family wishes, and organizational customs of the recipient when writing your message, and don't include any conflicting ideologies you may embrace.
- . Make a specific offer of help, indicating when and how you will take the next step to carry out your offer.
- . Combine your message with a small gift of a book or an activity the recipient can enjoy while recuperating.
- . For the recovering child, build anticipation of an upcoming event at a time when he or she will be fully recovered, and include some kind of related activity for now.
- . If you send flowers or another gift, include a personal note.
- . Close on a warm and positive note.

ELIMINATE *WRONG* MESSAGES

- . Don't moralize or include empty cliches or statements meant to be sympathetic. These can be off-target or easily misunderstood, as can such "silver lining" comments like, "At least you didn't...", or, "It could have been much worse."
- . Be sure to omit any hint of pity.
- . This isn't the time to offer unsolicited advice. Think only of offering comfort.
- . Avoid insincere or empty offers of help. Put legs on any offer by defining a specific task you will take on and the time you'll follow-up for a decision and instructions to carry it out.
- . Avoid dramatic or tragic words and phrases in referring to either the patient or your own feelings. Words like your "tragic" accident, the "worst" case, etc. aren't comforting.
- . Don't indulge in comparative stories, like "Jim's brother had the same operation..."

CONSIDER SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Take special care in these situations:

- . The injury or illness will have severe financial repercussions for the recipient. Inquire to learn how best to offer help, but don't let your offer take on the character of charity.
- . Don't pry. Be sensitive to the wishes of the recipient and take his or her lead in offering help. If it seems appropriate, you might say something like, "I'd like to help. Would it be helpful if I took over the Rogers' project for four weeks?" "I'd like to organize a carpool to take you to physical therapy if you'd allow me."

Message Examples

. The whole department was distressed to hear your vacation ended early with a bone-breaking fall. But we were encouraged that medical care was immediately available. We're waiting and ready to set up a car pool for picking you up and delivering you home from the office. I'll be in touch next week to discuss it with you.

. I was so sorry to hear about your need for surgery, but encouraged to hear it went very well. Now for the work of recovery. Please let Jack and me organize two meals a week to be delivered by department members. I'll call next week for your input.

. You are in my thoughts as you begin your journey toward recovery. I'll call you tomorrow to see if I might be able to pick up Abby each evening when I pick up Madeline.

. I shall be ever so happy to hear that you are moving toward a complete recovery. Meanwhile, may I take on the Tasker account until you can get back to the office? I'll call Jack tomorrow to learn your response, and to see if you have any special instructions.

. I know I'll see you in that "Electric Cowboy" line at the company picnic next spring. Until then, please rest. I'll call you Thursday to see if you might allow me to have your office extension forwarded to my line.

. I was so sorry to hear about your accident, but so happy to hear that the doctors have put you all back together again. May I drive you to your rehab sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays?

. Karen mentioned that you are in the hospital. I'm hoping that it's just a minor tune-up, and that your recover will be swift and complete...

- . I'm hoping with each day you're "more better" than the day before...
- . Being in the hospital certainly isn't fun, but I'm hoping that this surgery will finally do the trick...
- . Hopefully, today is a better day than yesterday, and tomorrow will bring you another step closer to feeling completely chipper.
- . You are greatly missed here. Both of the other managers have been very helpful, but it's your particular kind of skill-set that makes things run smoothly. Get well very, very soon.
- . I understand that once you get these bionic parts, the sky's the limit on cycling speed. Wow, I can hardly wait until next spring's race. You'll be way out in front. (And it's not even illegal!)
- . Your job is to get well. Let us divvy up the work here. How about Andrea taking over on the Adams account, and I'll take on Taylor until you get back?
- . I haven't told you nearly enough how much you mean to this office, and to me...
- . I'm sending a bushel of good thoughts, along with this new hybrid of a tea rose. And everyone here is expecting both you and it to be in blooming good form next spring...
- . Our ice cream flavor for this week will be "Nutty Pecan." I'm coming to bring it and your paperwork on Thursday, so let me know what else you'd like...

For Children

- . Roses are red, Violets are Blue, and at this moment--I'm oh, so sorry to say--so are You. But not for long...
- . Oh, the Places We'll Go, the Things We Will See,
When You're Cast is Off,
And You Travel with Me!!

I'm thinking of a celebration trip to the zoo
Is the very thing that will get your leg really work again...

. I'm so sorry, Billy, my special dear, that you're sick.
Now here's a rhyme I hope will cheer you up:
There once was a Blue Lagoon, a purple moon, and a red baboon.
How many other words can you find that rhyme, beside spoon?
Write them on this note I've enclosed, stuff
it inside the stamped envelope, and send it to me.
If you come up with more than twelve new ones, it's lunch at noon!
Just the two of us, and we'll have chocolate sundaes with a big, big
spoon,
And buy a flying red balloon. (Oh, so how many is that?)

. How about if I come over on Tuesday with some baseball cards to
trade?
That always makes me feel better.

. I'm enclosing some stamps for your collection. I think this will
help you finish your state series just in time for getting your cast
off.

. Ricky, I'm so sorry to hear you're not feeling well. So, I'm sending
this little mouse to say, "I hope you'll be up and jumping in a few
days..."

Here are some thoughts and ideas for other occasions from
*Personal Notes: How to Write from the Heart for Any
Occasion* (St. Martin's Press), by Sandra E. Lamb.

Birthday Greetings

It's important to know how the person you're writing to feels
about gaining a year in age before you begin writing. If she's
sensitive or secretive about her age, don't refer to it; and be sure

you understand her sense of humor before including a humorous remark. Birthdays are an ideal opportunity not only to celebrate someone's life, but also to add the glow of your special best wishes. Just be sensitive to the desires of the celebrant, and if this is a greeting to a colleague at work, stay within your organization's policy.

Words from the Masters

"It is not the years in your life but the life in your years that counts.
--Adlai Stevenson

"Celebrate the happiness that friends are always giving, make every day a holiday and celebrate just living!" --Amanda Bradley

Message Examples

- . Bushels of best wishes for a wonderful birthday.

- . It was a happy day, indeed, on [Date] when you came into this office. And each year on your birthday we're delighted to celebrate with you the wonderful team member you've become.

- . Birthdays are for celebrating, and here's hoping you'll carry on the party for the whole year.

- . What would this department be without you? Certainly not the award-winning model of efficiency you've single-handedly pushed it to become. Your birthday seems the perfect time to say thank you for all your invaluable contributions. You're a Checkers' Super Star.

- . You are both an A-1 colleague, and a truly A-1 guy. Best wishes for achieving all the goals you've set for yourself for this year.

- . Special people should have special birthdays. But for very special people, like you, the sky's the limit. Do have a smashing good time.

- . Happy, happy birthday, and best wishes for all you do this year. Another Heights Award, maybe?

- . Did I hear something about boogieing all night?
- . I believe this is the magic year for all your wishes to come true. I'm thinking, of course, of that trip to Paris.
- . I'm smiling all the way to the office party just thinking about all the great new adventures you'll be taking on this year. And I'm wishing you success beyond your grandest dreams for each and every one of them.
- . Three words to the wise birthday boy: party, party, party. Happy birthday, [Name].
- . [Name], here's to a day filled with happiness and an entire year of riches to follow.
- . What wonderful, fantastic things will you do this year to add to your impressive life list? I know you'll make a huge success of each one. But do tell me over lunch next week, will you?
- . Another year better. Topping your stellar record is going to be a big challenge; but you--of all the people I know--are up to it.
- . If birthdays were given out by popular demand, you'd be celebrating every week. And you'd always get my vote!
- . I can't think of a person I'd rather wish a spectacular coming year. I'm sure it will be fantastic, because you are.
- . You've made this office a better place to work, and we're all looking forward to what's in store this coming year. Happy Birthday.
- . To the master of multi-tasking, and making a great success of everything, best wishes for a record-setting year.
- . I have a feeling that this is going to go down as your happiest year ever!

- . It's going to be really, really hard to top this past year; but I'm sure you're up to it. Best wishes for a wonderful birthday, and a year filled with all the joy you can stand.
- . You make life a celebration, [Name]; may you have the full fireworks on your birthday, and a five-star year.
- . Wishing my very special boss a very special birthday.
- . Remember our sock hops in the gym at noon when we'd try to act two years older? You were so successful then, and now you are so successful at looking 10 years younger. What a woman. Have a great 39th.
- . A very, very special birthday wish for a very, very special friend.

Weddings

Every new couple needs the support of a community of family, friends, and colleagues who have joined together on their behalf. This is the perfect time to list yourself among those who care, and join with the couple as they start life together.

Join the celebration by expressing your joy and good wishes. But be sure your wishes for growth and happiness are in tune with the couple's belief system. (You may even want to send a congratulations message to a colleague who's the Mother, or Father, or sister of the new couple.)

Words of the Masters

*Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods or steeply mountain yields...*
Christopher Marlowe,
"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love."

Message Examples

- . Best wishes on this truly wonderful day to two truly wonderful people who share a very special bond.
- . May your blessings be many, and all your disagreements be resolved before sunset.
- . [Name] and [Name], two hearts united are far stronger than one. May your love grow sweeter by the day.
- . What wonderful news that your son and Shelly have been married. I'm sure you were stunning in your beige, Congratulations!
- . Congratulations! And welcome, Kerry, to the Landing and Landing family. We are delighted to have the Roths as part of our organization.
- . May the beauty of this day flourish and bring forth a uniquely beautiful relationship.
- . May the pledges and promises of this day be realized in full in your relationship.
- . May you come to know fully that the circle of your love is unending.
- . We had hoped for each of you the very best in life; and then you found each other. Perfect.
- . Your love and commitment to each other is a wonderful starting place for a truly happy marriage. Congratulations.
- . Happily ever after is really just experiencing the love you share each day.
- . May your love continue to grow in huge proportions.

Births and Adoptions

The arrival of a new family member is a miracle to be celebrated. Before you send your message of joy and congratulations, gather a little information to give your writing direction: Is the baby a boy or girl?; What is the baby's weight?; Name?; Are there any health considerations for baby or parents? Are there other siblings, and what are their names and ages?

Adding to the celebration of this joyous event is a great way to help build a community around the family. It fosters an extended circle of well-wishers where everyone feels cherished. Acknowledge how special the event is, note anything unique about the newcomer, congratulate the parents and siblings, and refer to details on the birth announcement, if one was received.

In sending greetings, think about widening your circle. You might also want to send a greeting individually to each sibling of the newcomer, to the new grandparents, a special aunt, etc.

Birth Message Examples

- . Your little family was exactly perfect. Now it's more perfect! Congratulations on the arrival of your beautiful little bundle.
- . A perfect two now becomes three. Oh, what joy.
- . It's often said, and oh-so-true, you'll soon not be able to remember life without your new Cherub. Congratulations.
- . A special welcome to Annabelle, an infant so wise she chose the smartest Mom available. We here at Wells rejoice with you, Aubree, Sam, and Samantha. Annabelle should be ready to join Wells' marketing department In about June of 2027, right?
- . What wonderful news that Rafael has arrived to join the wonderful Smith family, and ours here at Wellington. I look forward to meeting the young man at the next Wellington family gathering. Meantime, I'm sending out our packet of family benefits for you.

- . Just 18 years to love this tiny one into a wonderful adult. What happy days and years lie ahead.
- . Many, many, many are the joys of parenthood. May they all be yours in abundance.
- . It's such a blessing to have a perfect baby. And you have two! How doubly blessed you are.
- . Congratulations on the birth of this wonderful baby; and welcome to the world of sleepless nights.
- . Angels unaware and innocent! What a wonderful gift an infant is.
- . No child has ever been more desired or anticipated.
- . Happy days lie ahead. That, and, of course, a few tons of smelly diapers and years of sleepless nights.
- . How very fortunate young [Baby's Name] is to have been born to two such loving parents.
- . I'm sure the angels are rejoicing, as we are, at the birth of little [Baby's Name].
- . Welcome, welcome, welcome to our world, little [Baby's Name]. You have had the outstanding good fortune to be born to two perfect parents.

Adoption Message Examples

- . Two wonderful, loving people welcome a baby from afar to heart and home. Congratulations on the creation of your new family.
- . Very special parents; a very special baby. What could be more wonderful?
- . It takes a rare and wonderful pair of parents with a great reservoir of love to select a baby to nurture with unconditional love. We are delighted for you, and rejoice with you.

. We don't know, perhaps, the store of love we possess until we select a baby to love. Our best wishes for your happiness; all three of you.

. We can hardly wait to meet the new Miss [Name]. Congratulations! Happy days! And years of wonders to come. Our best wishes for you now that your joy is multiplied.

Welcome

Feeling welcome fills one of our deepest human desires. You can help to welcome a new associate at work. Even a new client or customer will be pleased to receive a card with a handwritten note that says, welcome, I'm glad you're aboard. You may want to add a little helpful information, too, about the benefits the newcomer can experience.

Message Examples

. Welcome to Hexx. I've found this to be not only a great place to develop professional skills, but also a wonderful place to grow a very special friendship. I know you will, too. Welcome.

. I was so delighted to hear you'll be joining our company. Welcome.

. Joining our merry band undoubtedly seems a bit strange at first, but I think you'll soon get into the swing of it. Welcome, so happy to have you as part of our team.

. We welcome every new "New Lifer" member with eagerness, because we all depend upon each other for support in meeting our goals.

Holidays

Holidays of all stripes enrich the lives of the celebrants. (It's important to know, in at least a little detail, the beliefs of those you're sending a message to in order to avoid offending.)

Add to the celebration to make it all the sweeter. It's a great opportunity to help build relationships with colleagues, customers, and employees, if both you and the recipient share a celebrated holiday. Keep your message in tune with the spirit of the season or day.

New Year's Day

A new year is the perfect time to establish the habit of connecting with colleagues. Sending a greeting card with your added message of good wishes is a great start. Include something about the goals and plans of your recipient for the New Year. You may also want to include a shared experience or memory, and a hope for a relationship in the future.

Message Examples

- . Happy New Year. I'm eager to hear about your plans for this year. Let's do arrange to spend a little time together for a visit to catch up.
- . It's always wonderful to start out with a clean slate. Happy New Year, and may it be filled with all your heart's desires.
- . Twelve new months of all good things to the [Family Name]s.
- . Best wishes for a healthy, happy, and peaceful new year to you and yours.
- . Wishes for a peaceful, prosperous, and joyous new year.

Rosh Hashana (The Jewish New Year)

A reflective, brief, and personal greeting for this Jewish religious New Year can make the holiday sweeter for the recipient, and for you. Think about the traditions of faith, and past holidays and traditions to get you started.

Message Examples

- . Happy New Year, and best wishes to our dear friends. You're often in our thoughts.
- . Thinking of all of you at this time of review, contemplation, and new beginnings.
- . We are hoping your New Year will be filled with all sweet, good things.
- . To our dear friends of many years, we so look forward to celebrating this New Year with you.

Hanukkah (Chanukkah, or The Jewish Festival of Lights)

In celebration of the Jewish military victory of the Macabees over the Syrians (163 B.C.E.), you may want to send personal greetings to those you hold dear and near. Start by thinking of other celebrations and traditions around the holiday.

Message Examples

- . You are in our hearts and on our minds this Hanukkah as we light the candles and remember our rich heritage. Happy Hanukkah season to all of you.
- . Love, peace, and light in all your hearts this Hanukkah season.

- . Eight days of blessings to you, and many more, as you light the candles this Hanukkah season.
- . May all the riches of the traditions of this season and our cherished memories of family celebrations embrace you this season.
- . Best wishes for this very special season.
- . Happy Hanukkah wishes to all in the [Name] family.

Christmas

This Christian holiday for those who celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ is rich in both religious and family traditions. You may use either, or both, to start thoughts about your personal message.

Message Examples

- . From the [Name]s to the [Name]s, special wishes for a merry, merry Christmas.
- . It's a very special time to renew old friendships and catch up on all the events of this year. (We're waiting for your annual Christmas letter to learn what the [Name] family has been up to.) We wish you all a very blessed Christmas season that lasts the whole year through.
- . Merry, merry Christmas, and a very happy new year.
- . We hope to share the joy of this season with you in the coming weeks.
- . I never sing "Deck the Halls" without thinking how lovely your home looks at this time of year with all the decorations. Special wishes for a wonderful--and fully decked out--Christmas season.
- . Peace to you all, and joy in abundance this holy season.
- . Light and life, peace and joy to you all.

Kwanza

Use memories or hopes for starting your thoughts for personal greetings for this African American holiday that starts on December 26 and runs for a week. Center your personal messages to include thoughts to honor and celebrate individual and community virtues of self-determination, unity, community spirit, collective work, cooperative interdependence, purpose, creativity, and faith.

Message Examples

- . Best wishes to you [Name] for the harvest we'll enjoy over the Kwanza season that will symbolize a surplus from our souls. We look forward to sitting around the table with you in this great time of celebration.
- . For the wonderful heritage we share, the traditions that are ours, and all our hopes for our community of brothers and sisters in the future, we send wishes for a rewarding and expressive Kwanza season.
- . It's a great time to look back with love, and look forward with heart and hope. We celebrate with you the successes of all those community projects that have been planned and executed. And we look forward to sharing many more dreams during this season. Best wishes for new successes.
- . To our friends who are the embodiment of all things Kwanza, we love sharing in your industry, and heart for the community. A happy, rewarding holiday season to the [Name]s.
- . To community, faith, responsibility, cooperation, and unity. And to all the cherished values of Kwanza, we look forward to the many worthwhile ideas and projects that will surely be produced in our time together this season.

Employee Leaving

A good news approach is usually the right tone for your message about leaving to take another job. Start and end on an upbeat note.

Examples of Messages FROM the Employee Who Is Leaving

- . I gained irreplaceable experience here at Jitters. I will miss this company, and all of you. But, I look forward to a continuing friendship with many of you in other capacities and other places.
- . I shall never forget the great learning opportunity my years at Diddles afforded me. And the great friends I have here. I shall miss you all.
- . I learned more in 18 months at Riggers than I did in six years in undergraduate and graduate school.

Examples of Messages TO the Employee Who Is Leaving

- . I'll miss seeing your bright smile every morning, but I know this is just the beginning of a very bright future. I look forward to keeping in touch.
- . Congratulations! Although mine will be one of the long faces you'll see as you leave Mills, I rejoice with you at the prospect of growth you will have at Jitters. And I look forward to your continuing input and camaraderie at ASEM meetings. The best of every good thing to you as you take on the challenges of your new position.
- . I know your new position allows you to pursue your next goal. Still, we here at Willows will miss the best first baseman who ever played on our company team. And our best company salesman. You simply can't be replaced. Best wishes for your every success. And I do look forward to keeping in touch.

- . Best wishes for every success in your career future. I'll be expecting frequent updates during our pick-up basketball games.
- . It's great to see your leadership skills rewarded with this promotion, though I will certainly miss your daily input. I do look forward to those bi-monthly luncheons to keep updated.

Retirement

Write your good news note of congratulations with a positive tone about the future. You might cite some contribution the person made to the company, and state how he/she will be missed. (It is a good thing to send another note six months or so after the person retires just to underscore that he/she hasn't been forgotten.)

Message Examples

- . I'm sure your record for safety in this company will never be surpassed! You've landed the "Superclub" at the top of the competitive list. I can hardly wait to hear what you'll accomplish in your next life's venture.
- . I'm betting that Patrick's Number One Marketing Manager will become--in less than one short year--a Number One World Traveler. What adventures await you. I'm looking forward to your reports at our quarterly luncheons!
- . I'm wishing you every happiness in this new beginning adventure: first stop Europe? And I'm looking forward to your full report when you return and we have that debriefing poker party.
- . I know you have a journal of 'to-do's as you set out on this great new adventure called retirement. May every one of them exceed your expectations.

. A new day, a new direction, a new challenge! Best wishes as you set sail on this wonderful time in your life. Well earned, and well deserved.

. Remember that we are all looking forward to your report in six months: "What I Did in My First Six Months of Retirement." (We'll need pictures to document the sizes on those fishes, by the way.)

. So many wonderful causes await your skill, heart and fortitude. I'm eager to hear the reports of all the good you'll be able to do with this extra time called retirement.

Sympathy

Offering solace during life's most difficult times gives us the opportunity to demonstrate the best of our humanity. Focus your message on the recipient, and be sure to keep your message within the boundaries of your relationship with the grieving person, while still expressing sympathy, acknowledging the loss, and offering connecting comfort.

From the Masters

. As Abraham Lincoln wrote to the Mother of sons lost in the Civil War, "... I pray our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

. As Walter H. Page wrote to President Woodrow Wilson, upon the death of Mrs. Wilson: "...There is nothing that even your oldest and nearest friends can say--words fail in the face of a bereavement like this. But I can't resist the impulse to write how deeply I feel for you..."

. As Lewis Carroll [Charles Dodgson] wrote to his brother and sister-in-law: "I must write one line to tell you how truly I feel, with you and for you, in this sorrow that has come upon you..."

. As Henry James wrote to Robert Louis Stevenson's widow: "...What can I say to you that will not seem cruelly irrelevant and vain?..."

. As George Eliot wrote: "...I believe you are one of the few who can understand that in certain crises direct expression of sympathy is the least possible to those who most feel sympathy..."

Message Examples

. Words are inadequate at such a difficult time, but please know my caring thoughts are with you in this time of grief.

. Our sympathy and warmest thoughts are with you.

. We were so sorry to learn that Martha's courageous battle with cancer is over. She was truly an inspiration to all of us.

. I was so sorry to hear that you and Jim are divorcing; I know this is an extremely difficult time and my thoughts are with you.

. John's smile and laughter will live in our hearts even as we mourn with you his absence from us.

. It is with a very sad heart that I send my condolences to you upon the loss of your dear mother, Grace.

. I can't express how very sorry I was to learn of the loss of your dear baby, Isabella.

. We at Wonder are so sorry to learn about your loss, and your personal grief; and we're ready to help carry your workload at this difficult time. I'll call you tomorrow to see what you may want us to do.

. I felt sick when I learned your position with LL Greedy was eliminated in the merger. I'm so sorry. You're truly one of the most creative people I know, and although I'm sure it doesn't feel like it today, I know you'll rise like the phoenix to even better things. In fact, I have a couple of ideas I'll call you about on Thursday.

. I can never think of your dad without remembering his delightful presence at our company picnic, and how all the children were gathered around him in delight as he told them stories.

. I cannot imagine the sorrow you are experiencing. Please know my thoughts are with you at this time of grief.

. Please know there are many here at Wiggins who care that you are suffering. Though we can't know your pain, we do care, and would like to help in some way... [Suggest something concrete.]

. There aren't any words that can measure up to your loss. So let me just say, I'd like to help shoulder a bit of your burden at this time. Could I take over your board meeting duties to give you a bit of time to get things sorted out?

. May the joy of life that was George's sustain you in this dark time of losing him. We will always remember his delight in the smallest and simplest pleasures. And--with you--we shall miss him.

. Please take strength from the fact that we all care and are holding you close in our thoughts at this difficult time.

To purchase a copy of *How to Write It: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write Second Edition* (Ten Speed Press), by Sandra E. Lamb, go to Amazon or Barnes & Noble by clicking [here](#), or visit your favorite bookstore.

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