

Don't Forget to Write

With the preponderance of e-mail, instant messaging, social networking and cell phones, communication is more instantaneous than ever. In our world of electronic and digital communication, the handwritten note is becoming a lost art. Though there are valuable benefits to the convenience of our new methods of communicating, there is also a price we pay when we disregard the deeper, heartfelt ways we used to communicate.

One aspect of handwritten notes and letters that makes them more meaningful is the very fact that it is not a quick and convenient method of expressing ourselves. When we go through that extra bit of trouble to find a sheet of paper, write our thoughts out by hand, address an envelope and pay for a stamp, the recipient knows there is something special about the intent of the message. It carries extra meaning that the sender went out of the way to create this message that can be savored again and again. Sure, you could send the same message in an e-mail, but the uniqueness of the message seems a little less.

There is also the increased intimacy that the recipient feels when they can hold in their hands the same paper you used when you created your message. They can see the distinctiveness of your handwriting, and maybe even see a hint of your emotion in the way you form letters, how hard you press on the paper, and even the mistakes you have to scribble out. For those special occasions when you need to communicate an intimate, heartfelt thought that you want to be certain the reader does not miss, using a handwritten note is like painting a giant red exclamation point across everything you say.

When was the last time you wrote your Mom a letter for Mother's Day or expressed your love for your spouse in writing? Think of how cherished a handwritten letter from you would be to your child when he or she is about to leave home, get married, or have their first child? You are creating a keepsake, a marker along the path your relationships have taken.

Not only on special occasions, but handwritten notes given spontaneously is a great way to remind those you care about that you are thinking of them. You are making emotional deposits in the bank account of your relationship each time you express to your loved ones the value they add to your life and how special they each are to you. Expressing these feelings in your own hand has the effect of magnifying the genuineness behind your words.

Another important aspect of handwritten letters, cards and notes is the heritage that these mementos pass on in later years, as both reminders of your history together as a family, and as a reinforcement of your values, identity and traditions. While we may one day reach the point where electronic communication accomplishes this sort of intimacy, for now, nothing takes the place of a special keepsake written in your own hand!

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