

Appendices

I hope you find these sample letters helpful in guiding you to write your own well thought out, heartfelt letters to the teens you love in your life.

Appendix 1: The parent letter

Example 1

Dear

Please take a few moments to read this letter. I know you think I am always worrying, and I try too hard or I am a try-hard (?) but I am your mum/dad and that's part of what parents are meant to do.

Just lately something is different about you and yes, I am worried. You haven't smiled for weeks, and you are struggling to get good sleep. You are spending much more time than usual in your bedroom and your friends haven't been around for ages. You really seem down and I am worried.

I have been online and checked out some youth websites and some of these things are listed as being a sign that you may be struggling.

There is just so much pressure on you kids these days – and too much stress can make you sick. I also know that you won't want to worry me – and that you might think you will be okay soon – and yet my mum/dad radar is ringing loud bells.

Can we have a chat? If not me, my love, can you please have a chat with some other adult?? If you want to chat to Dr, I am happy and I will let you go without me if that's what you want. Or maybe a school counsellor or someone anonymous online through one of the support services that are out there.

I really want you to let someone listen to you and see if there's anything we can do to help you ride out this bumpy bit.

I have printed off some of the fact sheets and would love it if you could glance through them.

If you really are okay, maybe we could just go for a coffee or a hot fudge sundae, do some window shopping or take a walk on the beach. Massage? Hot bath with bubbles? Swim with dolphins? Holiday in Monaco or Italy? Okay, maybe not the last one.

I am happy if you just write me a note – that will be a great start.

I guess I just want to know – how can I help? Can you please give me three clues on how I can help you at this time?

Remember that adolescence is a time of intense turmoil and confusion, and it will one day get better when your brain finishes growing.

I love you with every fibre in my being.

Mum/Dad

Example 2: Letter to Bring Up the 'S' Topic

Dear

This is one of those things that parents find really hard to talk about to their kids, especially when you are an adolescent.

I need you to know that at times you get told things by your friends about sex and stuff and just like when I was an adolescent, not all of it is true. I remember being told by someone that all the girls in our high school had been having sex! I thought she was telling me a fact and I felt a bit like a loser. I spent ages trying to work out

who I could have sex with so I wouldn't be a loser anymore. Luckily my cousins came for a visit and when I told them what had been said – they laughed and said, 'That is rubbish!' I was so relieved! But I often wonder what would have happened if they hadn't come for a visit.

I know how easy it is to be able to watch porn and statistically many of our boys and girls are watching it. Porn is not how I want you to learn about how to be sexually intimate with another human. Porn is about power and dominance and is definitely not about sharing your body with someone else, respectfully and joyfully.

I am giving you a book about puberty and the physical changes that are happening soon if not now – and I want you to check it out. A really good site to check out that includes videos is www.sexedrescue.com.au. Then if you have any questions – I hope you will come and ask me rather than rely on your friends.

I totally get that this chat can be really awkward and so we could do it in the dark if it would be easier?

Please remember that having sex is a big step that needs much thought and preparation. I want you to leave it until you are **much older**, as it can impact you mentally, emotionally, as well as physically. No, not everyone is doing it and don't believe what people tell you! Telling fibs around the topic of sex is common. Staying safe while being sexually intimate with another person is also important and it's not just about avoiding pregnancy, it's about avoiding sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Please also remember that alcohol and drugs can make it easy to be taken advantage of – and they can make you do things you may regret. Having genuine consent from whoever you are being sexually intimate with is incredibly important and yes, partners can change their minds and withdraw consent.

And always always remember that I will come and collect you from anywhere anytime you don't feel safe – **NO MATTER WHAT**. And I will do that for any one of your friends as well. No lecture – no cold shoulder – just safety!

Hope this is not too 'cringy' and uncool – this is important stuff and I would like you to know that we CAN have conversations about sex and stuff anytime you want.

Love you heaps, always.

Mum/Dad

Appendix 2: A letter to someone special in my life

I am writing this to show you how valuable you are in my life. Firstly, I'm going to list five things I love about you:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now I want to tell you about something I'll always remember about you. This is a memory I want you to know that I keep with special memories deep in my heart:

I also want to thank you for:

All my love always and forever.

Appendix 3: The truth letter

Sometimes we can resolve issues with people by writing an honest letter to them – and it is usually best if we do not even need to give them the letter, but the mere process of acknowledging what troubles you is enough to resolve it inside yourself. Use this template to help you express your feelings on paper. It is best to symbolically destroy it – tear it into tiny pieces and bin it or burn it safely. It suggests to your unconscious as well as your conscious mind that it is complete and finished.

Dear

I am writing this letter to release my resentment and negative emotions and to discover and express any positive feelings that I might have towards you.

ANGER

I don't like . . .

I feel angry . . .

I hate it when . . .

I can't stand . . .

I resent . . .

HURT

It hurt me when . . .

I feel hurt that . . .

I feel sad when . . .

I feel awful about . . .

I feel disappointed about . . .

FEAR

I'm afraid that . . .

I feel scared when . . .

I'm afraid . . .

I get afraid of you when . . .

REMORSE, REGRET, ACCOUNTABILITY

I'm sorry that . . .

Please forgive me for . . .

I'm sorry for . . .

I didn't mean to . . .

WANTS

All I ever wanted . . .

I want you to . . .

I want . . .

I deserve . . .

LOVE, COMPASSION, FORGIVENESS, APPRECIATION

I understand that . . .

I appreciate . . .

I forgive you for . . .

I love you because . . .

I love you when . . .

Thank you for . . .

Adapted from Jack Canfield,
1997 Self-Esteem Seminars,
Santa Barbara, USA.

Appendix 4: Twelve agreements for teens around tech

Rather than a letter, this is an agreement you sit down with your teen and negotiate.

1. No computer or device in your bedroom – without permission – especially overnight
2. Be actively engaged in outside-of-bedroom/home-based activity that builds emotional and social competence at least twice a week – preferably group activity
3. Be engaged in some form of sport/surfing/music/skating/dancing/martial arts/swimming at least three times a week
4. Complete normal chores around home
5. Ensure school grades are maintained
6. Be at family meal times (without devices) and have an agreed bedtime (again, without devices)
7. Have a friend visit or go to visit a friend IRL (in real life) weekly – and have time offline together
8. Be responsible for any excessive data expenses
9. Do not disable the parental controls that are in place and ensure you maintain privacy controls on your accounts
10. Avoid porn sites and viewing MA 15+ or R 18+ material or showing anyone else. [Please stress they are NEVER to show this material to anyone even if they ask.]
11. No offensive language while gaming
12. Any consequences for breaking the agreements start small, e.g. they lose half an hour of recreational technology time. Future misdemeanours gradually increase.

Allow some flexibility if your teen negotiates small changes occasionally. This encourages cooperation and fairness rather than resentment and rebellion.