

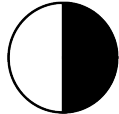
# EXERCISE: FUTURE ME LETTER

When you're stuck in a hard situation, it can feel like it will never end. This exercise helps you connect with your future self - the person you'll be when you have your own place, your own choices, and your own life.

This isn't about escaping reality. It's about remembering that your current situation is temporary, even when it doesn't feel that way. You WILL get out. You WILL have control someday. This letter is a bridge between now and then.

## Time Needed

20-30 minutes



## Energy Level

Medium-High (requires emotional energy and hope)



## What You'll Need

- Paper and something to write with
- Privacy

## When to Do This

When you need hope, when you're feeling stuck, or when you want to remind yourself why you're working so hard

## How It Works

You're going to write a letter to your future self—specifically, to the version of you who has their own place and control over their living situation. This might be you at 18, 22, 25, or whenever you imagine being independent.

## Step 1: Set the Scene

Before you start writing, imagine your future self. Close your eyes if it helps.

### Answer these questions in your mind (or jot notes):

- How old are you in this future?
- Where are you living? (City? Apartment? House? Dorm?)
- What does your home look like?
- How does it feel to walk through your front door?
- What's different about your life now that you have your own space?

**Don't worry about being realistic.** Let yourself dream a little. This is YOUR vision.

## Step 2: Start Your Letter

### Write: “Dear Future Me,”

Then begin. Here are some prompts to help you, but you can write whatever feels right:

### Tell Your Future Self What You’re Going Through Now

Get real about your current situation. Your future self needs to remember where you came from.

#### Prompts:

- Right now, I’m living in...
- The hardest part about home right now is...
- What I wish people understood about my situation is...
- Some days I feel like...
- The thing I’m most embarrassed about is...
- What keeps me going is...

#### Example:

“Right now, I’m 16 and still living at home. The house is overwhelming. I can’t have friends over. I feel embarrassed all the time. Some days I don’t even want to come home from school because I know what I’m walking into. But I’m trying to keep my room manageable and I’m saving money so I can get out someday.”

### Tell Your Future Self What You Hope For

Share your dreams for what your life will be like when you have control.

#### Prompts:

- By the time you’re reading this, I hope you...
- I imagine your home feels like...
- I hope you finally have...
- I dream that you can...
- I hope you’ve healed from...
- I want you to be proud that we...

#### Example:

“I hope by the time you’re reading this, you have a place that feels calm and clean. I hope you can walk through every room without stress. I hope you finally have friends over without worrying. I hope you’ve created the kind of home that makes you feel safe and proud.”

## **Tell Your Future Self What You're Doing Now to Get There**

Show your future self that Present You is fighting for them.

### Prompts:

- Right now, I'm working on...
- I'm trying to learn...
- I'm saving/planning/preparing by...
- I'm taking care of myself by...
- Even though it's hard, I'm...
- I refuse to give up on...

### Example:

"Right now, I'm keeping my backpack organized so I don't lose important stuff. I'm trying to keep one corner of my room clear. I'm saving the money I earn from babysitting. I'm learning how to set boundaries. I'm working through this toolkit so I can survive until I get out. I refuse to give up on having a better life. We deserve it."

## **Ask Your Future Self Questions**

What do you want to know about your future?

### Prompts:

- Did we make it out?
- Is it as good as I'm imagining?
- What does your home smell like?
- Do you still think about the house we grew up in?
- Are you proud of us for surviving this?
- What would you tell me right now if you could?
- Did things get better?

### Example:

"Did we make it? Do you have your own apartment now? Do you have a dog? Is it clean and organized like I imagine? Do you ever think about what it was like growing up, or have you moved on? Are you proud that we didn't give up?"

## **Make Promises to Your Future Self**

Commit to the person you're becoming.

### Prompts:

- I promise I won't...
- I promise I will...
- I'm committed to...
- I swear I'll never...
- I'll keep fighting until...
- I promise to remember...

### Example:

"I promise I won't give up, even on the hardest days. I promise I'll keep trying to take care of myself. I promise that when I have my own place, I'll keep it the way I want it: clean, calm, and safe. I promise I'll never let my home feel like this again. I promise to remember that I survived this."

## **End With Hope**

Close your letter with something that connects you to your future.

### Prompts:

- I can't wait to be you because...
- I know you're going to...
- I believe we can...
- Someday soon...
- Until then...
- I'm coming for you...

### Example:

"I can't wait to be you. I can't wait to walk into a home that feels peaceful. I know you're going to make it. I believe we can get through this and come out stronger. Until then, I'll keep taking it one day at a time. I'm coming for you, Future Me, and I will have learned so much. Just wait."

## **Sign It**

Love, [Your Name] - [Today's Date]

### Step 3: Seal It (Optional)

If you want, you can:

- Put your letter in an envelope and seal it
- Write a date on it for when you'll open it (your 18th birthday? When you move out? Five years from now?)\*
- Keep it somewhere safe
- Or read it whenever you need hope

\* If you reach your chosen date and you're not quite there yet: That's okay. Progress isn't always on our timeline. Write yourself a new letter acknowledging how far you've come, even if it's not as far as you'd hoped.

### Step 4: Write Back (Optional Future Step)

When you DO get to that future place - when you have your own home and your own life - consider writing back to Past You.

Tell them:

- You made it
- It was worth the fight
- You're proud of them
- They were stronger than they knew
- The hard days didn't last forever
- Thank you for doing all the work you did to get us here

### Using This Exercise

- **Read your letter when:**

- You feel hopeless
- You want to give up
- You forget why you're trying so hard
- You need a reminder that this is temporary
- You doubt things will ever get better

- **Update it as you grow.** Your vision of the future might change. That's okay. Write new letters to new versions of your future self.

- **Keep it private.** This is intensely personal. You don't have to share it with anyone. If you need to hide it: Keep it in a locked box, on your phone with a passcode, or in a trusted friend's home. Protect this from anyone who might use it against you or dismiss your feelings.

## Accessibility Considerations

This exercise involves writing a letter. If writing is difficult, you can: type it, use voice-to-text, record a voice memo to your future self, have someone scribe while you dictate, or even just think through what you'd say mentally. If imagining the future is hard due to depression or other mental health challenges, that's okay—you can write about what you wish could be different without needing to believe it will happen. The exercise can still be valuable even if you're skeptical.

## Important Reminders

- **Your future is not set in stone.** You're not guaranteed a perfect life just because you want one. But you ARE working toward something better, and that matters.
- **It's okay if this makes you cry.** This exercise can bring up a lot of emotions—grief for what you don't have now, hope for what's coming, anger that you have to wait. All of those feelings are valid.
- **The gap between Present You and Future You might feel huge.** That's normal. You're bridging years of life in one letter. The distance is real, but it's not uncrossable.
- **This letter is for you, not for anyone else.** If someone finds it and doesn't understand or is dismissive, that doesn't make your hopes less valid. Your feelings and dreams matter, even if others don't get it.
- **You don't have to believe it will all come true.** Even if you're skeptical, writing this letter plants a seed. It reminds you that there IS a future beyond today.

## Real Talk

Right now, your life is largely outside your control. Your parents make the decisions. You live in their space. You can't just leave.

**But someday - maybe at 18, maybe at 20, maybe at 25 - you WILL have control.**

You will choose where you live. You will choose how clean it is. You will choose who comes into your space. You will choose what your home smells like, looks like, and feels like.

That version of you exists. They're waiting for you. They need you to keep fighting, keep surviving, keep planning.

This letter is your promise to them that you won't give up.

**And it's their promise to you that the hard days won't last forever.**

Write the letter. Seal it. Hold onto it.

And when you finally get to be that person - when you finally have your own place and your own peace - you'll open it and realize:

**You made it. You actually made it.**