

This version was adapted from a previous letter written by Hannah Brencher, founder of [The World Needs More Love Letters](#).

A Love Letter to College Freshmen.

Dear You—

It might just be me & you up in the world right now.

Just you... the quiet of a new dorm room... the glow of the laptop screen... this love letter... and a feeling churning in your stomach that you may never get used to all this.

Ever.

It's not true. You're going to do just fine. **You're already doing just fine. In fact, your reactions are completely to be expected during this incredible transition, even though it's one of the hardest things to convince yourself of when the tears are streaming and you just want to go back home:** Back to comfort. High school. A relationship & friendships now sitting in the pile of "long distance." Bonfires. Hammocks. Summer. Familiarity. Anything but this.

It'll be the best four years of your life... that's what they're telling you, right? That—if done right—these next four years will sculpt you & change you & make you ready for the real world. **Truth told: this is the real world. It's yours. Stop thinking otherwise. Don't let a moment more slip away.**

These next four years are yours to be entirely & completely selfish.

To figure out "you" and how "you" make this world a better place. So start...

Start at the coffee bar. That's a good place to start. Just visit the coffee bar and treat yourself to something sweet—you're in college. It's something to celebrate.

Knock awkwardly on the doors of people next door. **Everyone is waiting for someone to make the first move and plan a powwow. Be that person!** Decide that tonight it is the football game and tomorrow it is popcorn and a movie night in your room. Pick a movie that is both drama & comedy, with traces of home & familiarity in it for each of you.

Befriend your RA. They are not the enemy. They are here to make every ounce of this easier for you... and they'd really appreciate the chance to try.

Call home when you have to. Cry your eyes out. Take slow sips of the broth of homesickness in the morning. It's ok... It's ok... Let the homesickness in. Don't push it out. Talk about it. Ask others about it. Embrace it. It will head south eventually... I promise.

Write letters. To your friends at other schools. To your long distance boyfriend. To teachers back home. Glitter the maps with your cursive to one another. Give one another a reason to track back to the campus mailbox for something other than a free pizza coupon. You'll keep those letters for years & years. You'll one day say that there is nothing like those letters you've kept stacked in a box beside your bed.

And on the note of friends... step away from Facebook for a little while. Not forever. Not for always. Just enough time to be present to the here & now. The meeting of new faces. The conversations at parties. The ice breakers that yes, you clearly don't want to do but should anyway. Be there for it. All of it. Don't sit in the feeds of your friends back home; start new chapters that would make them proud.

Follow. Just follow wherever this year takes you. You'll change. It's inevitable. But don't shy away from the change or the chance to develop into a better friend... a better leader... a better somebody. Accept it. When people grow distant and

old relationships don't fuel you anymore, just accept it. That's life. It's always happening. Clear away and cut the ties you need to cut... make room for Better & More. You'll find best friends in this place, but...

Don't go crazy looking for them. **You'll find one another soon enough and in a year from now you'll wonder how there ever was a whole two decades of Not Knowing One Another.** For now, just meet people. Sink into it naturally. Some friendships will stick and others won't. That's more than OK, it's to be expected. You'll get there. I promise. Just find the places where people are and start there.

A club. A meeting. The newspaper. Something. Anything. Not just for social purposes— your resume is going to start mattering sooner than you think... take it seriously.

And classes too—Go. To. Them. 8am or not—Show. Up.

Study. Try harder than you've ever tried before. Consider a time management course. Take at least one course that interests you... thrills you... makes you think. & don't rush to choose a major. There's time to get your feet wet with the muds of it all.

Most of all, embrace it. All of it. The new opportunities. The events on campus. The free stuff. The chance to grow apart from everything you've ever known. The chance to be someone you have always wanted to be...

Sit down during this first week of college... take out a piece of paper... and write it all down. Your hopes & your dreams & your goals for the next four years. Who do you want to become? What do you want to accomplish? It's time to start all of this.

Write it all down. Put it in an envelope. Seal it up and scribble "Do not open until college graduation day," in big, bold letters. And tuck it somewhere safe...

Get clear on what you want to make of these next four years and then go out and do it...

You've got this. You've really got this. And if ever you start to believe that you don't, come find me.

Love,

Someone who's been there before.

We encourage you to reach out:

- **To your RA** to get involved in your Residence Hall Community.
- **To the Counselors-in-Residence (CIRs).** They can help with adjusting to college, as well as with things like anger, stress, grief, roommate problems and time management, just to name a few.
- **To Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).** CAPS can help navigate the pressures of college life. Our staff includes professionally licensed Mental Health Clinicians and Board Certified Psychiatrists. We also have full-time and half-time trainees available to provide counseling under the supervision of a licensed Mental Health Professional. Call (479) 575-5276 to schedule an Initial Assessment.