

# Legacy Tips & Tools

## The Legacy of Love

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**“Love is so much larger than anything I can conceive. It may be the element that keeps the stars in the firmament.”**

**-Maya Angelou**

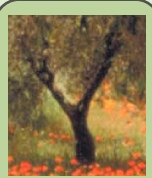
Legacy activities address our needs to belong, to be known, to be remembered, to have our lives make a difference, to know we're blessed and to bless others, and to celebrate life. As we approach Valentine's Day and begin to muse about spring, the time when a young person's fancy turns to love, we focus on reflecting on and writing “love-letters” as this month's legacy topic!

Though we may not have great means, our expressions of love are needed in this world and slake the thirst of those around us: family, friends, community. Mother Teresa reminds us, “In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love.”

Love is complex, multi-dimensional, and multi-leveled: it can be conditional or unconditional, physical, romantic, platonic, passionate, built of compassion and caring. There's self-love, love for other people and all other species, love of nature and the earth, and spiritual love of God.

The Dalai Lama teaches: “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.”

Believing his powerful thought, we realize that “love” is a verb, an action. We may know in our hearts that we love, and



often believe that others know it without our taking the responsibility of expressing it. Giving voice to and writing our love is tangible, can be preserved, read and reread, and allows our loved ones to be deeply nurtured.

### Reflection and Writing:

Our Tips and Tools legacy reflection thus includes reflection and action. I suggest 5 steps:

1. Begin with an exploration of love as you see, understand, experience it in yourself and the world around you. I suggest a free-flowing journal session for no more than 15 minutes for as many days as you find something to write.
2. Make a list of people and things you love.
3. Choose one person on your list, and write a letter to her/him expressing your love with genuine and specific details of recognition, appreciation, caring, validation. (Again, write for no more than 15 minutes)
4. Return to your journal, and write for 5 minutes about your experience with this Tips & Tools reflection (I call this “Process Notes”).
5. Mail or give this “legacy love-letter” to the person to whom it was written at an appropriate time.

Steps 3-5 can be repeated as often as you wish; expressing love as part of your legacy can be fulfilling all year long.

May your writing adequately express your love, and may all your legacies be blessings,

*Rachael Freed*

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