

The Wellfleet Method in Action

A SPECIAL OBJECT LEGACY LETTER

One of my favorite ways to use Legacy Letters is to accompany a gift of a special object. Special objects have their own stories and unique meaning, and they can also represent traditions and values. The Legacy Letter is less about the tangible worth of the object and more about the meaning behind it.

THE WHAT, THE WHO, AND THE WHY

Think of an object that you own that has special meaning to you. If you were going to give this heirloom to someone, who would that person be? Why have you chosen this person to be the recipient?

Perhaps your grandmother's recipe box is special to you because of your memories of meals with your grandmother, but you hate to cook. It would make a perfect gift for your daughter, a talented chef just graduating from culinary school. Giving her the box would carry on your grandmother's legacy and also support your daughter's choice of career.

It could be a brooch your mother gave you when you got engaged. Now your son is engaged to marry a wonderful woman; giving her the brooch would say, "you are a welcome and important part of our family."

For this Legacy Letter the WHY is passing on the item and the reason it is going to the recipient.





CONNECT THE WHY TO STORY

Why is the object special to you? What would you like the recipient to know about the object?

Recall being with your grandmother in her kitchen, the wonderful smells and tastes, the love that she put into her cooking and baking.

Describe how receiving the brooch from your mother made you feel—did you feel loved, happy, excited about your engagement? When you look at the brooch does it make you feel your mother's presence and love?

REFLECT ON THE MEANING

What values, wisdom, tradition or history do you want to share?

You want to let your daughter know that you value the hard work and resilience she has shown in making it to graduation and that her great grandmother would be proud of her. You want her to know you are entrusting her with your precious memories and your grandmother's traditions, wisdom and love all contained in that box of recipes. You are telling her that you know she will use them better than anyone else.

EXPRESS THE LOVE

Think about how you want the recipient to feel.

You want your future daughter in law to feel appreciated, seen and welcomed, hold that in your mind as you write. State that love specifically in the letter.

SPECIAL OBJECT LEGACY LETTER

Together these 4 parts create a powerful Legacy Letter. Here's what a special object Legacy Letter looks like put together:

My Beloved Amy,

Today is your 21st Birthday. As your mom it is so hard to believe that 21 years have flown by since that day I first laid eyes on you and held you in my arms.

Right now you are six time zones away studying and I miss you. I can imagine you trying all the street food, learning the local dialect and making new friends. I admire your adventurous spirit, your curiosity and your desire for knowledge that leads you away from home, even if it means I see you less.

I am not surprised that you are a strong, creative, adventurous and caring person. You were named after two women, my beloved Grandma Amanda who was caring and adventurous, and my Aunt Caroline, who was strong and creative. They would have loved you and would have wanted to be your friend.

In honor of your 21st birthday, I am passing down to you two pieces of jewelry that I hold dear. Not because they are particularly valuable, but because they were given to me by Grandma Amanda and Aunt Caroline. On my 21st birthday, my grandma gave me the watch I now give to you. My aunt gave the ring to me shortly before she passed away, and I know she would have loved to know that you now wear it.

I hope that these objects connect you to your namesakes and remind you to always be your brave, adventurous, creative and caring self. May these objects act as a source of inspiration and remind you that you are deeply loved.

With love,

Mom

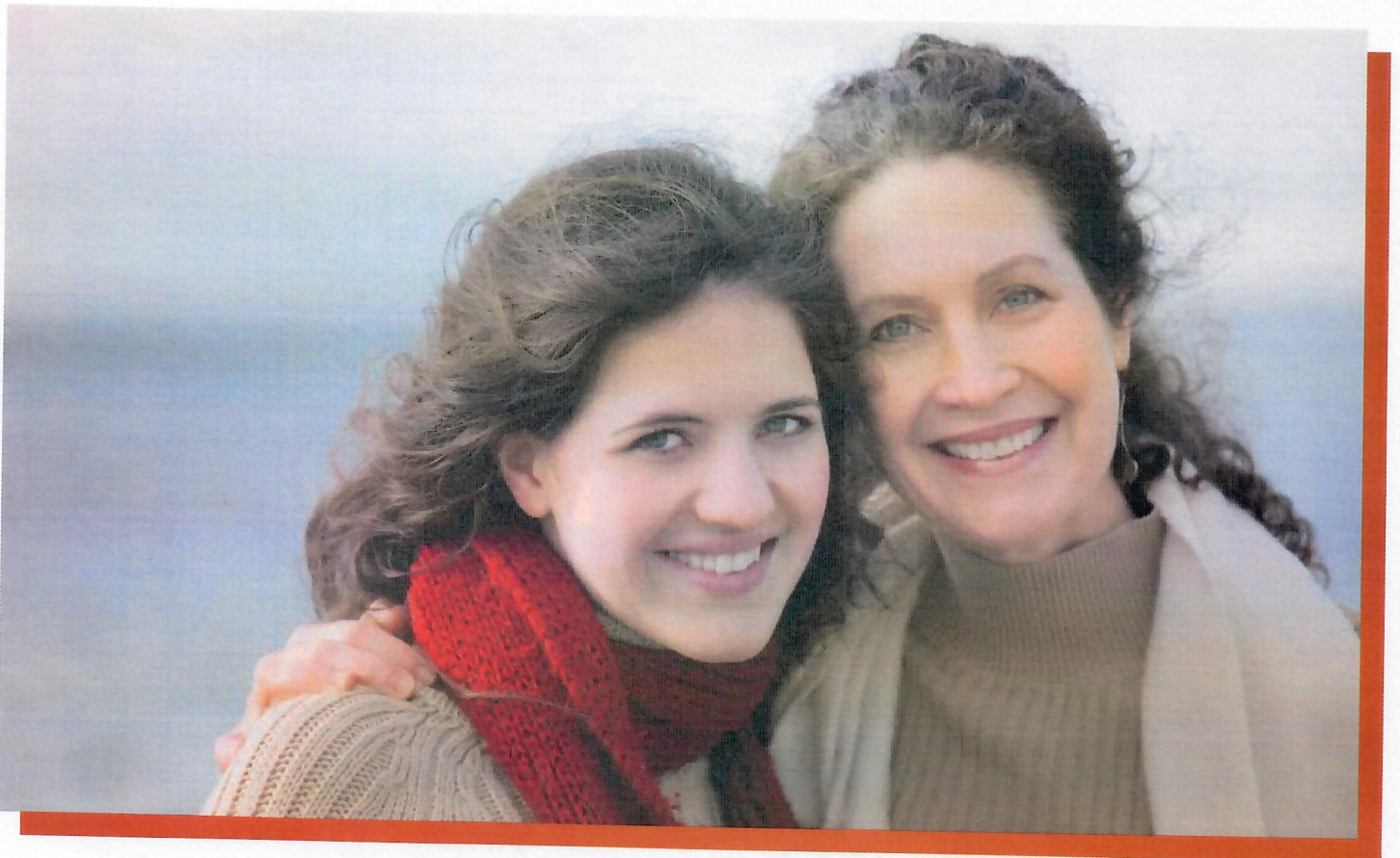
Close your letter, sign it, and share it.

WHO WILL YOU WRITE TO?

What special objects might you gift to people you care about?

Turn to the template on the next page to write your special letter.

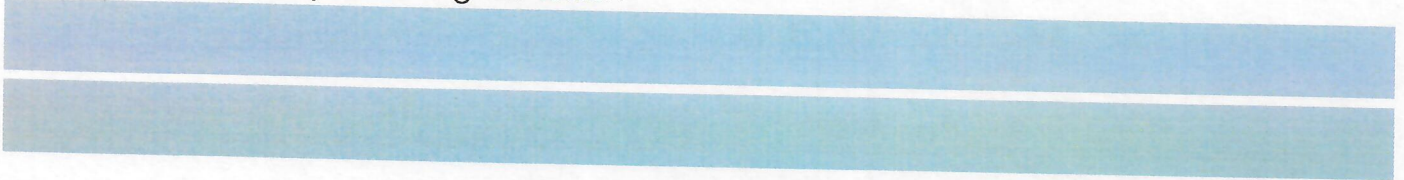
- Remember to think first about how you want the recipient to feel.
- Focus on what values, wisdom, history and love you want to share.
- Use stories to show what you want to say.



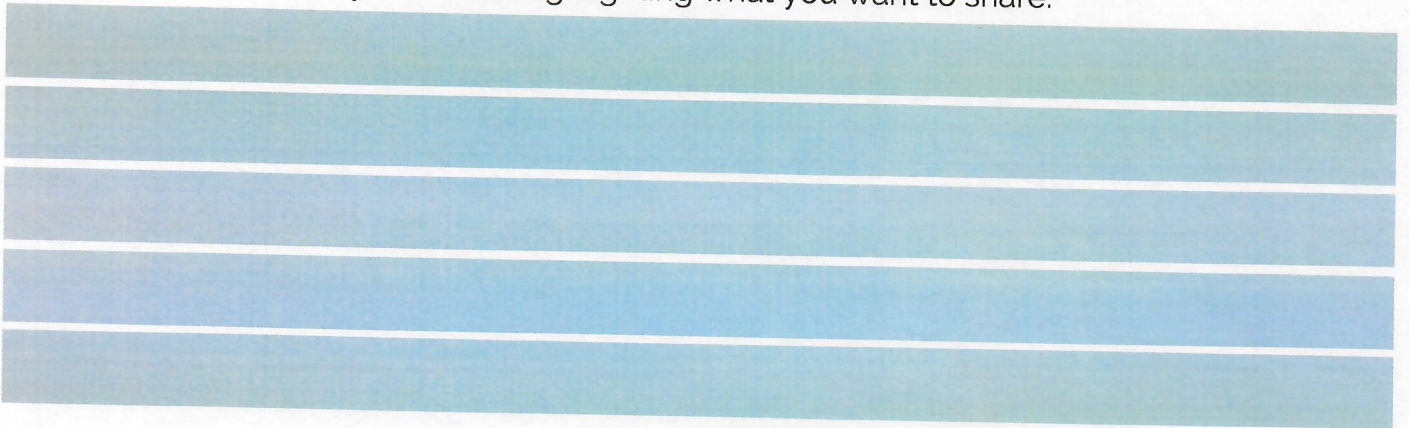
WRITE A SPECIAL OBJECT LEGACY LETTER

Think about a special object that you want to pass on, who would find it meaningful and why.

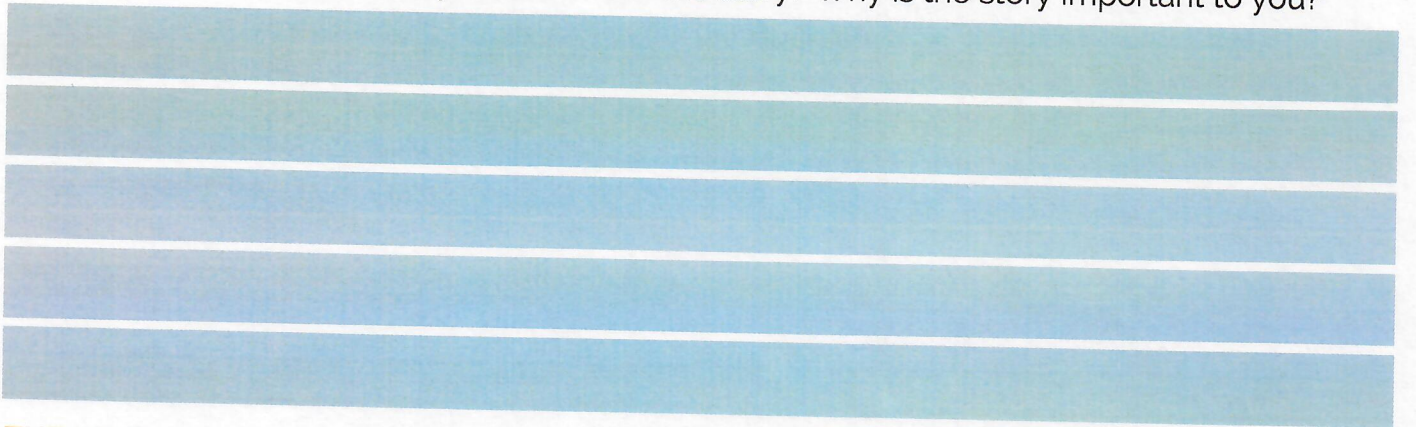
THE WHY - Why are you writing the letter?



THE STORY - Tell a story or stories highlighting what you want to share.



THE REFLECTION - What did you learn from the story? Why is the story important to you?



THE LOVE - Share love, gratitude, hopes and dreams or blessings.

