

# Goodwill Words

A scrapbook  
of  
'letters to strangers'

By  
T Haag

**Word Inventions--[inventwithwords.com](http://inventwithwords.com)**

**Copyright 2023 by Tim Haag**

**Thank you for buying an authorized edition of this book and for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part of it in any form without permission.**

**ISBN 978-0-9765632-4-2**

## **Introduction:**

**I compiled this book to inspire others who are engaged in a similar endeavor of sending ‘goodwill words’ to folks who might need a bit of a lift during tough times.**

**Were all these examples successful? I wish I knew, but I [and my other ‘pen-in-hand’ cohorts] keep the faith that we have ‘done good’.**

**Here’s hoping this first collection of letters will inspire others to join the goodwill words movement.**

**Note: Two of my go-to websites that have inspired me are [moreloveletters.com](http://moreloveletters.com) and [loveforourelers.org](http://loveforourelers.org).**

## **How to use *Goodwill Words*--**

**— Remind yourself, “Hey, if this guy can write these, so can I!” ;->**

**— If there is any phrasing or topic idea that works for you, feel free to copy it.**

**— Use my writing strategies and examples as a starting point for your own.**

**— Share this with others who want to pass along a few words of encouragement.**

**— Find some enjoyment from the pages.**

**Thanks again for sending positive vibes into the world.**

## Thoughts while writing my letters:

-- I wish some of the requests added more specific information about the recipient. The more I know about the person, the easier it is to connect to something we have in common.

-- Some days, I just do not feel focused...not so much from the actual writing of the letters, but from a feeling that my words won't come out as sincere as I want them to be. So, I take the day off. No sense making my project feel like a chore and risk the words coming out lifeless.

-- There has to be faith involved in this process—faith that the letters will reach the person, that they will brighten recipients' days and remind them of their value to others.

-- I also want the process to feed a bit of my creative spirit—not just with my words, but with the final product I send. On those days when I want to incorporate graphics to help convey a personal message, I word process my thoughts. You will see plenty of those letters in this book.

-- One challenge I face: what to say to someone who is described as ‘suffering from dementia’. My less-than-scientifically based solution: Appeal to recipients’ long-term memories. If my words don’t apply, or if they turn out to be inadvertently inappropriate [i.e. they conjure up something painful, etc.], I’m hoping there is a ‘gatekeeper’, if you will, who might weed out my letter, or at least the parts that don’t ‘work’.

I found this DEEP [The UK Network of Dementia Voices] document to be helpful:

<https://www.dementivoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/DEEP-Guide-Writing-dementia-friendly-information.pdf>

-- Finally, for this audience, I wonder if more legible word-processed letters aren’t a preferable option to handwritten letters. In fact, as I write this, I’m tempted to experiment with sending both a handwritten letter and a digital version. Yes, more time-intensive, but worth considering.

**So,  
let's get to  
the letters...**

I enjoyed reading about your very interesting life -- one of devotion to your church, one of notable artistry, considering your sewing and quilting skills, and one of laudable determination -- judging by your extra efforts to continue reading.

I'm sorry about your loss of beloved family members, but I'm encouraged that a special person like you has a team of supporters and "fans" who visit you regularly, including Buckley.

Wishing you days of peace and comfort as you savor sweet memories and good company.  
Tim

As you can see, my letters are not works of art. Aesthetics are nice, but finishing letters is the priority.



Here's wishing you many  
happy hours of TV and movies  
that help you relive favorite  
childhood memories.

Greetings!  
My favorite line  
from your daughter's  
story about you: "He helped  
create a better life ... for my  
sister and me." Bravo to you for that  
most important accomplishment. ~~And~~ So  
please don't forget how much you  
contributed to your world, as a  
parent and as a firefighter.  
I'm also glad to hear  
that the moon landing  
affected you as  
deeply as it  
affected  
me.  
Tim

!

I enjoyed reading about your special talents [I barely have the dexterity to say 'crochet', much less try it.], your love of dogs and cats [I'm definitely in that club.], and I too appreciate movies and TV shows that don't make me want to bleep out half of the dialogue. I'm wishing you a 2023 where your life is filled with your large, loving family [Bravo to your granddaughter who shared your story] and more of the things that make you happy.



These computer-generated letters actually take more time to compose than the handwritten ones, but they're more fun to make.

Every adversity, every failure, every heartache carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit.

---Napoleon Hill

\_\_\_!

Apologies for not penning this letter, but trust me, this is not a copy-and-paste effort.

We fellow English teachers can spot those a mile away...

Anyway, sorry to hear about the challenges life is dealing you and so I am absolutely wishing for you a 'seed of equal or greater benefit' as you forge ahead with life.

Bravo to you for your reinvention efforts. I'm excited for your prospects once you nail down that master's degree. As a teacher of English [and this won't surprise you], I'm wondering if your first-drafting a recollection of your *favorite moments with or lessons learned from your mom* through the years might be even a little therapeutic. [My heart goes out to you after your phone visits with your mom—sounds gut-wrenching.] And here comes that ~~yaddah-yaddah~~ moment ;-] we teachers might expect: Writing often can lead us to unexpected discoveries about ourselves. Okay, okay, pep talk over...

It does sound like you're lucky to have a husband who cares enough to share your story and ask for a little support from others.

Here's hoping I've provided a little of that support.

Best of luck—and an extra dose of courage—, \_\_\_\_, as you take on the challenges of these coming months.

So my question is:  
What does someone  
so adventurous do to  
stay engaged and entertained?  
in 2022? I think you could give  
a few of us some hints. I did see  
that you walk and swim, but what  
note when you're keeping your heart  
for at a "normal" setting? As  
interesting to hear your  
comparisons of 1970's Ireland  
and 2022 Oregon. "Green"  
and "Beer" come to  
mind! Take care!  
Tim


You've probably noted my attempts to  
cover up the recipient's name.

Just my being paranoid about another's privacy.



!.  
I'm privileged to  
have the opportunity  
to say 'hi.' to someone  
who values both lottery  
tickets (my predominant investment  
strategy) AND ice cream, I hope,  
you had a warm, comforting, and filling  
Thanksgiving. It was nice to read that you're  
resisting your day trip with your brother,  
though present you in the Midwest? Then again,  
with your Swedish genes, winter weather,  
probably doesn't even make you  
put away your sunscreen!  
shorts and Bermuda  
I send you best wishes for this  
holiday season!  
/Tm

What can I say?  
Some recipients' stories simply evoke  
more playfulness in my letters.

It's so admirable  
the way you stay  
engaged with life despite  
your health challenges.  
I wish I had your grit.  
I also appreciate your stewardship  
of our environment. We just recently  
had solar panels installed. While we  
don't expect to earn back the cost of the  
panels, well, my wife said it best:  
"It's the right thing to do!"  
Next: what's the difference between a  
bongo and a chain saw?  
You can always tune up a  
chain saw.   
Finally, here's hoping  
the Cabs sweep the  
season series w/  
the Cards!  
Tim

Sorry to hear of your setbacks  
and what probably feels like a  
long road back.

But I find it so admirable that  
you keep your "eyes on the prize"  
namely, your loved ones.  
I would like to think that anyone  
who has a business and talents  
years has the skills for a good job,  
that even in what might appear to  
be an unrelated field.  
Here's hoping (thus the photo  
on this card) good fortune finds  
you and that along the way,  
you treat yourself kindly during  
these tough times,  
Tim



Your interest  
in gardening,  
flowers, and word games  
reminds me of my wife who,  
once she racks up the early points  
in the 14 times Spelling Bee (try it out!),  
usually slips out to the yard to plant  
seeds or find places I need to dig up.  
In other words, coupled with your service as  
a nurse, you truly must be special.  
I'm sorry to hear of your  
loneliness but I'm very understand-  
able that someone with family  
and a drive to stay engaged will have  
special years ahead.  
Tim





I read so many special things about you, but what stood out was your years as a teacher and your work with organizations to help kids. And so I wanted to share images of children to remind you of what you've accomplished in your life. Take care, Tim





Hi



!!

You sound like such an interesting person--starting with your cooking and baking skills.

Question: When your granddaughter mentions chocolate chip cookies as a favorite, are they your favorite treat to bake or to munch on while Vanna White turns the letters?

Probably like you, I do miss Alex Trebek--one of many much-appreciated Canadian contributions to the U.S. So then, another question: Which 'new' Jeopardy host do you prefer? [This is NOT a test, by the way. Just curious.]

As for the squirrels in the park...absolutely! We love watching them in our backyard. But we DON'T love when they just sit there in the street in front of our car, no doubt chuckling at us as we sit there--engine running--completely at their mercy.

Finally...oooooh, Greek food. I'm jealous, as we don't really have a Greek restaurant nearby. If we did, I'd be ordering souvlaki every week. Take care, ] !!





As a longtime teacher, there is nothing I enjoy more than reading about teacher heroes. Believe me, you belong in a hall of fame. I am so impressed with all you accomplished and would love to hear of the highlights of your career...the kids who imprinted themselves in your heart...the colleagues who raised you up during the tough times and who made you laugh during any overly lengthy staff meetings. (I exaggerate, of course, because I'm guessing every staff meeting was short, to-the-point, and left you feeling completely fulfilled.:->)

Seriously, though, bravo and kudos [see that? You earned both!] to you for all you did for kids, and thus, your community.

Wishing you years of comfort, health, and plenty of time to savor your years in the classroom. Oh, and by the way, you NEVER missed a day? You are totally an 'iron woman'.

Take care,

Tim

I'm sorry to  
hear of your  
occasional loneliness  
so I suggest keeping  
yourself company with walks  
and walls of your baked treats!  
And then I'll come by <sup>to</sup> your  
official taster! No? Not a good idea?  
Okay, okay, in that case, I'll send you  
more visits for a life with even  
grandkids and hours  
and hours from your  
crocheting.  
Take care,  
you talented  
lady!  
Tom



You must be  
one special and  
strong -- person to weather  
the challenges of cancer and  
the ensuing changes in your  
life. I realize that I'm sure these  
times I call for a trip to the pub and  
I'm hoping that might still happen  
as a special occasion,  
continued love and daily  
family comfort best wishes for  
Bible. Take care  
from your  
Tim

You are truly a devoted servant and family member! As a long-time teacher, I can appreciate all you did as a principal *even before* you moved to California. But now, raising two kids!-- Including one who's grateful enough and found it important enough to share your story with us... I'm thinking your positive examples have rubbed off on her.

I'm glad you're in California where you are probably able to garden pretty much year-round. Are flowers your specialty? Vegetables? Both? Here's wishing you a nice and easy recovery from your surgery. In fact, I'm hoping you're too busy doing other fun stuff to read my letter till later! Take care.

Tim



I hope  
recovery  
is going well.



1  
I'm sorry to  
hear of your  
health setbacks and  
the resulting job loss.  
I'm encouraged, however, that you  
have an equally selfless husband  
by your side who would probably  
and he could give you a break-  
larges you're facing. It's my  
serving hope that you  
stay faithful and hope  
ful and that you  
can still find  
moments of  
gratitude.  
/L.M.

Another benefit of my 'goodwill words'  
project is the daily 'Hey, I don't have it so  
bad!' reminder.

Inside myself is a place where  
I live all alone.

And that's where you renew  
Your springs that never dry up.

-- Pearl Buck

Very sorry to  
read of your lone-  
liness. I admire  
your independent nature,  
however, and the way you  
productively pass your time in the  
garden. I'm wondering what you're growing  
Best? I also wonder how the monsoon affects  
your gardening? Vegetables? Flowers?  
As for your working up the courage to  
open your heart to  
another day, believe me, I  
understand. Sometimes, life  
steps in and tells you  
you're ready!  
Take care, Sunila.  
— Tim



—-!!

I like the other folks writing to you hope [some are praying, most likely] that your struggles end in a resounding success story.

After all, the perseverance you've shown through these challenging times is what I think will again pull you through.

Easier said than done, I realize, as life has thrown its share of curveballs at you, but boy, have you ever shown the ability to create and capitalize on your own opportunities. And your dedication and devotion to your team at work is not to be ignored. Have faith that that kind of commitment will also pay off in terms of support from others.

Your strength and resourcefulness gives me hope that you will once again break through your self-doubt and forge another uplifting [and I pray, enduring] chapter in your life.

You deserve this, —-!

A quote to consider:

Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th.

—Julie Andrews

Take care,  
Tim Haag

Love those quotes!  
When I'm at a loss for words, I  
borrow them from smarter folks.



First of all, I'm jealous of anyone who grew up in Santa Barbara. I've added some images that tell me one thing: You and I have a lot in common! I love dogs, California beaches (I grew up in Salinas), outdoor markets, and how can anyone NOT like the Peanuts gang? Take care, enjoy the photos.





I was a teacher for more than  
30 years and seeing you through  
the eyes of a teacher, I felt both  
sad for you, but hopeful that  
your teacher (teachers?) could find a  
way to involve you beyond simply being  
a student. Can you help with some  
classroom chores? (Become an expert!)  
I too enjoy minecraft (yes, even an 'old guy'  
likes minecraft!) and would enjoy reading a  
book about it written by ..... YOU!

Tim

It's pretty obvious by now that  
my teaching experience dovetails  
nicely with a number of the  
recipients' stories.

These words caught my attention: "a life characterized by the love which she has always given to those around her."

That's you! And while you're understandably lonely, I'm sending hope that you can still reach down and share a little bit more of that love... simply by being there for those who want to love you back.

After all, there's still time for you to pass along -- and relive -- some of your favorite priceless memories.

TAKE CARE! Tim



**SORRY TO HEAR OF YOUR  
SADNESS OVER THE LAST COUPLE  
OF YEARS. BUT BOY, WITH ALL  
YOUR ACTIVITIES, YOUR CARING  
NATURE, AND YOUR DEVOTION TO  
FAMILY, I HAVE TO SALUTE THE  
GRIT AND DETERMINATION YOU'VE  
DEMONSTRATED DURING THESE  
TOUGH YEARS.  
YOU SOUND LIKE THE KIND OF  
PERSON WHO DAILY IMPROVES  
THE LIVES OF OTHERS.**

**MY BEST TO YOU IN 2023.**



"Iron Woman", indeed.  
Sorry to hear of your tough times,  
but, boy, if anyone can create  
some happiness around  
her, it would be you.

I can picture one ~~little~~ little  
corner of your house adorned  
with butterfly images. It could  
also serve as a nook for reading  
your mysteries. (Favorite author?  
I do like Agatha!...)

As for your card-playing, I'm  
sorry you don't have as many  
chances to "reel in your opponents"  
(Admit it... I bet you're a "ringer" 😊)  
Hoping your arm improves  
and times with family + friends abound!

TIM

So... Judge Judy, huh? What do you like best about her?

Her sense of justice? When she rips into a plaintiff or defendant? Question: Do you ever catch yourself adding a little extra commentary of your own? (I'd be disappointed if you didn't. 🙄)

As for your sticker books, do you have favorite themes or designs or subjects? (Animals? Mother Nature? Judge Judy defendants? Heris wishing you a pleasant surprise tomorrow. (That would be fun.)

TIM





What a full life you have led and what a bumper crop of memories you have 'grown'. I'm sorry you've scaled back on your gardening, but boy, could you teach us a few things about what to put in the ground, when to plant, and how to harvest all that food. And I bet you two did a nice job of canning, as well \_\_\_\_ bravo to you for your continued loving care of I \_\_\_\_ Here's wishing you both plenty more treasured moments together.

Thank you for all you've done for special people in your life. You have made your little corner of the world a much better place.

Tim



How goes life in Illinois? It sounds  
as if you led a very interesting  
and productive life. Tell us the  
secret to savoring those special  
years and how we can incorporate  
those memories into our lives in 2022.  
I bet you have some ideas and I'm  
hoping you're putting them to use.  
Think of how much you have to share -  
lessons learned during your parenting  
years, your favorite experiences while  
traveling, and pursuing your shared  
interest in art. So... put down The Tribes  
right now and write or dictate your book.  
Tim

I have encouraged a number of folks to put their experiences, memories, or thoughts into a book. It's a positive way for them to pass their time and connect with not only others, but with themselves.

Very sorry to hear of your loss of your partner/husband. I'm guessing he complemented you in many ways, so I'm wishing you strength and perseverance as you adjust to this new chapter in your life.

I'm also hoping life will reciprocate -- providing for you the same kind of support and compassion you no doubt shared with your many clients.

As for your being a cook -- and my being the selfless, supportive person I know myself to be <sup>o.o</sup> -- I'd be happy to taste-test your work. What's your specialty? Because my specialty is eating. <sup>o.o</sup>  
Take care!  
Jim Haag

Those profiles that mention food immediately capture my attention.





So sorry to hear of your tough times, while your loss is painful, I'm sure you realize how lucky & were to have had such special years with a special guy. What follows may sound like

"advice" but really it is a list of observations of folks who have weathered situations similar to yours.

1) They reach a point (have done the work to realize) where they go with what helps them in a given hour/day/month etc. 2) They've reached out for loved ones. 3) They gain comfort when they encounter the departed person's traits in other.

NOW: Time for some advice. Track down Alice Medrich's BEST COCOA BROWNIES recipe and make yourself a batch. Tim

Note to self:  
Don't offer  
'advice'.  
I really don't  
know nearly  
enough to  
roll out some  
possibly  
misguided  
'solution'.



7/22/22

Baking, huh? Let's trade recipes  
and send each other some of our  
favorite mail-friendly creations!

Okay, time out... just kidding,  
starting to sound a little overly  
familiar... Creepy. 😬

Still, I can't think of a better escape  
from life's challenges than putting  
forth a batch of Best Cocoa Brownies.

This is legit.  
not spam. <https://bit.ly/bestbrownies2>

(All right, Tim, let's give the poor girl  
a break from your own obsessions...)

I am so impressed, with  
your willingness to step out of  
your comfort zone. And while I  
read that you're feeling a little  
guilty about not being with your  
dad, I'm thinking/hoping he is  
impressed with your courage  
and strength as you take on  
new challenges.

I'm sure the rest of the people  
are. Take care, Tim





**Thanks for reading.**

**I hope this spurs  
you to creating  
your own form of  
literary goodwill.**