

# Write Your “I Want to Do Letter”

A Simple Way to Get What You Want Through Personal Reflection and a Community of Supporting, Encouraging, and Compassion People

By David Tillman – January 2023

Here’s an easy way to do what you want to do and keep a balance in your life. Simply write a letter to yourself every three months with one to two things you want to do in each of the nine areas of your life. Then look at your letter at least once a week to remind you what you wanted to do. To get started just download the attached “I Want to Do Letter.” This is all about helping yourself get what you want out of your life.

At the end of three months, sit down with your letter and circle the things you regularly did. Give yourself a pat on the back. Then look at the things you did not get to do, no problem. Do some reflection and then edit “I Want to Do Letter” for the next three months.

After the first three months, I suggest you also add your One-Year Vision,” Five-Year Vision,” and “Twenty-Year Vision.” The simple act of writing the intention of what your vision is for the next one, five, and twenty years, can have amazing results. Imagine looking back at what you wrote, one, five, and twenty years later. Write these vision statements as if you have already accomplished them. See the “I Want to Do Letter” example to get ideas. Over the months or years, you can modify your one-, five-, and twenty-year visions if you want to. You can edit this letter to yourself to best meet your needs.

You can do this by yourself or with others. I learned about this many years ago. We did it in a group of friends (four to six people is a good size so everyone has time to talk). We met twice a month at someone’s home for one and a half hours (you could also do this online via Zoom or another online group chat app). We started on time and ended on time. Each person would write their “I Want to Do Letter” and print enough copies (or email) to give to everyone. For the first meeting of the three months letter cycle, each person would read their letter. There was no feedback.

Keep it simple, if there is any pressure from the group telling a person to do something different than what they had written or an idea of how to write (or do) it better is not helpful. Be patient, it will only take two or three months before everyone will begin to learn how to best use the “I Want to Do Letter” for their own and small group members’ needs and different styles of learning and communication. This is not a race or competition; everyone will have different things they want to do. It is rather a place to build a trusting community that offers support, encouragement, and compassion to

everyone, wherever they are in their life's journey and wherever they dream of being in the next one, five, and twenty years.

For the next five meetings with the three-month letter cycle, each person would briefly highlight the things they were doing in the letter. Then share what they had not been able to do with a brief sentence or two about why not. After everyone has shared take time to socialize until the one and half time is up. Officially end the group after an hour and a half (or the meeting time length you all agreed upon at your first meeting). A suggestion is not to plan anything else for all or some of the group members to take place after the meeting. This will keep the energy and intentions within the small group space during the meeting and release it fully until the next meeting. If some people stay and others leave after the meeting it may eventually break down the trust level of the small group. You can schedule other group events between your regularly scheduled meetings. If you would rather socialize after each meeting, go for it. It's your time.

Below is a suggested small group meeting process. They include small group meeting guidelines which need to be discussed and agreed upon by all members at your first meeting. Feel free to make changes that are agreed upon by all group members. Doing this and maintaining these group guidelines is where trust is developed with the group members. Welcome any suggestions for changes as they arise.

It will take the group some time to trust each other. It takes what it takes. Trust levels can change at any given moment. That is life. Over many months you hopefully will all feel comfortable speaking from your heart.

I was in a small group for many years. After we had gotten to know each other better we started a small group and created something like the "I Want to Do Letter." Many of our group members had in their one and five-year visions to find a life partner, date, get married, and have children. It was amazing that within two to three years many of us were in a serious relationship, got married, and began to parent our child(ren).

For me, our group "I Want to Do Letter" never felt like a competition as we had gotten to know each other well enough. It was a way of learning how to support, encourage, and be there for others. That has been a good life lesson which has been a blessing to me all these years. Our small group would at times volunteer in the community, like at a food shelf, or serve food at Loaves and Fishes, or other ways of giving back to our community. We also found time for our group to get together to go on bike rides, weekend hiking trips, and potluck dinners.