

ONE AMERICA, ONE LETTER

Welcome Guide

READ THIS ON SCREEN. Print only the separate items you choose from the Print Center on the website.

The heart of this challenge is a physical letter: handwritten or typed, signed, folded, and mailed in an envelope - or placed directly into the recipient's hands.

The Physical Letter Is the Challenge

Email, text, direct message, and social media do not complete this challenge. The time, paper, signature, and physical delivery are part of the gesture. Nothing fancy is required: a good pen and ordinary paper, a typed page, a postcard, or a simple note all work. Old-school is welcome here.



- Choose one person whose relationship matters more than the disagreement.
- Write privately and in your own voice - not for an audience.
- Seek understanding, not victory.
- Use a pen and paper, a typed page, a postcard, or any simple format that can be physically delivered.
- Sign the final letter and put it in an envelope when the format calls for one.
- Mail it with a stamp or hand it to the person yourself.

Optional writing help

This letter should come from you. If naming feelings or facing a blank page is stopping you, you may use a writing aid - including AI - as a coach. You do not need to provide names or private identifying details. Describe your intention, such as: 'I care about this person, we disagree about something important, and I want to be honest without attacking them.' Then ask the tool to teach you how to organize the letter, ask questions that help you identify what you actually feel, or point out places where your own draft may sound harsher than you intend. Do not ask it to write the letter for you, invent personal feelings, or speak in your place. The final words, judgment, and emotional truth must be yours. If the tool did the thinking or feeling for you, the challenge is not complete.

Useful coaching requests

- Ask me questions that will help me understand what I want to say before I draft anything.
- Teach me a simple structure for a respectful letter, but do not write the letter for me.
- Read my draft and identify wording that may sound accusatory or unlike my stated intention.
- Help me separate what I observed, what I felt, and what I hope the other person understands.

A simple beginning

Dear _____,

I'm writing because I value our relationship more than our disagreement. I don't expect either of us to abandon what we believe, but I would like us to understand each other better.

Here is what I want you to understand about my perspective...

And here is what I genuinely want to understand about yours...

Sincerely,

Your Optional Print Menu

Nothing below prints automatically. Open only the item you want, check its page count, and then choose Print.

PHYSICAL LETTER KIT	2 pages	A focused checklist and a clean letter-starter sheet.
PASS IT FORWARD CARDS	1 page	Four small cards. Cut out one for the envelope; save or share the extras.
PLEDGE WALLET CARD	1 page	Your personalized pledge number and a compact keepsake for a wallet.
WELCOME GUIDE	Screen-first	Advice and sample letters. Printing the whole guide is unnecessary.

Invite a Friend

This opens your own email app with a short invitation already written. You choose the recipients, review the message, and press Send yourself.

OPEN A READY-TO-SEND INVITATION

Write to the Founder

After you send your physical letter, I would genuinely like to hear what happened - what worked, what did not, what surprised you, or what you learned.

Write to OneAmericaOneLetter+stories@gmail.com with the subject 'My One America, One Letter story.' Writing does not give permission to publish. If part of your story could help others, I will ask separately what may be quoted, whether your name may be used, or whether you prefer anonymity. Nothing is published without clear approval.

This is currently a one-person effort. I will read what you send, though a personal response may take a few days.

Sample Letters

These are examples, not scripts. Borrow a structure or opening if it helps, but make the physical letter unmistakably yours.

Sample 1 — A different point of view gun ownership

Dear [Friend's Name],

I've been thinking about your post since Tuesday, the one about how nobody should be allowed to own a gun like the one used at that school. I didn't respond right away, and I'm glad I didn't, because my first reaction wasn't really an argument — it was just defensiveness, and that's not what this deserves.

I need to say this first, before anything else: I am so sorry for those families. I read the names of those kids the same night you posted, and I sat with my own kids asleep down the hall and couldn't stop thinking about it. Nothing I say below is meant to talk past that grief, or to suggest your fear for other people's children is somehow less legitimate than my reasons for owning what I own. It isn't.

But I do own guns, and I raised my kids around them, and I want you to understand why, because I don't think you actually know — I think you know the bumper-sticker version of someone like me, not the real one.

My dad taught me to shoot on his dad's old .22 when I was nine, out past the property line where nobody could hear but the crows. It wasn't about danger or power. It was one of maybe three things my dad and I did together that he was actually good at teaching and I was actually good at learning, and in a house where we didn't have a lot else in common, that mattered more than I think I can fully explain to you. I've since taught my own son the same way, on the same kind of gun, with the same rules my dad drilled into me before I was ever allowed to touch one: it's loaded until you've checked it yourself, it never points at anything you're not willing to destroy, your finger stays off the trigger until you've decided to fire. I take that seriously. I've never once treated it casually, and I don't know anyone in my life who does.

I also keep a handgun in the house, and that one isn't about my dad or hunting. It's because I live twelve minutes from the nearest sheriff's response on a good night, and I have a wife and two kids I am responsible for getting to safety if something happens in this house that I can't talk or run my way out of. I hope to God I never touch it for that reason. But I'm not willing to bet my family's safety on hoping.

I know the statistics get thrown around from both directions until they stop meaning anything to either side, so I won't pretend I can out-argue you with numbers. What I can tell you is that for me, this was never about a symbol, a party, or wanting to feel like a tough guy. It's about a relationship with my father I didn't get in many other ways, and a plan for my family's safety that I've thought about more soberly than almost anything else in my life.

I'll be honest that I don't think every gun law is an attack on me personally, and I don't think every person who wants stricter rules is trying to disarm good people out of spite. I actually agree with you on more of the specifics than you might expect — I think a lot about training requirements, about how a gun ends up in the wrong hands, about whether the guy who did that shooting should have ever had access to what he had. Those aren't unreasonable questions. I just don't think the answer is that the right to own one at all should depend on convincing enough strangers I deserve it.

I don't need you to end up agreeing with me on any of that. I'd just like you to know that when you see someone post something defending gun ownership, it might not be the caricature you're picturing — for at least one person you actually know, it's a dad, a husband, and someone who thinks about this as carefully and as seriously as you do.

Can I ask you something in return? What would actually make you feel safer — not as a slogan, but specifically? I'd genuinely like to know, because I think we want the same thing here even if we'd get there differently.

Whatever you land on, this doesn't change how I feel about you. You've been a good friend to me for a long time, long before either of us ever said a word about any of this, and that's not going anywhere over a Facebook post.

With respect, [Your Name]

Sample 2 — Nothing political at all family estrangement

Dear [Sibling's Name],

It's been almost two years since we've really talked, and I don't want it to be three.

I keep replaying the week after Mom died — how fast everyone had to make decisions about the house, her things, all of it, while we were still in shock. I said some things about the sale that I still think about, and I know at least one of them landed as an accusation about money when it wasn't really about money at all. I was grieving and scared and looking for somewhere to put it, and you were an easy target because you were right there. That wasn't fair to you, and I'm sorry.

I don't think either of us handled that week the way we'd want to if we could do it again. I've had a long time to sit with my part of it, and I'd rather own that than keep being right about yours.

What I actually miss isn't the argument or even being proven right about the house. It's you. It's calling you when something stupid happens at work because you're the only one who'd find it funny the same way I do. It's not having anyone to call on Mom's birthday who actually remembers what she was like before she got sick.

I'm not asking you to agree with me about what happened, or to pretend it didn't hurt. I just don't want losing Mom to also be the thing that cost me my brother.

If you're willing, I'd like to talk — actually talk, not over text. No agenda beyond that. And if you're not ready, I understand, and I'm not going anywhere either way.

I love you. I miss you. [Your Name]

Sample 3 — Short, plain, and still enough a friend you let down

Hey [Friend's Name],

I've been meaning to write this for a while and kept putting it off because I didn't know how to say it right. I don't think there's a right way, so I'm just going to say it plain.

When you were going through your divorce, I basically disappeared. I told myself I didn't want to say the wrong thing, but really I think I just didn't know what to do, so I did nothing. That wasn't okay. You needed a friend and I wasn't one, not really, not when it counted.

I'm sorry. Not the kind of sorry you say to end a conversation — the kind where I actually see it and it bothers me.

I don't expect this letter to fix it. I just didn't want to keep pretending it never happened. If you ever want to grab a coffee and actually talk, I'm around. If not, I get it.

Either way, I'm glad you're doing better now. [Your Name]

Sample 4 — Distance that crept in slowly a father, to his son

Dear [Son's Name],

I've started this letter probably ten times over the last few years and never sent it, because I didn't know how to say this without it sounding like an excuse. I don't want it to be an excuse. I just want to say it.

I was there for a lot of your childhood, but I wasn't really there for a lot of it either. I remember sitting in the stands at your games with my phone out, half-watching, telling myself I'd look up in a minute. I remember being home most nights and still somehow not around — in the next room, working, tired, wound up about something that felt urgent at the time and that I can't even remember now. You didn't need me to be perfect. I think you just needed me to be paying attention, and a lot of the time, I wasn't.

I've spent a long time telling myself that providing was the job — that if the bills were paid and nobody was in danger, I was doing my part. I don't think that's wrong exactly, but I think I used it to let myself off the hook for the rest of it, the part where you actually get to know your kid instead of just keeping him fed and housed.

I'm not writing this to get you to tell me it's fine. I don't think you owe me that, and honestly I'd rather you didn't say it just to make the conversation easier. I'd rather this just be true between us: I wasn't as present as you needed, and that's on me, not on you, and not on anything you did.

What I want now, if you're open to it, is just to actually show up — not with some big gesture, just consistently, in the smaller ways I skipped over before. A call that isn't about anything in particular. Showing up to something without my phone in my hand. I don't expect that to undo anything. I just don't want to keep doing the thing where I mean to and don't.

No pressure to respond right away, or at all if you're not there yet. I just wanted you to have this in writing, from me, instead of continuing to hope you already knew.

Love, [Your Name]

Sample 5 — When money got between us an old friend, a loan

Dear [Friend's Name],

I've written and deleted this text about a dozen times, so I'm doing it as a letter instead, where I can actually say the whole thing instead of a half version.

It's been about four years since I lent you the money for the car repair, and somewhere in year two I noticed I'd stopped expecting it back, and somewhere in year three I noticed I'd also mostly stopped talking to you, and I don't think those two things are unrelated even though neither of us ever said so out loud.

I want to be honest: for a while it did bother me. Not really the amount — it wasn't enough money to change my life either way — but the quiet of it. No plan, no "hey, I haven't forgotten," just nothing, and then it got awkward to bring up, and then it got easier to just not text you than to bring up something that felt like it might turn into a fight.

I don't think you're a bad person for how this went, and I don't think I am either for how weird I got about it. I think we both just let an uncomfortable conversation turn into a long silence because neither of us wanted to be the one to say it out loud first.

So I'm saying it now: I don't need the money back for this to be okay. I mean that. What I actually miss is you — the guy who'd show up with no notice with terrible coffee because you knew I was in the middle of finals, who I could call at midnight when things were falling apart. That's what this cost us, and it's worth more to me than what I lent you.

If you want to pay it back sometime, fine, no hard feelings either way. But that was never really what I wanted this letter to be about. I just didn't want the money to be the reason we stopped being friends without either of us ever deciding to.

Take care of yourself, [Your Name]

Sample 6 — Feeling like an outsider at family gatherings in-laws

Dear [Mother-in-law's Name],

This isn't an easy letter to write, and I've hesitated for a long time because I didn't want it to come across as an accusation. It isn't one. I don't think you've ever set out to make me feel unwelcome. But I want to be honest with you about something I've been carrying for a while, because I'd rather say it plainly than keep quietly holding it.

At family gatherings, I often feel like I'm on the outside of something — like there's a version of the conversation, the jokes, the history, that I'm not quite inside of, even after all these years. I don't think that's anyone doing something wrong exactly. I think it's just what happens when you marry into a family that already has its whole shared life built before you show up. But it's been lonelier than I think anyone realizes, including me, for a long time.

[Spouse's name] loves you and loves this family, and I never want to put [him/her] in the middle of this or make family time feel tense. That's the last thing I want. I just think if I keep pretending I feel completely at home when I don't, it'll stay quietly true forever instead of maybe actually changing.

I don't have a specific ask, really. I think I just wanted you to know how it's felt for me, in case there was ever an opening — a call that's just us, or being included a little more in the ordinary stuff, not just the big holidays where everyone's already used to their roles. I'd like to actually feel like part of this family, not just someone who's allowed to be at it.

I know this might not be easy to read, and I promise it's not meant as a complaint about you specifically. I just care about this family enough to want to actually belong to it, not just attend it.

With respect, [Your Name]

Sample 7 — We didn't fight, we just drifted an old friend

Hey [Friend's Name],

I was thinking about you the other day for no real reason — I think a song came on that we used to play way too loud in your old car — and I realized it's been something like five years since we've actually talked, not just liked something on each other's pages.

I keep trying to remember what the fight was, and there wasn't one. That's almost the strange part. You got married, I moved for work, we both had kids around the same time, and somewhere in the shuffle of all of it, checking in stopped being a habit and became a thing you mean to do and don't. I don't think that's really anyone's fault. I think it's just what happens if nobody catches it.

I still think about the year we lived three blocks apart and you'd show up at my door with no notice, or the trip we took that neither of us could really afford, or you sitting with me the week my grandfather died even though you barely knew him, just because you knew I shouldn't be alone. I don't have a lot of people who did that for me. I've never really replaced that.

I'm not writing this because anything's wrong, or because I need something. I just didn't want another year to go by without saying that you mattered to me then and you still do now, even with all the silence in between. If you're ever up for catching up — even just a call, no big production — I'd really like that.

Either way, I'm glad you're out there living a good life. I hope it's everything you wanted.

[Your Name]

Sample 8 — When we stopped sharing a faith a parent, about belief

Dear [Parent's Name],

I've wanted to write this for a long time and kept putting it off, partly because I know it's a tender subject for you, and partly because I wasn't sure I could say it without it turning into an argument about who's right. I don't want it to be that. I just want you to actually understand where I am, instead of guessing at it or worrying in silence.

I know it was hard for you when I stopped going to services. I know part of you took it as a rejection — of the way you raised me, maybe even of you. I want to say clearly that it wasn't that. The faith I grew up in gave me a lot of good things: a sense of community, a language for gratitude, people who showed up for our family when we needed them. I haven't forgotten any of that, and I'm not pretending it didn't shape me, because it did.

What changed is more specific than "I don't believe anymore," even though I know that's how it probably looked from outside. It's more that over time, some of what I was taught to believe stopped fitting with what I actually think is true, and I got to a point where I couldn't keep saying I believed something I didn't, just to keep things comfortable at home.

I know that's not the outcome you hoped for, and I'm not asking you to be happy about it. I'm only asking that you not read it as me rejecting you, or rejecting the values you actually gave me — honesty, showing up for people, trying to live a decent life. Those didn't leave when the specific beliefs did. If anything, being honest with you about this instead of quietly going through the motions felt like the most consistent thing I could do with what you taught me.

I still want you at my table, and I still want to be at yours. I don't need us to agree about this for that to be true. I just didn't want there to be a wall of things we're both too careful to say out loud between us anymore.

I love you, and none of this changes that. [Your Name]

Sample 9 — The letter that started this project real, names replaced

Dear [Friend's Name],

I've been thinking about your Facebook post about Dr. Fauci and why it bothered me more than I expected. After sitting with it for a while, I realized it wasn't because I needed you to agree with me. It was because I care about you, I value our friendship, and I wanted you to understand why I see things differently. I don't normally write letters like this, but I feel it's important to handle this differently than I began earlier tonight.

I deeply appreciate the gas money you've given me. It's helped me get to meetings when I honestly couldn't have afforded it, and I don't take that generosity for granted. But what I value most isn't the gas money. It's your friendship. I look up to the example you set, the positivity you bring into the rooms, the way you're willing to call me out when I'm judging my family or someone else, and the way you aren't afraid to tell a friend a hard truth, even when it's awkward or uncomfortable. In a lot of ways, I guess this letter is my attempt to be that kind of friend back to you.

It didn't feel right to respond on Facebook. I wasn't interested in adding to the division or the drama, and I didn't want to call you out in front of everyone. I respect you too much for that. This felt like something that belonged in a private conversation between friends, but I needed time to gather my real thoughts and not be reactive like the alcoholic inside me was trying very hard to be.

Part of what made that post difficult for me had less to do with politics than with something much more personal. Because AA has become such an important part of both of our lives, I couldn't help viewing it through that lens.

One of the greatest gifts AA has given me is the reminder to be careful about judgment, to look at my own motives before criticizing someone else, and to remember that every person—even the ones I disagree with—is a flawed human being deserving of compassion. I'm far from perfect at living those principles myself, but they're values I keep trying to grow toward.

When I read your post, I found myself struggling because it didn't feel consistent with that spirit. It seemed to me that Dr. Fauci had been reduced to a symbol or a villain instead of being viewed as a human being who was trying to navigate an unprecedented crisis, however imperfectly. Whether we ultimately agree with his decisions isn't really the point. What stayed with me was the feeling that the conversation wasn't about unity, love, and compassion, but instead was filled with certainty and condemnation.

I know a lot of people believe Dr. Fauci lied to the American people during the pandemic. I understand why they feel that way. COVID was frightening, information changed constantly, and the government's messaging was often confusing. Trust was damaged, and once that happens it's hard to rebuild.

But after reading reports, testimony, and investigations from a variety of perspectives, I've come to a different conclusion. I don't believe the evidence shows that Dr. Fauci intentionally deceived the American people.

One of the biggest examples people point to is masks. Early in 2020, Dr. Fauci and other public health officials said the general public didn't need them. Later they strongly recommended them. On the surface, that looks like a contradiction.

But context matters.

At the beginning of the pandemic, scientists knew much less about asymptomatic spread, and hospitals were facing severe shortages of protective equipment. As researchers learned more about how the virus spread, and as mask supplies improved, the recommendations changed.

To me, changing recommendations when new evidence emerges isn't proof of dishonesty. It's how science is supposed to work. If scientists refused to change their conclusions after learning something new, that would be the opposite of science. Could those changes have been communicated better? Absolutely. I think that's a fair criticism. But changing your guidance because the evidence changes is very different from intentionally lying.

The same is true when it comes to the origins of COVID. From everything I've read, Dr. Fauci consistently said the evidence at the time leaned toward a natural spillover from animals while acknowledging that a laboratory accident hadn't been ruled out. Even today, different US government agencies have reached different conclusions with different levels of confidence. That tells me this is still a complicated question—not one with a simple, universally accepted answer.

I've also heard the claim that Dr. Fauci "funded the creation of COVID." It's true that U.S. research funding supported coronavirus research through grants involving international collaborators. Whether that research should have been funded is a legitimate debate. But I haven't found evidence showing that Dr. Fauci knowingly funded the creation of SARS-CoV-2 or intentionally misled the public about it.

What I've spent even more time thinking about, though, is why Dr. Fauci became the face of so much public anger.

He wasn't the President. He wasn't a governor. He couldn't order nationwide lockdowns, close schools, pass spending bills, or set state policies. He was an advisor—a physician and scientist whose job was to offer recommendations. The actual decisions were made by elected officials at every level of government.

That doesn't mean his advice shouldn't be questioned. It should. Every public official should be accountable for what they say and do.

But sometimes I wonder whether focusing so much blame on one scientist has made it easier to avoid asking harder questions about everyone else who had the authority to make decisions. The pandemic wasn't shaped by one person. It involved thousands of decisions made by presidents, governors, legislators, health agencies, hospitals, businesses, and ordinary people trying to navigate an impossible situation.

History is usually more complicated than finding one person to blame.

I'm not saying Dr. Fauci handled everything perfectly. I don't believe that. He made mistakes. Some of his messaging could have been clearer. There are plenty of pandemic policies that reasonable people can criticize and debate. I have my own questions about some of them.

But making mistakes during an unprecedented crisis isn't the same as intentionally deceiving the public.

What ultimately persuaded me is that after years of investigations, congressional hearings, lawsuits, media scrutiny, and political attacks, I still haven't seen evidence that establishes Dr. Fauci deliberately lied to the American people in the sweeping way that's so often claimed. There are arguments about policy, judgment, and communication. Those are worth having. But those arguments aren't the same as proving intentional dishonesty.

One of the qualities I've always appreciated about you is that you don't seem content to simply accept what you're told. You seem to want to think things through for yourself. I genuinely admire that. I think skepticism is healthy. I just hope we apply that same skepticism to every source, even the ones that tell us what we already want to hear. I try to hold myself to that same standard because I know how easy it is for all of us to fall into confirmation bias.

I'm not asking you to trust Dr. Fauci because he was a government official, because the media defended him, or because he served under seven presidents from both political parties. Those facts don't prove someone is right.

I'm only asking that we judge people by the strength of the evidence rather than by how often a claim is repeated or how useful it is politically.

If, after looking at the same evidence, you still come to a different conclusion, I can respect that. My goal isn't to change your mind nearly as much as it's to explain mine.

Our friendship means far more to me than any disagreement about politics or the pandemic. I hope we can keep talking the way friends should, with honesty, humility, curiosity, and respect. Even when we disagree, I'd rather understand each other than try to defeat each other.

With love and consideration, [Your Name]

ONE LETTER IS ENOUGH TO BEGIN.

Make it physical. Make it yours. Send it with care.

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