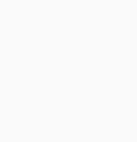


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Jan 5, 2022 What would you write in a letter to yourself?

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## What would you write in a letter to yourself?

By [twenty-something.](#) • Issue #32 • View online

### Probably the things you most need to hear.

by *zosomething*

Like I said last week, I'm obsessed with the new year. I wrote my 5th New Years' letter to myself, and this year, I asked Bianca, Natalie, and Sam to write one too. So, without further ado, let's ring in 2022 with some good old-fashioned zosomething reflection.

### Chika

I've spent a lot of my life planning for when my life will begin. It's been one of my faults, always looking forward, never living in the present. I'm ready to be present. 2021 was the hardest year of my life, and I made it through. I've learned things about myself and how important my relationships are to me. And I think I've finally broken the chains of toxic independence. I don't have to do everything by myself. I can let myself be cared for.

This year I will be moving to New York, something I've wanted to do since I picked up my first Gossip Girl novel at 10 or 11. I used to think New York was too big for me, it moved too fast, I wouldn't be able to keep up. But I have never felt so confident in who I am as a person. In 2022, I'm excited to write a new chapter, one that will be a major plot point in the inevitable book I write about my life. My goal? Make it one worth reading (and worth a sick-ass movie adaptation).

*Chika Ekemezie is the founder of twenty-something and a freelance writer who writes about sex, dating, and the politics of life. You can find her work in publications like Cosmopolitan, VICE, and Bustle. She's currently based in Brooklyn, but you can never take the Jersey out of the girl. Follow her on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*

### Bianca

Bianca,

Your affinity for the Zodiac is a bit embarrassing. It's cheugy to claim, but you can't blame yourself for wanting your current situation validated and your future softly outlined.

That you know.

You were born on January 10th, five years before the new millenia, and it was snowing. A mighty mountain goat with bullish emotions and a mask to match. That was fact well before you ever learned about what a birth chart was. Growing up—the oldest of three—you learned that determination, work ethic, and broad-brush-stroke success were what mattered. You didn't question it. You competed, you followed through, you toughened up, you kept your eye on the prize (whatever it was from week to week).

We entered the new year with a new moon and said new moon just so happens to be "held under" Capricorn. Your sign. The astrologer-poet duo *Astro poets* wrote that this moon, "will ask us to especially consider what paths we are on and how we might want to make sure that they are the right ones." Perfect timing—classic *Capricorn*.

Well. This past year—in and out of isolation, met with massive bouts of change—you've started to see your path for what it really is.

You've learned to listen to your gut, and that's been a great compass.

You've started to forgive yourself for the wrong turns taken, and that's given you fuel to keep trucking forward.

But this coming year, the right path might be the slower one. The one that has no defined end. The one that requires some outside guidance. The one that makes you question the rigid definitions you've put into place—success, comfort, and happiness.

The "right" path is the one you're on.

It always has been.

Instead of working so hard to hit the next mile marker, remember that "success" isn't always seen. It isn't always material. It's not the promotion, the new project, another byline. It can simply be that intimate, internal serendipity.

Acceptance, contentment with the present, and a slower pace. With less rushing and more rest, you'll get to where you need to be.

*Bianca is a writer and strategist from Chicago. She helps run a digital community called Distant, spends too much time cuddling her two cats Pearl & Norman, and refuses to acknowledge that pasta sauce can also be called gravy. You can find more of her work at [www.biancapsmith.com](#) and you can find her on Instagram at [@biancapsmith](#) and [@distant.community](#).*

### Natalie

Dear Natalie,

I know you have some mixed feelings about writing this. You're worried you're going to reflect on this past year and be disappointed. And unfortunately, you're also finding it hard to be optimistic about the future.

But if the series finale of *Insecure* taught you anything, it should be that life isn't necessarily about celebrating your achievements, but about celebrating your growth. In *Insecure*, Issa's life didn't improve linearly. Over the course of five seasons, she didn't go from one unhealthy relationship to meeting her perfect man. She didn't go from being unhappy at work to having her dream job. Things got messy in-between. Like sleeping on an ex-boyfriend's couch and fighting with her friends messy. And even when things looked better on paper, like when her career was finally getting the recognition it deserved, she still had moments when she looked in the mirror and wanted to fast forward to the part of her life where everything was okay.

I've never related to anything more. Usually, when I write letters to myself or reflect on the past year, or even write a pro and con list, I'm looking for the facts. I'm reviewing exactly how my life improved and how it didn't. I'd list pros like, "I got a new job", "I felt more confident in my body", or cons like, "I still haven't met the love of my life". But this time around, when I started listing the things that happened in 2021, I quickly stopped and reminded myself of the things that can't be captured in a list. The number of times I sat in my living room and felt completely comfortable, a feeling that I thought I'd never have three years ago in this same apartment. Or the times I shared a homemade meal with my roommate-turned-really good friend. Or the nights I spent with my parents singing and dancing to Italian music in the kitchen.

Sometimes I still feel like despite those pros on my list, those tangible achievements, I can convince myself that I didn't have a good year because I'm still not at the part of my life where *everything* feels okay. Because something is still missing. But does that part of our lives exist? We don't get to have a series finale for our real lives. There's no montage of the main character fondly looking out into the distance, knowing all the loose storylines in her life have been neatly tied up. In TV shows and movies, you're led to believe that characters have completed their growth over 90 minutes or five seasons and now they get to go on with their lives peacefully. But in real life, the growth never stops.

So, Natalie, as much as you're trying to avoid reflecting on 2021 and as hard as it is to be optimistic about 2022, if there's one thing that's guaranteed, it's that you've grown personally and professionally over the past year and you can expect to keep growing in the future. You can look back on this year and be proud of yourself. And you can remind yourself of those moments dancing in the kitchen and sharing a homemade meal and know that those are the moments to be celebrated. And while they may not be guaranteed, it's safe to assume that there's more of that in your future, too.

*Natalie is a freelance writer based in New York City. She loves SoulCycle, croissants with her coffee, and taking too many pictures of sunsets in Central Park. You can find more of her writing at [www.natalie-zisa.com](#) and you can find her on Instagram and Twitter [@natalie\\_zisa](#)*

### Sam

To you, myself.

2021 was a year that felt entirely too fast. However, upon reflection, you have experienced so much more change and growth than ever before. You put in a lot of work this year!

The year started off with your health at its worst; at the bottom of a hole so dark, you couldn't see out of it. You could hardly walk down the street due to chronic pain, and you were feeling unsure on whether you had a future. In the spring, you hit rock bottom and it pushed you to make one of the most important choices you've ever made: to take control of your health. After years of useless doctor appointments, you doubted whether a Chinese-medicine-based program could do anything for you, but you still put all your effort into eating the suggested foods, taking the herbs, and doing the breathing exercises. You ate tens of pounds of plain potatoes for a week straight! As silly as it all felt at the time, you stuck with it and have done what you once believed impossible and began healing what you knew as incurable. That is no small feat. The hole you started in became more shallow.

Your relationship with food and your body also changed. The knowledge you acquired means you no longer have to panic over fad diets and mourn for a time when your body used to function. Food is no longer a mystery and is now a tool for wellbeing. With this new perspective on your health, you have been able to be more comfortable in your skin. With the ladder you built from all your hard work, you began to climb. You could begin to see the bright sky starting to shine down on you.

You were afraid you'd have to give up on some of your dreams because of your health, but this year you were finally able to start setting things in motion to move abroad in 2022. Since you were little, you've always wanted to move abroad, but it wasn't until a few years ago that you decided on Japan. Being a child of immigrants and wanting to move to another country caused some conflict, of course, but your confidence and determination ended up creating opportunities for new bonds with your family. Those bonds emerged as hands that reached towards you, helping you out of the hole you had been trying to climb out of for so long.

As you did all that hard work, you recognized that it was taking too much of your energy to worry about false friends that made you feel bad about things you cared about, and you were finally able to release them, along with years of anxieties. You had so much to unravel from those difficult times and you have learned so much about yourself. It was a relief to be free of that toxicity but you continued to struggle with the lack of meaningful relationships in your life. While yearning for like-minded people, you stumbled across a small community online who supported and encouraged each other. Their passion was contagious and reignited your creative goals. You left your past worries behind and buried them in the hole that once confined you. You mourned the friends you had lost over the years, but you planted new seeds for the future.

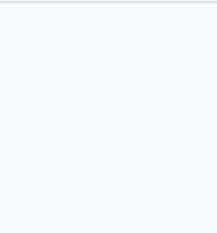
You know this already, but I am so proud of you. In 2021, you did things you would have written off as impossible at the beginning of the year. I am so grateful to be able to tell you that I love you and I will treat you with love in the future.

You deserve to feel peace in 2022.

Sam

*Sam Boudiab is a multidisciplinary creative based in Chicago. She prefers beverages and soups to be scalding hot and spends way too much time trying to "understand." She thinks babaghanouj is better than hummus. Find her work at [samanthaboudiab.com](#) and on Instagram at [@samanthaboudiab](#).*

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By **twenty-something.**

Twenty-something is a newsletter about being twenty-something. Or thirty-something. Or forty-something (you get the idea). Every week, we pose a question about the most important things impacting young adults today or the questions we can't stop thinking about while we mindlessly scroll on our phones, taking our Screen Time to new limits. We have a lot of questions. We will rarely answer them in their entirety. We will have fun trying.

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