**LWQA episode 121**

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I'm your host. Dr. Katie lender. On this episode. I'm issuing a bit of a challenge to any of you who want to join in with me in a fun activity for the year that I think could be really enjoyable. But first, let me give you some context. So I've mentioned a couple times on the show that I've been reading a lot of May certains journals and in these journals May certain who is a she was a poet she wrote fiction and Memoir and also she was a frequent journaler who.

Published her journals, but she was also a really frequent letter writer and she mentions this in many of her journals to the point where some weeks. She's writing 75 letters a week to various people all over the world. And I found this kind of shocking now admittedly. This is before email. So she's kind of living in the Backwoods of Maine and she's writing to people who she's developed relationships with over the course of her career and she doesn't have an electronic way of doing that.

And so she's writing these letters. And over and over again. She actually talks about how challenging it is for her to write these letters to take the time to do it. She feels like she's getting backlogged and she can't process her mail and you know, she's got all these other things going on including traveling speaking engagements and those kinds of things.

So despite the fact that she was talking about how much it was a problem for her. I really love this idea of writing letters and I was I got it kind of planted a seed for me and I was thinking about how we just don't really do that anymore. We write emails, but they're very different and they're often very business focused and we have kind of a mindset around email that we just kind of jot a quick note off to someone.

And we're not always I don't think anyway, I mean I don't use email this way writing kind of these, you know longer narrative based stories about what's going on in our lives and over the years. I've had a couple of people that I do that with that. I trade kind of lengthy emails with updates, but I've kind of traded that for things like Zoom calls, and we just kind of get on a video call and talk to each other.

So I've even gotten out of the habit of writing and of the your letters this was something that I know a lot of people engage in I used to do this giving kind of an update to friends and family about how things were going. But since I started podcasting and blogging I guess I kind of just assumed that people could figure out what was up, you know that way and they could get updates through these other mediums.

But the more I thought about it the more I missed this idea of connecting with people on a one-to-one level through letter writing. And here's what I think is kind of the benefits of focusing on letter writing one is that you really do have to slow down especially if you're doing a handwritten letter, which is what I typically do if I'm writing a letter or card to someone is I will actually do a handwritten note.

And so you do have to kind of slow down to make sure that your writing is legible first of all, but also you really have to think about how do you want to fill the page? What do you want to tell them about what's been going on in your life that you think would be interesting for them? I also like I mentioned think that one of the benefits of letters is that they're usually not as business focused especially if they're meant to be kind of the handwritten notes that you're sending to friends or family and with email.

I think we get into this mindset of it's very business e and we often do a lot of emailing for work. And so even if we're trying to switch gears and do something that's a little bit more focused on, you know, the personal or a little more narrative based. We're still using the same medium that we would use for business and that's a little bit challenging.

For me. I also think that letters are really focused on connection. It's different than podcasting or blogging where it's really a one-to-many platform and you're trying to share out, you know something that you think a lot of people might be interested in learning about or hearing about with a letter.

It's very focused on that person and sometimes responding to what they've written to you and your kind of deepening a relationship with them. And again, I find that very different than what. You over email? I also think with letters and this is kind of similar to what I really enjoyed about May certains journals is you have to focus on small moments.

So yes, you can update on the bigger things that are going on in your life. But if you're going to tell like a short story about something that happened to you or to your family, you have to kind of think about you know, what would maybe this person find interesting or funny and you know, what would be kind of giving them a smile if they were to read, you know a particular thing that.

To you and it kind of forces you to focus in on smaller moments in your life that you might want to include in a letter like that. Also, I think it's just fun to get mail. I think we can all agree that you know, there's a lot that comes to our mailboxes that isn't that fun like bills and all kinds of things and it's always fun to get a letter from someone or a card that really is more than just, you know, a happy birthday with their signature on it or something, you know, like it's actually they've taken the time to write to you.

And a couple other reasons, I'm really drawn to this. I do feel like writing letters in some ways is kind of a form of meditation it both in the way that it's connecting you to other people in the way that it's forcing you to slow down and have these small moments, but I think that it's also just a time to pause and we all need more of that I certainly do.

And then of course, there's that handwritten element, which I think is just more personal than emails to get that handwritten note and to actually see someone's handwriting and what it looks like so I want to do a challenge this year. I've been thinking about it for a while and I think it would be really fun.

I want to write more letters and I want you all to help me with this. It could be cards. It could be letters. It could be postcards. I don't really care but I. I want you to send me something so that I can write you a letter back and I'm going to give you my PO Box address so that you can send me something in the mail.

I need you to make sure you put a return address on it and a name. So I know who I'm writing back to and it would be great. If you gave me enough detail about something that I could actually respond to something that you have done. And of course I will share something. From my life that's going on and maybe we can strike up a bit of a correspondence.

So if you're interested in doing this letter writing challenge with me throughout the year if it sounds fun, I don't think it's going to be that much time on your end. Who knows I might get 50 of these letters in the mail and then I have to respond to them all but for you, maybe you're just writing a few throughout the year you can mail them to my PO box, which is PO Box 1 6 2 1 in Albany, Oregon.

With a zip code of 9 7 3 2 1. That's PO Box 1621 in Albany, Oregon with a zip code of nine seven. Three two one. I'm going to put this in the show notes as well in case you want to look there if you're driving or something right now and you can't write this down just make a mental note to go to the show notes and find this if you want to participate and the general idea is to just kind of let's all slow down.

Let's have more connection lets, you know deepen the relationships that right now are pretty one way because. Listening to the show what I don't always know who you are on that other end, and I think it'll be kind of fun. So the other thing I would say is if you don't want to write to me, but you're interested in this letter writing challenge take it on yourself and write to other people right to friends.

You want to reconnect with or family members or even just recognize people's birthdays with a card in the mail. Whatever you want to do this year. I think that it's a great way to deepen those connections and you know slow down take a breath and decide. What is it? We really want to be sharing with those relationships.

So I'm going to wait. And see what I get in the mail. I'll definitely update you all to see if anybody males anything to me, but I would love if you would help me out with this challenge. Thanks so much for listening to this episode and I'll look forward to seeing what you send me in the mail lifework QA is part of the radical self-trust podcast Channel a collection of content dedicated to helping you seek self-knowledge nurture your superpowers playfully experiment live your core values with intention practice loving kindness towards yourself and others.

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