**LWQA episode 131**

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I'm your host. Dr. Katie lender. In this episode. I thought I would give you an update on my letter writing challenge that I issued a little bit earlier this year and I will link to the original episode in the show notes in case you want to take a listen if you haven't already heard the episode and one of the things I heard from someone actually who wrote me a letter that I thought was interesting is that they almost skipped the episode because they thought it was about like writing to politicians and they didn't realize what it was about and then they ended up writing me a letter.

So the idea of this challenge. If you didn't listen to the episode was I gave out my PO Box address and asked people to write me a letter so that I could write them back and I wanted to get into writing more letters this year. And this was for a number of reasons. I was partially inspired by met certain who is a was a poet and a frequent letter writer and an author and I just loved reading her journals and hearing about all the letters that she was, right.

And I also have definitely felt a pull to better understand and know who is listening to the show and who are the kinds of people who are connecting with me, but I don't necessarily know who they are. So I ended up getting several letters from people. So I thought I would give a little bit of an update about how this is going and some of the things that I'm learning through this letter writing challenge.

So the first thing to know is that I have had seven different people write to me from three different countries. So far three of the people of those seven have written me multiple letters and I've also gotten a few postcards thrown in with the letters as well, which has been really fun. And people write about all kinds of things as you can imagine.

They tell me about how their day is going. They ask questions. They give me information about their lives or things that they really care about and it has been so fun. To participate in this letter writing challenge. So of course, I will give you my PO Box again if you are interested in writing to me and now I'm including it at the end of every episode in case you want to send me in a letter or a note and it is PO Box 1621 in Albany, Oregon nine seven, three two one and here are some things that I'm kind of learning through.

This challenge one is that I definitely have to set aside time to respond to these letters and often times. They'll come in and kind of a bat. I'll get like two or three when I check my PO box and then I'll carry them around with me for a while. And this has been especially true since I've been traveling a little bit in these past several weeks that I'll just kind of stick them in my planner and think about when I'm gonna get a chance to respond to them.

But I don't always respond right away. And this is something that I have felt a little bit of guilt about I know met certain felt a lot of guilt about this and oftentimes by litters will start with like thank you for your patience in my response, but it's definitely something that I have to put on my to-do list to like take care of responding to these letters and what it is also kind of forced me to do is to get intentional about.

Planning for that time. So for example, I have some like small cards and things like that that I've been using to respond to people and I need to make sure that I tuck one of those into my planner. I also need to make sure that I have stamps which is not something I necessarily thought about if which seems kind of silly that I wouldn't have thought about this at the beginning of the challenge but having stamps is pretty important if you're going to be mailing letters to people so I have to make sure that I have kind of blank things to write correspondence on.

And I definitely had a couple letters that I just wrote on like printer paper, which doesn't seem like the best way to be corresponding with people, but I didn't have a ton of stationary at hand and I wanted to make sure I was responding to them. So there's definitely a little bit of planning and like supplies if it goes into letter writing and I've had the benefit of having some people who are writing me letters like they have stationary and they're like doing, you know stickers or other things that are just kind of fun to receive in the mail.

I have other people who are just doing printer paper or postcards like it's really kind of all across the map but it's really fun to see how people are writing, you know these letters and putting them together. I also have some people who are writing. It just like quick notes on postcards or a one-page letter.

I have other people who are writing me multi-page letters. So depending on what I get I try to respond in kind and I try to write the length of whatever the person wrote to me. And so that's the other thing I have to take into account when I'm writing. These letters is trying to kind of respond in an equal way to the time that they took to write me.

I want to make sure that I'm putting in a lot of time to in my response. So what are the kinds of things that I'm responding to in these letters? Sometimes people have very specific questions for me. Like they want a recommendation about something or they've heard me talk about something and they want some more detail.

So sometimes that's what comes up in my response. I've definitely found it's a lot easier to respond to a letter that has questions in it because then you have an idea of things you want to write about. So typically I'll read through a letter from someone and I'll just make some brief notes like a bulleted list of like things that they mentioned or questions they had so that when I'm writing my own letter I can kind of glance at that list and make sure that I'm covering everything and then I'm responding to the things that they wrote about and it's not just about answering their questions, but also commenting on things that they told me about themselves.

So I might have a question back to them or I may have a comment about something that they said or or something really resonated with me and I want to make sure they know that so it's actually a really interesting genre to be writing in because it's very different in some ways than what you're paying attention to in other forms of writing.

So I do also include in this in my own responses in these letters things that are happening like right then in my life. So if I'm reading a particular book that I'm finding interesting or I've just listened to a podcast episode that I liked. These people are getting kind of a first-hand account of that because it's what's on my mind at the time.

So there's definitely stuff that I'm including in these letters that are not that's not necessarily being shared in other places. I do consider them to be more personal if someone has taken the time to write me a letter. I want them to feel that connection through the response. I think that's you know, it's a really special and unique thing to take your time out of your day to write a letter to someone so that's been really interesting.

The other thing that I found that's been kind of an interesting lesson with these letters is I know some of the people who are writing to me from other spaces like social media and they'll write me about something and then I'll see on social media like an update to that thing. So I'll know like how a situation got resolved for example, and then I'll have to write them a letter and it's interesting because.

You know when people used to write letters without social media or without email, they wouldn't have known that something got resolved. So they would be kind of responding to the emotion in the original letter and they wouldn't necessarily be knowing what had happened. So let me give a concrete example of this someone wrote to me about their job search and how they just had an interview.

They feel like it went really well and they were waiting to hear back. Well, I knew from other spaces that this person had heard back and that they had not. Progressed in the job search. So if I had just responded to that original letter not knowing that I would have said oh that's so exciting.

Like I would have really connected with their emotions of excitement and hope but now that I knew that they didn't get the letter or they didn't get the job offer. My letter response was, you know, I saw that you didn't get this and I'm still rooting for you like it was a totally different kind of emotional tone and it got me thinking about kind of the space-time, you know Continuum when it comes to these.

And that you know, like I'm getting them several days after their written. My response is often coming several days after I receive it and a lot of times things happen in the mean time between when a letter is being written and when it's received and responded to. So that's something that's kind of interesting as well.

If you're trying to kind of do daily, you know check-ins with people about what's going on in your day-to-day life. You're going to see that in different spaces than in the letter writing. And so sometimes the letter writing can actually go much deeper in terms of the emotions that someone's feeling in a particular moment because you're getting other kinds of Snippets and updates and other spaces like social media.

So I've been thinking a lot of that as I'm working on writing this letter responses. So all that to say I'm loving the challenge. I think it is super fun. I've really been enjoying it. I'm so thankful to the people who actually took me up on it and have been writing me these letters and I would welcome letters from you too.

I hope you'll consider jadi me a note you can again write to Katie Linder PO Box 1621 in Albany, Oregon nine seven, three two one and I will definitely write you back everyone who has written to me has gotten a response. And it's been a really fun thing to do. So, I hope you've enjoyed this letter writing challenge update.

I hope you'll consider participating and thanks so much for listening to this episode. Life word 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 and settle into your life's purpose learn more about the RSD Channel and access show notes and transcripts for each episode at Katie lender dot work / podcasts.

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