

Queer Platonic Love Letters: Re-imagining Intimacy and Connection

About Me

I am a queer, transgender non-binary, disabled, neuroqueer, mixed Chinese and White clinician of color. I work full-time in private practice on unceded Chochenyo Ohlone land (Oakland, CA). I work with other queer and trans adults and adolescents of color, supporting them in their journey to find a sense of belonging within themselves and others. I practice from a relational, attachment, somatic, and IFS approach.

Chosen family & queer platonic love

Chosen families are prominent in queer and trans communities of intersecting genders, race, disability, and class. They are one of the main ways that queer and trans people have and continue to take care of each other. In times of crisis, such as when basic rights are threatened or when nuclear families reject queer and trans members, these intentional communities can be life-saving. They serve a necessary role outside of crisis as well, by virtue of meeting basic needs of daily mutual love and support.

Queer platonic relationships often exist within these chosen families. These relationships push against strict ideas of what is platonic, romantic, or sexual. They can be a place of redefining intimacy and closeness, of loving without bounds. Queer platonic relationships can also be where folks see themselves reflected in one another, and where we get to love ourselves by virtue of loving each other. These relationships are incredibly intimate, powerful, and healing.

Love letters as a wellness practice

While historically left out of psychology and other scientific research, there is clear archival data of how love letters are an important form of care and healing for queer and trans people. Love letters offer the opportunity to slow down and cherish one another, have agency in creating preserved archives of queerness, and challenge internalized barriers that prevent us from being vulnerable with our loved ones. They can also be a somatic release by transferring energy from ourselves to another.

Materials needed: paper, pen/pencil, phone (for text, audio, or video recording), or **any other means of communication that is available and accessible to you**

Prompt: What are moments when you have felt loved, appreciated, supported, and/or cared for in your friendships? How would you want to document and share this moment with the people you have in mind?

Prompt 2: Who in your ancestry / lineage would you write a love letter to? Who would you thank for your opportunities, gifts of knowledge, and/or sources of sacred healing?

Reflection questions

- How do you define friendship? How were you taught to think about intimacy in friendships?
- How were you taught to draw parameters between platonic and romantic relationships?
- What are the ways that you learned to express love and connection with the people in your life? What cultural influences have shaped these expressions?
- What would it be like for you to write a love letter to a friend? What would it be like for you to receive one? What do you need to be in a place of giving / receiving?
- If not a written letter, what would you make? Be creative!