



More love letters in the world

No one understands the power of love letters better than US-born Hannah Brencher. All the more profound, it turned out, when encountered by total strangers; a discovery inspiring the creation of her website: The World Needs More Love Letters.

The company's raison d'être arose from her own struggle with loneliness: "Far less glamorous or romantic than you might imagine – I was struggling to get out of bed every morning. I was fresh out of college and grappling with my place & purpose in this world... Moving to New York City unravelled me and I needed a way to cope and step outside my own loneliness."

Hannah began by penning positive letters on her subway journeys, designed to reach out to strangers that she reckoned could also use a bit of a boost. She'd invite some to have a "bright day", and tell others how fantastic they were... even if they thought no one else had noticed. It was all powerful stuff, offering the very sentiments we sometimes forget to communicate to our loved ones, let alone total strangers.

Hannah would deposit her soul-nurturing notes all over the city "crooked into cafes & libraries & coat pockets." She then started blogging about her love letter writing, and watched in amazement as requests for love letters flooded in from all over the world. "In the span of 9 months, I wrote & mailed over 400 love letters to people in need around the globe & the process healed me. It absolutely healed me." It seems that the act of selflessly reaching out to others, was the very thing to irreversibly lift her own flagging spirits.

Having personally handwritten hundreds, if not thousands, of letters, Hannah was invited last year to do a TED talk, in which she cites the example of a woman whose husband returns from a tour in Afghanistan, and their ensuing struggle to reconnect: "So she tucks love letters throughout the house as a way to say: 'Come back to me. Find me when you can.'" She goes on to tell the story of a university student who left love letters around her campus only to find, the very next day, that countless love letters were suspended from the trees, on benches, and hidden in the bushes. And then comes the invigorating story of a man threatening suicide on his Facebook page, only to now be distinctly in the land of the living, with a stack of said love letters under his pillow.

"I've discovered that no matter how tough we act, we all still need a love letter from time to time. That even in a world crammed tight into 140 characters and constant status updates, there is a still a great craving for the handwritten note. But most of all, I learned with certainty that the world needs far more than just my own love letters." Hence the creation of her website, urging others to join her cause at www.moreloveletters.com. There are now more than 10,000 people from all over the world in her network. All poised to handwrite letters to order, or to target anyone feeling despondent or lonely and in need of someone to tell them that "everything will be OK." Mostly, however, they just scribe positive notes and scatter them about their own global localities; brightening the day of many an unsuspecting soul...

