

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

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- When you feel your compassionate mind has finished writing to you, read your letter through. Change or add anything, particularly in any areas where the critic has crept in. Our body is usually very good at picking up how our letter feels to us.

**How do you feel as you read your letter through?**

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- Once you have made any changes, read it again (it can be very powerful to read it aloud, or to have someone read it to you). This time really focus on reading it very slowly with a warm, kind voice tone and facial expression.

**How do you feel? Does it feel different to when you read it through the first time?**

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**What things particularly struck you about this?**

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**Did you cover any of these areas? If not, add them in and see how the letter feels now:**

- **Engagement with suffering:**

1. Care for wellbeing (your motivation, intention and heartfelt wish for yourself):

e.g. *'I wanted to write to you because I can see that you have been having such a difficult time since Baby was born. I wanted to let you know that I am here with you and to help you as best I can.'*

**Your examples of communicating your wish or hope for yourself with this letter**

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2. Sensitivity to the distress (seeing all the areas of suffering):

e.g. *'I can see that you have been waking feeling so anxious and full of dread, and you have been trying to hide this from everyone which is putting such a strain on you. This has been so very hard for you.'*

**Your examples of demonstrating your sensitivity to your distress**

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3. Sympathy (being moved by the suffering):

e.g. *'I am so sorry that you have been going through all of this. I know that you were so looking forward to having a baby, and you are so disappointed with how things have turned out so far. I can feel just how painful this is for you.'*

## Your examples of sympathy for yourself

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### 4. Distress tolerance (being able to bear the feelings that come up):

e.g. *'Although your feelings of disappointment and sadness are painful, they will pass, as all feelings do, and in the meantime you can use all your usual strategies that have helped you get through painful feelings in the past, and the new ones you have been discovering too; your compassion practice, going and doing things that you enjoy with your baby even though you are feeling this way, spending time with people you feel comfortable with . . . '*

## Your examples of distress tolerance you might want to put in this letter to yourself

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### 5. Empathy (understanding just why this is significant to you as opposed to anyone else):

e.g. *'This is so particularly hard for you because you really wanted this baby, and you also have learned to set very high standards for yourself in order to feel loved and accepted. You wanted people to be proud of you when you became a mum, but now you feel you have let them down. This is so painful, and scary, because you really do want, and need, their help too.'*

## Your examples of how you might be empathic to yourself in this letter

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6. Non-judgement (understanding and accepting that these feelings and issues are part of human suffering. Holding them with warmth and kindness without being critical or judgemental of them):

*e.g. 'These struggles and feelings are common, and normal, if very painful, aspects of having a new baby, and have been experienced the world over for hundreds of years. These are not your fault at all.'*

**Your examples of conveying non-judgement to yourself in your letter**

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