

Dear World,

Most people love the holidays. For me, they were a time of disappointment, fear, regret and anger. I'm a survivor of human trafficking. While others were celebrating, I was being beaten and raped by men who sought out my trafficker to buy sex from a child.

When I finally exited what we survivors call "the life," I was given a fresh start. In the beginning, I felt alone and angry. I lived in the same city as many of the men who bought me as a child. I even saw some of them around town.

Slowly, I learned to forgive those who hurt me. It took years of journaling and counseling to make me the strong woman I am today. It is my mission to give back to others in situations similar to mine. I always thought no person on this planet would ever love me and that I was worthless in the eyes of everyone around me. But when I started to love myself, flaws and all, I was able to recognize the love and compassion in others.

This holiday season, send a note or card or write a letter to those who mean the most to you. Spend time with people who make you whole. Be with people who love you for the person you are. They may not always be related to you by blood, but they are still family.

Peace,  
Asia Graves

It's remarkable just how much forgiveness a single sheet of paper can hold.

Putting thoughts on paper can be a powerful way to express feelings, heal and inspire. We asked five people whose lives have been touched by violence or cruelty to write Letters of Peace that reflect their enduring faith in humanity. Meet the authors, read their letters and learn more about the power of paper.

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