

WRITE YOURSELF INTO YOUR *Dreams*

Troubleshooting ELS Letters

You'll likely experience more resistance when writing your ELS Letters than during any other stage of the ELS Method, because of the powerful and positive changes they bring; this resistance usually manifests by not following the instructions. If you feel blocked in writing your ELS Letters, start by re-reading chapter 5 to make sure you followed all of the instructions. If re-reading chapter 5 doesn't alleviate your block, consider the following possibilities:

1. YOU DIDN'T EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS FULLY.

If you write a set of ELS Letters and feel only a little better, ask yourself: *Did I express all of my feelings fully in my Expression Letter? Is there anything I left out? And did I write what I most needed to hear from the other person in my Response Letter, or do I need to make additions?* Remember: the Response Letter should include exactly what you most need to hear from the other person, as if your own personal genie could make them say exactly what you'd wish to hear.

2. YOU'RE AFRAID ELS LETTERS WON'T "WORK."

The first ELS Letters you write are the most difficult, because you haven't felt their benefits yet. But you just have to take the leap! They have significantly helped everyone I've shared them with and I know they can help you, too. It's common to ask yourself: *What difference are imaginary letters going to make with someone who would never apologize to me in real life?* It's a fair question, but the messages you receive through your Response Letter will often bring you to tears because of how realistic they *feel*. The most significant outcome of the ELS Letters is a greatly improved relationship with *yourself*. This improvement is made possible *because* you're providing for yourself what you need from someone else using your imagination and creativity.

3. YOU NEED AN APOLOGY SOONER.

Sometimes when you're writing an Expression Letter, you'll feel unable to move past the anger category. Anger is a form of self-protection, and you may need to hear an apology *first*, before feeling safe enough to move onto the hurt and sadness category, because expressing those emotions feels more vulnerable. So, if you feel blocked in moving onto sadness, try crafting a Response Letter out of *only* the anger statements that you've written so far. Once you've had that shorter Response Letter read to you, you'll likely find it easy to circle back and complete the rest of your Expression Letter and a full Response Letter based on that full version.

4. YOU'RE AFRAID TO STIR UP THE PAIN.

People often tell me that they've already processed these painful experiences and gone over all "this stuff" over and over again—with therapists and other healers—reliving all the ways in which someone has hurt them, and they don't want to do it again. It's completely understandable to feel that way, especially when all that healing work hasn't made you feel any better. However, ELS Letters really *are* different than the other things you've tried. Yes, you will be touching on this old pain again, but it's for the explicit purpose of providing that pain with a channel so that it can finally be released and replaced with feelings of lightness, relief and love.

5. YOU CAN'T TAKE IN THE APOLOGIES.

One of my clients stopped me while I was reading her Response Letter, because she felt like the apologies weren't "sinking in." For so long, she had been surrounded by people who had refused to take responsibility for the ways in which they had hurt her, that hearing apologies felt foreign. And because of all that, she actually felt uncomfortable receiving apologies. So I let her know that it's natural and normal to need apologies when you've been hurt or wronged; *everyone needs and deserves an apology when they've been hurt or wronged.*

She also shared that she was afraid that if she received the apology, it would mean condoning the hurtful behavior. Part of her wanted to dig her heels in and say, "That was not right! I'm not gonna let them get away with that!" I let her know that she *was* right: their behavior wasn't okay. But it takes a lot of energy to stay angry; energy that she could be using to do other things, like making her dreams come true.

The reality is, when you receive heartfelt apologies for all the ways you've been wronged—especially from one of your parents—it sends a clear signal to your system that you deserve better. Once you've heard the full Response Letter, you will have internalized those messages, your self-worth will have greatly increased, and you'll no longer feel the need to stay angry.