

## CHAPTER 19: The Letters

**A**fter I saw Dr. Mackey for several months, he asked me to write a couple of letters. The first one he asked me to write was a letter to myself from my grampa. I thought it was pretty weird at first but he convinced me to try it, so I did. I used to call Grampa Jack “G-Yo” just for fun. It’s like a hip-hop thing. He didn’t like hip-hop, but he’d go along with it, and when I called him “G-Yo” he’d call me “T-Yo.” That always made me laugh. Anyway, this is the letter I wrote for Dr. Mackey from Grampa Jack to myself:

*Dear T-Yo.*

*I love you with all my heart and soul. I wish I didn't have to go.*

*I also wish that you knew how bad my health was and were a bit nicer to me when I would cough a lot and get tired.*

*Tyler Daniel Paulson, I will always miss you and love you and I'm still watching over you and always will.*

*I am in a very happy place right now and you too will someday be with me.*

*Your voice was my favorite thing to hear every day.*

*It may have sometimes seemed like I didn't like your father but I always did.*



*I was and still am oh so sorry to leave!  
Your favorite grampa,  
Jack Paulson*

The second letter Dr. Mackey asked me to write was to my mom. He wanted me to tell her how much I loved her, but also tell her all the stuff I would regret not telling her if she ever did die, which of course I hope and think she won't. It was hard at first but I sort of got on a roll once I started thinking about stuff to say and to thank her for. Here's the letter, which made my mom cry and which she actually framed and now has hanging in my mom and dad's bathroom.

*Dear Mom,  
Here are some of my best memories of you and me, and our family:  
You letting me stay home to watch the World Series when I was nine.  
Seeing both you and Dad on the field after we won the nine-year-old  
Little League championship.  
The first morning of kindergarten when you gave me a big hug and said  
with tears on your cheeks, "This is the beginning of something very great  
for you, Tyler."  
Going to the University of Iowa football game with you and Dad and  
Trevor with homemade cheese-and-ham sandwiches — you always gave  
me two of them!  
Stopping at a roadside rest stop and playing chess with me when I was  
only four years old on the way to Davenport to see your aunt and my  
great-aunt (I still remember that).  
You and Dad stopping in Indiana on our way home from our long car  
trip to Pennsylvania and getting me a Three Musketeers bar and a root  
beer after we had just stopped about fifteen minutes earlier. That was  
very nice and I really liked that.  
You coming to my spelling bee last year and making me feel like the  
winner even though I finished second.  
You giving me a clean slate and letting me start over again after a*



## SNOWMAN ON THE PITCHER'S MOUND

*rough time last winter.*

*You and Dad supporting me and standing behind me this past year even though I've said and done some pretty dumb and scary things.*

*Giving me a great birthday party last August at the Iowa Cubs baseball game in Des Moines.*

*You getting goofy at the backyard block party last summer and spraying everyone with the hose.*

*The way you always respect me and love me and talk to me and listen to me no matter what I do.*

*Thanks for being the best mom in the universe.*

*Tyler Daniel Paulson*

