



COMING CLEAN SERIES

**DEAR BODY,
I CAN
EXPLAIN...**

A LOVE LETTER TO MY BODY

PENNY PLAUTZ

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HERE I AM.
COMING CLEAN.
WILLING TO
TELL THE TRUTH
AND RECONCILE
MY RELATIONSHIP
WITH MY BODY.
WHATEVER I'VE BEEN
TELLING MYSELF
UP UNTIL NOW
IS JUST A STORY.
IT'S TIME TO WRITE
A MORE EMPOWERING ONE.
I'M STARTING WITH
THIS LOVE LETTER
TO MY BODY.

Penny Plautz



DEAR BODY, I CAN EXPLAIN...

There are so many things I have blamed on you, Dear Body. **So many ways I have shamed you and used you as an excuse not to show up and be fully present.** To not be me, the full expression of who I am - *quirky, creative, compassionate, wise, weird, woo-woo, funny, fabulous, daring, and different.*

I had this ridiculous notion that if I had the perfect body, I'd have the perfect life. **That somehow my weight equaled my worth.** If my body was acceptable to others, I might be able to accept it myself.

But I had it all backwards.

The love and acceptance had to start with me. I had to know that I mattered regardless of how I chose to interpret what I saw in the mirror on any given day.

So I'll start with the Hawaiian practice of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Ho'oponopono prayer consisting of four phrases is where all negotiations begin with me. **I'm sorry. Please forgive me. I love you. Thank you.**

You, Dear Body, have always been an incredible teacher. Despite my attempts to control every little detail, you have always overridden my "authority" with your undeniable truth. The harsher the terms, the bigger the push back on your part. And rightly so. You were, after all, tasked with keeping me alive at all costs.

You know me inside out. My oldest friend, my most loyal and faithful companion, **you have never stopped working for me in all these years.** No matter how many times I gave you reason to.

You have worked tirelessly on my behalf in ways I'll never completely comprehend.

You've made sure my heart beats, my body heals, my senses interpret incoming data at a phenomenal rate and adjust accordingly, my organs are functioning, my cells are communicating, toxins are being eliminated, food gets digested, nutrients are extracted, energy is distributed, oxygen gets allocated, my brain is protected, my immune system is defended, and the list goes on. **My health, well-being, and survival have been your #1 priority 24/7 for my entire life.**

For that I am eternally grateful.

And yet I have withheld so much love, so much pleasure, so much joy from you. There is no excuse for such stinginess.

I would never treat a friend or even a complete stranger with the total disregard and disrespect with which I have treated you. I have held you to impossible standards and punished you or dismissed you when you refused or were physically incapable of complying with my demands.



I have blamed and shamed, starved and stuffed, ridiculed and criticized, betrayed and abandoned you time and again. Granted, that's a strange way of showing my appreciation and gratitude.

Please forgive me.

I know every wrong-doing, every insult, injury, compromise, or transgression has been registered and recorded somewhere in my cells. **What is most appalling is the majority of these wounds were self-inflicted.**

After all these years **I still have these outrageously unrealistic expectations about how you should look, feel, perform, and age.**

For some reason I expect you to be able to **easily attain and effortlessly maintain the elusive ideal weight** etched on my driver's license. I expect the thick, lustrous hair I was supposed to have inherited from my paternal grandmother to be on my head, not my chin. And I expect any extra "insulation" to go where it's needed, not where it's already stockpiling.

How can I expect to look, feel, and weigh the same as I did years ago when teaching fitness classes, swimming all summer, rollerblading around the park, and daily dance parties were the norm? Not the menopausal melodramas, midlife mayhem, or pandemic paranoia that are the new normal now.

Life feels heavier these days. And so do I.

It's not only unrealistic but also unkind for me not to allow you, Dear Body, to evolve and expand into all you've become. You are a living landscape of love, loss, and longing. Of dreams, daring adventures, and disappointments.

Why would I resent the way these experiences frame my face, burrow into my belly, settle on my shoulders, huddle around my hips, and linger on my legs?

But sometimes I do.

"You are a living landscape of love, loss, and longing. Of dreams, daring adventures, and disappointments."



I rail against the quiet conspiracy that made me feel invisible at forty and obsolete by fifty.

I know I have a choice whether to buy into this belief system or not. Just as I know feeling fabulous over fifty, sixty, seventy, and beyond is its own kind of revenge.

I resent being held to a standard of beauty defined by an industry that sells us all on the notion that **we are fundamentally flawed, inadequate, and in constant need of fixing because we will never be enough on our own.**

Of course, **nothing could be further from the truth.**

Yet, sadly, being bombarded with this message subtly and not so subtly for half a century shaped my relationship with you, Dear Body.

I began to believe them, which meant distrusting you.

Forgive me. I had a lapse in judgment.

Was that when the insidious voice of "reason" convinced you act your age? And insinuated you're too old to ride a bike, take up skiing, or attempt a cartwheel and the splits?

When did she take over for the sassy seeker of truth who knows that **life truly begins when the Princess becomes the Queen and decides to Own Her Throne?**

Feeling fat, fuzzy, or fatigued is no way to reclaim the health, power, or joy that is yours for the taking. **It's just a temporary response to an untenable situation.**

I understand how world events leave you feeling weary. **I know how very sensitive you are, Dear Body, and how you feel the world's pain acutely.** I know how hundreds of tiny hurts collect around your heart, hoping to heal but reluctant to forgive or forget.

I understand how the silent suffering and shame of our ancestors lives on in you. I feel how the belly, breasts, birth canal, and back bear the burden of betrayal, bravery, and being powerful, witchy women.

Bravery and boldness are your birthright. **Transcending the limitations of our mystical mothers and giving voice to their deepest truths is your promise to them, Dear Body.**

A tall order indeed.

Padding and protecting yourself in defense is a reasonable response. Seeking solace in comfort food and beverages, numbing out with Netflix, or non-stop work is a familiar fix for troubling times.

But it also creates a pattern of powerlessness and self-loathing. Of becoming an internal terrorist who criticizes and condemns you for not being able to handle it all without gaining weight and losing yourself.



It's easier to give up on deep connections and true intimacy than to drop down into you, Dear Body, to seek a solution.

Exposure to that kind of emotional intensity and vulnerability can feel overwhelming.

You are not to blame for the abuse you endured. **You paid the price of nice.** First through anorexia, then promiscuity, then disconnecting from joy, personal power, and the soul's insistence on forgiveness.

Learning to instinctively trust and align with your wisdom has never been quick or easy. It has taken decades and several failed attempts to reconcile my relationship with you.

But it is the only way forward. **Because you, Dear Body, hold the key to me.** You are the ongoing mystery my mind can't unravel. You honor the unspoken truths my heart can't bear to witness. You evolve with every breath.

So here we are. **Coming Clean once again. Reclaiming our health, power, and joy - one truth at a time.**

Here are my new vows to you.

"Dropping down into the body opens me to intense emotions and extreme vulnerability. Yet it also avails me to intuitive insights and instincts that remain a mystery to my mind."



Dear Body, I promise to nourish you, honor you, and respect you.

1. I will feed you delicious, nutritious foods and provide chocolate on demand.
2. I will drink water all day even if it means ten more trips to the toilet.
3. I will allow you to rest, relax, and follow your own rhythm.
4. I will move in ways that strengthen, stretch, challenge, and delight you.
5. I'll adorn you with your favorite bling. *Including your most fabulous shoes.*
6. I'll put you in water when you get cranky. *I'll even throw in flippers and your flowered swim cap.*
7. I'll make play part of each day and let pleasure to be the measure of success.
8. I'll consider aging a gift and observe the changes with curiosity and kindness, grace and gratitude, humility and good humor.
9. I promise to be present with you *in this moment*. I will not compare you to younger, thinner, healthier, or sexier versions of yourself or others.
10. I will drop down into you and access your immense emotional intelligence when I feel frightened or freaked out. Checking out is *no longer* an option.
11. I will ask for your assistance in interpreting and clarifying your cryptic clues to our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
12. I will come clean and tell your truth for the health of all concerned.

You, Dear Body, are an exquisite expression of my soul's evolution.
And I so seldom acknowledge you, thank you, or tell you I love you.

You met the exact physical specifications required for me to learn my life lessons this time around. **You have never failed to do your job and provide life supporting feedback.**

Even if my grievances against you felt justified at the time, **I know you always have been and always will be on my side.**

At long last, I'm listening to you. Help me interpret every ache and every pain, the weight loss and weight gain. Help me hear the wisdom in my gut, the who-when-where-why-what, and the truth you convey in your very nuanced way.

I am paying attention. **What I require now is the courage to consistently show up and honestly address your concerns.**

Fear-based thoughts are just the story I default to when I'm tired, "hangry", lonely, or scared. **I'm ready to write a more empowering story and be free of the not-so-civil war I've allowed to wage on within me for far too long.**

I'm not saying I will never again blame you for all my issues.
And I'm fairly certain skinny jeans and other questionable fashion trends will never be a choice *we* make.

But I will love you, nevertheless. Because I couldn't do any of this without you. I need all parts of me aligned and accounted for in order to carry out my mission: **For all bodies to feel they belong and are accepted here.**

It starts with me. So let me end where I began.

I'm sorry. Please forgive me. I love you. Thank you.

And so it is. **It is already done.**

Penny

**"You,
Dear Body,
met the
exact
physical
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