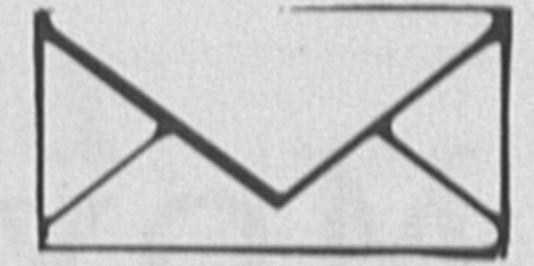




Letters home



Dear Mom and Dad,

This letter has been a long time in coming. I've wanted to write it for years now, but had decided against it in fear of disappointing you and losing your affection. Over the years, however, I've found that not writing it has affected our relationship. It has kept me from sharing important things with you and made me feel like I couldn't be myself with you, which has put increasing distance between us. I write this to you now in the risk of hurting our relationship and in the hopes of improving it.

For the past four years, Kate and I have been living together as a couple. We love each other very much and are committed to being together for the rest of our lives. I know that you won't be able to understand our commitment and that it will be very hard for you to accept it. From the outside, our relationship is foreign to your experience. It does not follow the norm. To you, that means our life together will be hard, and in some ways it is. But in many ways it is rich and fulfilling. We give to each other true companionship -- the kind that neither one of us was able to feel in romantic relationships with men. For me, meeting Kate was like an answer to my dreams. I never had a satisfying relationship with the men I dated. I never felt I could be completely myself, that I could talk about my feelings and be understood. It made me feel inadequate. I wanted so much to have a close, serious relationship.

When I fell in love with Kate, I didn't know what to make of it at first. Thankfully, I was in therapy at the time, and my therapist helped me understand my feelings and see them as OK. Loving a woman was a new experience for Kate, too. We both had to look inside and be true to our feelings in spite of social pressures to do otherwise.

I have told (my brothers, sister-in-law, and cousin) about the full extent of my relationship with Kate, and of course all of my good, close friends know. Kate's parents have known for some time. I regret now that it has taken me so long to tell you, but I wanted to spare you the pain of knowing. You have been good parents and I was afraid that you would blame yourselves for having a child outside the norm. There was nothing you did that "made" me homosexual.

Of course, you will feel many things in response to this news and I've enclosed a book to let you know that you're not alone ("Now That You Know," by Betty Fairchild and Nancy Hayward). In the end, I'd like you to be able to view Kate's and my relationship from the inside -- to see our love and how happy it makes us,

to see that it is very much like your feelings for each other. I also want you to include Kate in our family events, because she is my family now.

I know this news will be hard for you to hear, and I'm sorry for any bad feelings it brings. I will be glad to help you understand it in any way I can, to answer questions you might have about my past and present. Remember that I told you this because I love you and because I wanted to make our relationship more honest. This is the hardest letter I've ever written, but I feel more open already.

With love,
Luisa

Dearest Lulu,

I don't know if I can write this letter or not. It's been almost a week since your letter came -- at first I was just numb and my arms and heart weighed a ton. Since then I alternately feel all the other ways. Of course I realized there was a possibility but I was hoping so hard you and Kate were just good friends and from things you said and did, it seemed possible. Many women who live together aren't Lesbians.

The "If Onlys" are almost overwhelming and I know they don't make sense, but they keep coming. You are such a part of me and I wish so much that somehow I had been able to do some things better. It seems in your case it was such a fine line and because of funny circumstances, you went over it.

All of the pain that you have had and the knowledge that my darling Lulu is on the "outside" in our society -- even though things are different now, it is still true -- hurts so very much. I would have done anything to protect you from all this, and I feel so utterly helpless.

I am trying so hard to look at the good things. I thank God we know Kate and like her so much. We see the wonderful compatibility you have together and we see serenity and sureness in you. We admire the commitment you both seem to have. And of course the best thing is that there is no question that Dad and I will love you forever. I will pray constantly that God will give me the strength to accept this with grace. Dad is able to accept things much easier than I. He is so objective and less emotional, even though he does love me and you kids very much. My friends have always filled a big gap, helping and supporting by talking these hard things through, but I haven't been able to tell anyone yet, and I'm not sure it wouldn't be harmful to you. In any case I feel very lonely and I'm hoping

it will help when we can talk to (your brother and sister-in-law) over Memorial Day weekend.

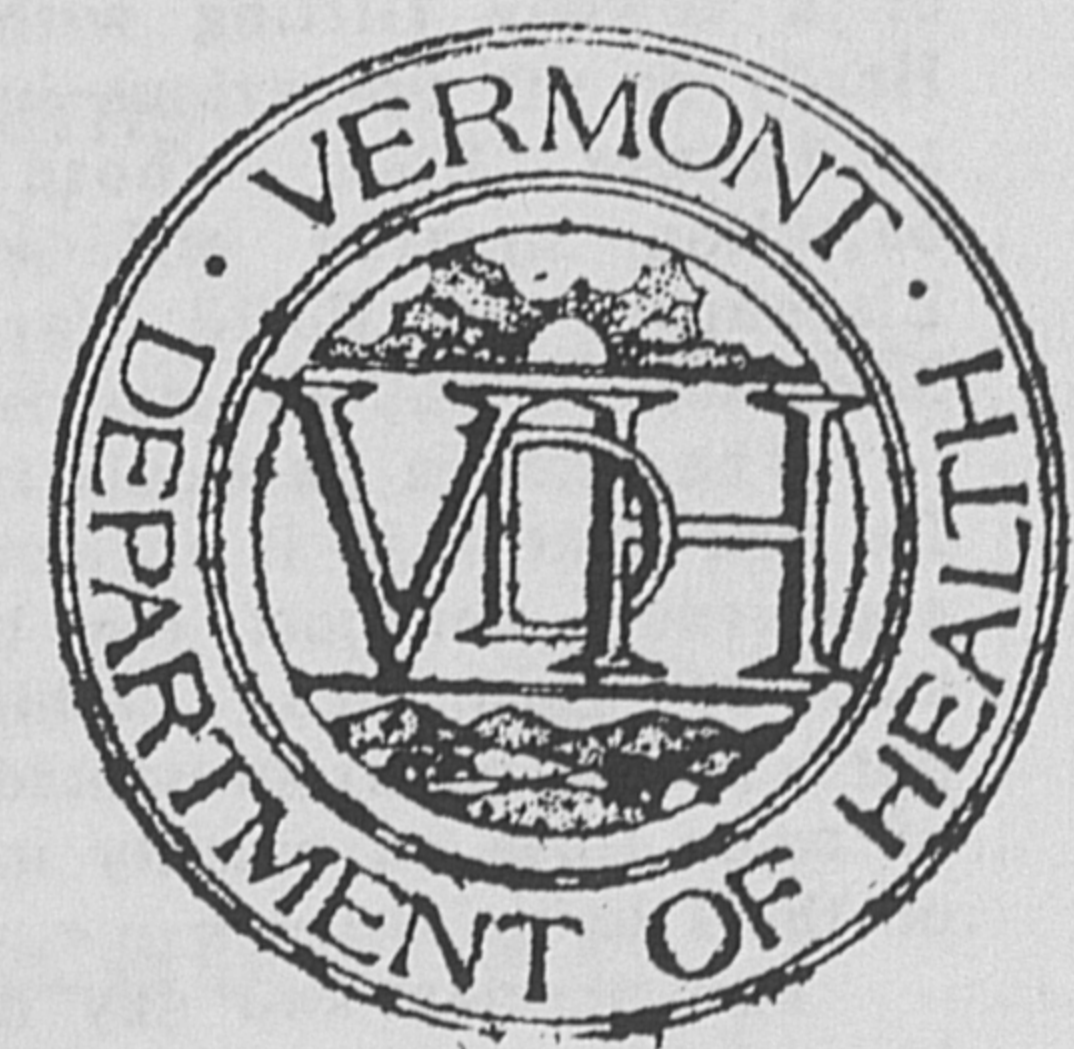
I need to ask some questions, because I have to put together some of the pieces. When did you and Kate meet? Did your therapist make you see there were several options to your dilemma? It was so new for you both. I want to learn these things, so we don't have to talk about them with Kate. When did you tell (your cousin), and do you think she told (her parents)?

There's much more, but I guess this is enough for now. We'll be thinking of you so much as your birthday approaches.

Love,
Mom

Luisa's note: This was written three years ago. My relationship with my parents has improved tremendously since then. I'm still surprised that their acceptance came so easily. Kate has been completely welcomed into the family -- in fact, last month my father gave us money for a deposit on a house.

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