

Writing Postcards With Pizazz

The other day I met my friend, Ed, in the campus post office and caught his hand just as he was dropping a postcard into the slot. It had a tutti-frutti colored glossy of David Bowie, in his wilder days, on one side and a paragraph requesting money on the other. It read:

Dear Dad,
I is learning a lot here. The food is good. Going fishing tommorrow. Running out of bait. Please send money.

Surf Naked,
Sir Walter

P.S. — I joined the Ozone Ridge Riders Club. My name is now Sir Walter Reckless. Went on a panty raid last night.

Needless to say, I tore the postcard in half and dropped it in the garbage. "Hey, that cost 20c," said Ed. "I thought it was okay."

"Well, good try Walter," I replied, "but whaddya say we doctor it up a bit?"

I purchased a postcard with a picture of trees — good, clean, healthy American trees. You know what I mean.

Keeping the basic thoughts intact, I helped Ed make a few minor changes.

Dear Dad,

I really appreciate the opportunity to expand my intellectual horizons. The environment here is conducive to a healthy mind and body.

Tommorrow, I will participate in an outdoor lab activity. Please send money for lab-related supplies.

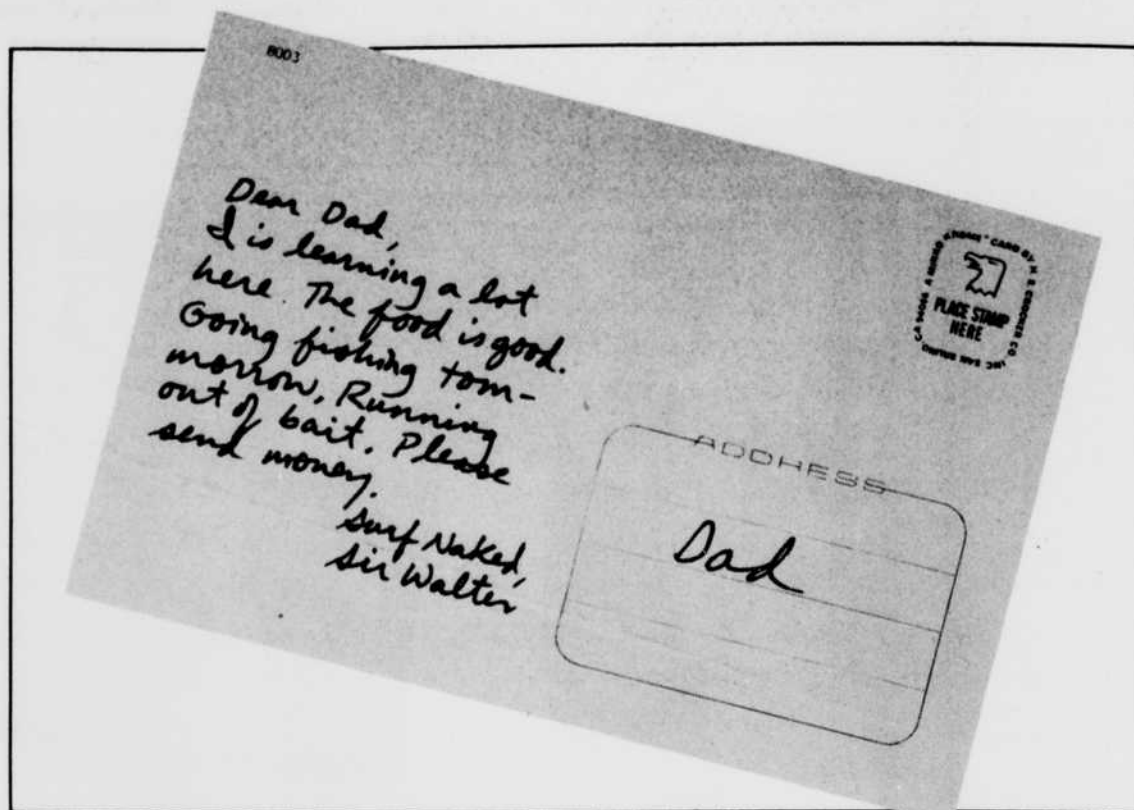
Your loving son,
Edwin

P.S. — I joined a respected campus organization involved in collecting clothes, meeting others, and community activities.

No more than a few days had passed before Ed received a check for \$200. I heard him singing Bowie's "Golden Years" on the way to Jed's Tackle Store.

The point is this. Often, it's not what you say to your parents, but how you say it that matters. Remember, mom and dad were put on this earth to send you money for college. Don't be afraid to ask for it.

Several approaches can be effective. You should choose yours depending on your individual situation and relationship with your parents. Here are a few consistent producers.



The Guilt Trip

Dear Mom,

I'm sorry this letter is so hard to read. I am writing it with the little plastic nob on the end of my shoelace as I can't afford a pencil right now.

I'm also kinda low on food. But don't worry. This buddy I met at the Greyhound

Station says he knows where we can get some mushrooms and berries. Are the red or the white ones the dangerous kind?

Yours in Decadence,
Ralph

Yuppie Baloney

Dear Dad,

Remember how, when you were in college, you joined the Ki Alpha Cow fraternity?

Well, I went there today. The only problem is that there is now a \$50 initiation fee. But hey, like I said, what's fifty bucks when it comes to family tradition?

Enclosed is a self-addressed stamped envelope.

"Moo — Audacious"
Your son,
Peter

The Screamer

Hey,

If I don't get a little cooperation from you folks pronto, I'm gonna hitch a ride to the coast and take up residence in a driftwood shack with some skin head friends of mine.

How do you think the neighbors will feel about that? Of course, if Pall Malls and Budweisers are more important than the future of this nation, I'll

understand! Send money!

Eat Dirt,
Crutches

High Powered

Mom, Dad,

I hate to disturb you but I was working in biology lab with these exotic viruses last week, and the beaker slipped. You can probably guess what happened next.

I caught African Boogaloo Fever. Medication is \$87.

It's no problem if you can't send the cash, I mean if it's not in your budget this month.

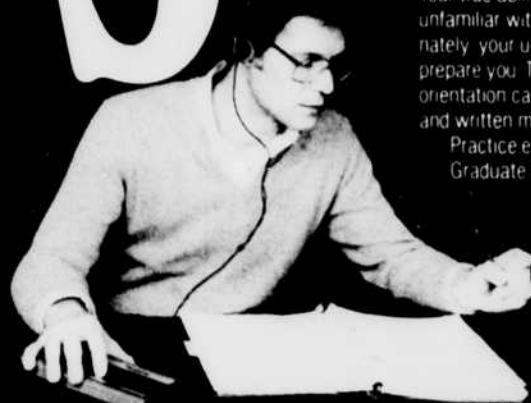
Nice knowing you,
Cindy

P.S. — If I don't get the medication in 24 hours, I'll die.

Like I say, these are just a few of the letters I have crafted to put money in mailboxes. They should be used sparingly, and with caution. Remember not to send the same letter twice. And always affix dull meaningless postage stamps like the ones with pictures of Eisenhower or "The American Fungi Collection." Parents like that stuff.

— SCOTT STARBUCK

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