

POSTCARD

FESTIVAL
ideas

Postcards to My Younger & Older Self.

A Collaboration between Chester U3A and
Division of Psychology, University of
Chester for the 2026 Festival of Ideas.





postcards to my younger and older self

You're doing better than you think

Believe in your future self

Don't stop
Don't stop
now

Proud of how far you've come

- Dream Big
- Keep Going
- Trust the Process
- Enjoy the Ride

- Discipline
- Datienne
- Patience
- Perspective
- Gratitude

Dear Future Me,

Dear Future Me,

Dear Future Me,

Progress Not Perfection



POSTCARD



I'd like to tell my younger self to work harder at school instead of doing homework on the bus. When I start work I'd save a little, only a very little, each month, saved somewhere I can't touch it, so it can grow nicely for when I retire. I'd like to be less sure that what I believe must be right, so I can open my ears to listen and measure other people's views, instead of dismissing them without thought. I'd like to engage more with my parents instead of always thinking I needed to be different from them and their 'older' generation and take on board their lifetime's wisdom - most times they were right and I was wrong!

Retired U3A member

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
Festival of Ideas 2026,
University of Chester.
Town Hall.

Dear Younger Me,

Life is messy. Embrace it like a child. Be curious and ask questions, but don't expect definitive answers. In forming relationships, recognise that what's beneath the surface is far more important than what's on it. Don't be deterred by the time and effort required to truly get to know someone. 'Work' is not a dirty word. Find something that suits you and do it cheerfully and whole-heartedly. People will judge you. Mostly this is opinion based on limited information. Choose what to accept. Some will try to take advantage of you. Don't let them. Value experience and wisdom but remember that no one has a monopoly on either. Be creative. The process is deeply rewarding and the product is uniquely you. Never stop being curious, creative and occupied. This is what gives life meaning. With very best wishes for the future, A retiree in permanent denial

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To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my younger self...

- 1 Our life is what our thoughts make it.
- 2 We do not see things as they are—we see things as we are.
- 3 You get what you concentrate on. There is no other rule.
- 4 Gratitude is the fastest form of healing.
- 5 The people who are the hardest to love are usually the ones who need it the most.

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
Festival of Ideas 2026,
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To my younger self,

Take your time in making decisions, and always sleep on it, things can look different in the morning.

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my younger self,

Be curious about everything
and everybody around you.
Pursue your interests and
never shy away from an
opportunity.

'A lifelong learner'

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my younger self,

Try harder to make sport or singing or some other group activity part of your life when you are young. Wherever life takes you, there will always be a community of people whom you can join with to share this experience and find friends in every location.

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my Younger self,

Learn about critical thinking. This wasn't something offered when you were young, and it is such an important skill. Read information from trusted sources, clarify your thoughts and encourage your family & friends to discuss things with you. Quiet and peaceful dinner times are great for family harmony, but these life skills will help you outside your happy home.

Someone who learnt this skill too late!

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

Festival of Ideas 2026,

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To my younger self,

Believe in yourself
while accepting others
have ideas too.

Stay curious while
acknowledging not
everyone is as
interested in
EVERYTHING as you.

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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I'd like to tell my younger self to work harder at school instead of doing homework on the bus. When I start work I'd save a little, only a very little, each month, saved somewhere I can't touch it, so it can grow nicely for when I retire.

I'd like to be less sure that what I believe must be right, so I can open my ears to listen and measure other people's views, instead of dismissing them without thought. I'd like to engage more with my parents instead of always thinking I needed to be different from them and their 'older' generation and take on board their lifetime's wisdom - most times they were right and I was wrong!

Retired U3A member

To Myself,

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Now aged 76 I see that I have been many different people over the years. I am pleased to say that I like the girl, the woman, the wife, the mother, the teacher, the nana, the sailor, the hiker, the poet, the artist that have been me over the years.

To like yourself - that is a big deal- do your best, strive to get things right, be kind but accept that you are flawed and recognise so is everyone else.

I remember when I was 27 with a new baby an old lady said to me " Enjoy every minute with your baby, it will be gone in a flash."

I say try to find joy in everything.

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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To my younger self,

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I would plan your retirement from an early age around 30 - 40. Plan your finances and how you would like your retirement to be.

Don't forget friends and family they will always be there for you, if you let them.

Don't worry too much about small things, as they have a way of solving problems themselves. Follow your heart and never stop dreaming.

'The future is belongs to those who follow their dreams' Eleanor Rosevelt.

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

Festival of Ideas 2026,

University of Chester.

Town Hall.

Hello me,

Remember your dreams, some came true others were shattered by life's cruel consequences but I'm glad I tried and still do.

Take great care of yourself, laugh love and talk to those you love as often as possible hold and hug them. Make long lasting happy memories these will help you once they're gone.

Don't be too hard on yourself, life will be tough at times, but you'll get through it.

Above all stay strong and be happy, life is for living so make sure you live it to the fullest.

Catch you later,

Me.

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Keep working hard and it will pay off, maybe not quite in the way you intend! your career , and indeed, you, can be relied upon regardless of what else changes in life. Your sense of humour will be invaluable. Try to be kind in every situation but don't let anyone take advantage of your kindness. You will enjoy close friendships and will be valued for your honesty and reliability. Be clear in your messages, and do not hesitate to apologise if you are wrong.

Enjoy life - you generally get out what you put in, so you are very much the master of your own future. Be brave and take it all on the chin, you can overcome it all. Be yourself - you do not have to mimic others. You are unique, and deserve to be treated well. Life is too short to mess about

Love from older you x

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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These are a few things I wish someone had told me.

POSTCARD



1. You can waste a lot of time trying to make everything you do perfect. Just do the best you can and you will almost always find that it is good enough.
2. Be open to criticism, but also have the confidence to know when you can ignore it because you are the expert. Don't waste energy worrying about negativity from anyone who you wouldn't actively go to for advice.
3. If you want something, ask. The worst thing anyone can say is no.
4. Although it may feel like it sometimes, it is rare for EVERYTHING to go wrong at the same time. Try to find comfort in what is going right.
5. You will have to make lots of choices, some big and some small. Sometimes, with hindsight, you will think you have got it wrong. Remember that you made the best choice for you at that moment and don't beat yourself up with "what ifs".
6. Other people's lives may sometimes seem more exciting or interesting than yours. Don't waste energy on making comparisons. Remember that life is too short to do everything or go everywhere. Just make the most of anything you choose to do, and don't let your enjoyment be spoilt by "fear of missing out".

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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To my younger self,

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Don't smoke. Ever. It's a lose lose situation. Look after your health.

Have confidence in yourself - you can do it.

Work hard at your exams, you then will have more choices, there will be plenty of time for other things later on.

Don't neglect your friendships.

To Myself,
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To my younger self,

Please make
choices and
decisions based on
what works for
you, not just to
please others.

To Myself,
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Young man: believe in yourself - you can do better than most. And say yes more often (for example to music lessons and to foreign languages, both things you cannot so easily pick up later in life). Oh yes, and have more sex, for the same reason!

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To my younger self,

Take heed of the
pension advice you
ignored, but carry
on with your
wandering .

Poor Wanderer

To Myself,

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To my younger self,

Follow your dreams and don't be influenced by others.

Enjoy life, don't take it too seriously, travel, travel and then travel more. Don't get into a long term relationship or get a mortgage till you're in your 30s!

Always be true to yourself 

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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To my younger self,

Think more carefully
about your choice of
university.

Picking something/
somewhere others want
you to do/go wasn't right.

University is not just
about learning, but
making friends,
developing key skills, and
can be a great set up for
your career/life.

To Myself,

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To my younger self,

Have faith in yourself and those friends and family who love you . Don't let cruel members of your family destroy your confidence .

Follow your dreams and have confidence that you will be loved and can be very happy .

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To my younger self,

You should have
moved to New
Zealand ! 😊

To Myself, _____

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To my younger self,

Remember that
you can't ever
erase anything
nasty you have
said or done.

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To my younger self,

Whilst some of your fashion choices were great, and helped you fit in with your friends, you should have questioned the very flared Wrangler jeans, the oversized Parka and the platform shoes!

From a more conservative dresser!

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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To my younger self,

Start family
history in my
teens rather than
in my later years -
whilst the people I
love are still alive.

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my younger self,

Enjoy yourself. Life is shorter than you think.

In general, if you like people, they will like you back.

Be careful with your body, some careless injuries stay with you for life.

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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To my younger self,

Have no regrets.
Whatever life throws at
you go with the flow.
It might take you in a
different direction than
you expected but you will
still continue your
adventure. Just in a
different way than you
expected.

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my younger self,

If something you are passionate about makes you a bit scared and vulnerable, just do it when you are young - because you may not get another chance.

Just Do It Now!! & enjoy the experience.

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my younger self,

Try not to worry as things generally turn out OK.

Friends will come and go but that's fine as long as you can always give people the best version of you.

Try to make someone smile every day, knowing that you made a difference.

Savour every moment

To Myself,
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You might not give any thoughts as you're growing up, you just go with the flow, day in, day out, home, school, friends. That's fine, however, there is much more to experience, much more to enjoy, The gift of conversation can give you insight. Talk to people, ask questions, you may not get answers, however these conversations will increase your confidence, so that when you need to ask difficult questions or to ask advice it will be easier.

No one through life is 100% happy, childhood, adulthood, at times you can feel down, lost, unhappy, embarrassed. All of these emotions will pass, it's part of developing into adulthood, learning a coping mechanism.

As to worrying about your future, each step along the way, a little step. Each time you won't always get things right, there will be opportunities to try again - or even again.

Above all be kind, enjoy moments with your friends and family, feel joy and look at the wonders of the natural world. You are truly wonderful. Me.

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To Myself,
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To my younger self,

Learn from mistakes instead of fretting and see them as life experience.

When making difficult decisions follow the chosen pathway and stick to it and things will fall into place at the end of the road.

Ask questions about the lives of the older members of your family - they had a wealth of interesting memories to pass on.

Senior u3a member

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my younger self,

Regard
everything you
do as an
experience you
can learn from!

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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To my younger self,

Follow your
dream whatever
anyone else
says!

Farmer

To Myself, _____
Psychology & U3A, _____
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University of Chester. _____
Town Hall. _____

To my younger self,

POSTCARD



Don't worry or sweat
over the small stuff !

(PS - the reality that
you don't realise at the
time..... is that life is
simply a series of
things that is ALL
small stuff)

To Myself, _____

Psychology & U3A, _____

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To my younger self,

POSTCARD



I would tell the younger me that nature has made us all very differently for survival of the species. That I didn't have to have the figure of every super model or actress to give me some worth.

Now I'm m old I recognise my worth, I am a social caring person with a fun personality but my younger self never recognised that just my shape which made me self conscious.

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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To my younger self,

Don't judge your life by comparison to others and ignore the "curated" lives that others present to you on social media. Enjoy YOUR life!

To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
Festival of Ideas 2026,
University of Chester.
Town Hall.

Dear Younger Me,

Please don't think that you have to be everything that is expected of you because YOU can be more than anyone else can imagine.

Family's past experiences may be constraining their outlook. They may be guiding you away from mistakes they made however it isn't obligatory to follow advice without having a context to evaluate it in. Secrets hide why's.

As long as you don't break the law, or hopefully any hearts, then be what you want to be.

Saying No is not negative as doing something other may well be better than the option perceived by others. Explore the wider options.

I am looking forward to celebrating your experiences.

A former retail assistant, emergency worker, administrator, lecturer et al.

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To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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Ok things didn't go amazing to plan but I am still here in 2026 and the tide continues to ebb and flow. How young are you? 14 oh that's good still time for a course correction. I was never a parent I am afraid so this is a chance to pretend I'm your father and dispense sensible advice. Put down the Beano and please just read the Do's and Don'ts. Humour me.

Do take French at school and x67 metalwork.

Don't hang around with those bad lads. Do go to college and learn a trade. I think we'd make a good electrician.

Don't sniff glue. I think we've lost a million brain cells due to that. you've lost a few brain cells.

Do stay fit & strong healthy & positive.

Don't over indulge – in anything.

Do support your local football team. It will be a lifetime of heartbreak but the right thing to do.

P.T.O

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To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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In time or uncertainty, it'll be just okay.

Don't go out with *****.

Do enjoy riding your bike.

Don't spend too much time on your own.

Do join GREENPEACE.

Don't put off till tomorrow what could be done today.
Procrastination = pain.

Life has a lot to offer, and you don't have to go far to get it. Books, music, films, food, nature, enjoy them all. Be kind, thoughtful, generous and polite. Don't always follow the crowd. Always stay close to your family and cherish close friends. You can't go far wrong and even if you do there is always tomorrow. Best of luck.

PS: Watch out for that slipper rock when you go skinny dipping in Australia. You nearly didn't get this message from the future if you know what I mean. Take Care.
Elder.

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To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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Town Hall.



postcards
to my
younger
and
older self

dream big
you can
anything

proud of
how far
we've come

ideas
memories
daydreams

Dear Little Me.

grateful
growing
becoming

LESSONS
TRUST THE PROCESS
EVERYTHING HAPPENS
FOR A REASON

Dear Future Me.

Dear Elder

POSTCARD



Hope you are happy and achieving all the success in life. There are difficulties in your path but you achieved. Happy to see this with all.

Family and friends cares about everything you did best and when you look back the journey is wonderful. All the happiness for future day.

Thank you for all, Family and Child student.

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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To my older self,

If you don't have your driver's licence yet I will be disappointed. Just kidding, but I hope you've got your degree, found a job helping children with SEN, and now have a house of your own. On top of that, I hope you've travelled the world (especially Australia!) and then settled down with kids (no more than 2 please). Most importantly, I hope you feel fulfilled in life and have achieved everything you wanted to!

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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To my older self,

POSTCARD



I hope you finally feel happy for yourself or even by yourself (stop fixing people).

I hope all the wishes you had for your life in the time of settling down is with you now.

I hope you love yourself more than you try to love others,

I hope you do more for you than for others. I love you for who you will be already ❤️

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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Dear Older Me,

I hope you're happy and healthy.

I hope you have achieved all of your dreams and are living comfortably with your family and friends close to you.

I hope you have lots of cats.
Lastly, I hope that despite everything, you're happy.

from your Younger Self

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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Dear Older Self,

I wonder now what kind of job you have now or if you have retired. I hope life has treated you well and you were happy. I also hope that you got to travel and to be free and enjoy life after retirement if you have retired. I hope you got the best partner you always hoped for and hope you have children just like yourself. Most of all, I hope you become the version that younger me had always wanted.

Thank you for everything you have done until now.

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To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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Dear Older Self,

I hope that you fulfil every dream you've seen. Building a life in a new Country all by yourself is not easy for you I know, but I 's so proud that you found your way and succeed. Your job with kids seems so enjoyable and serious you are killing it!!

Your husband sees to be a very good and loving person glad that you got one with whom you can be 100% yourself and check his patience everyday :)

Your life is everything you wishes for, you've made your parents proud, made a life, found the love of your life while never losing your trues self.

I'm proud of you ❤️

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To Myself,

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Dear Older Self,

POSTCARD



I hope you are happy and proud of how far you have come.

Keep believing in yourself, continue learning and never forget to appreciate the people and experiences that shaped you.

Stay kind, stay strong and keep chasing your dreams.

Yours faithfully, Me X

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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Town Hall.

To my older self,

POSTCARD



I hope you feel safe you are happy living with love and happiness and kindness, hopefully with your partner and feel you have succeeded however you may define this.

I really hope you have tonnes of animals, cats, dogs and more and live with peace and fullness.

Hopefully we have figured out how to love ourselves or at least are trying. Sincerely younger you



To Myself,
Psychology & U3A,
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Dear Future Self,

POSTCARD



I hope that you got a job that you love and put your degrees to use.

I hope you found joy in life and continued to do things you enjoy while working on your career. Did you get dogs? Get married? Have children? If you didn't

I hope that you don't regret it and are proud of your achievements. As long as you enjoyed your life I am proud.

Best wishes, Me

To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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University of Chester.

Town Hall.

Dear Older Self,

Hope you are doing well. I hope you remained kind, grateful and compassionate. I hope you're still helping children of families who need support. never forget the lessons learned through the joy of success and the disappointment of failure.

I hope you have found peace and good health, meaningful relationships and a sense of purpose. Kee learning and stay humble. Keep helping others. More importantly, never lose the curiosity, determination and hope that has brought you this far,

With best wishes your younger self.

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To Myself,

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Dear Older Me,

The best thing that you can ever do is to remain kind to everyone that you meet , cherish and love the people who have stood by your side through every chapter of life and never forget to be grateful for all that you have received.

Stay humble no matter how much you achieve, and earn honestly!

Always remember that wealth is the impact you make on others lives, keep helping those in need and never lose your compassion.

May you find peace in giving, joy in serving and gratitude in every moment.
MSc F and C Student.

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To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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Town Hall.

Dear Future Self,

Did you find a job in psychology? Or did you stay in your teaching job? Do you have a house with ❤️ him?

Did you go travelling in a van and explore the world.. or parts of it at least.

How did my family turn out? Is everyone happy and healthy? Did we acquire any more pets?

Did you learn how to be happy in your own company?

Did I make new friends outside my comfort bubble?

Love you lots, Family and Child student! xx

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To Myself,

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Dear P,

I hope that the house in Finland is being well maintained. Are your parents alive and well?

I hope you are earning a comfortable pay, staying creative, and impacting people in whatever way you can, Maybe even travelling and have a pastime that is optional.

You of course know I'm wise and peaked at this age so don't feel scared to fall back to this version of you. I am proud of you and would brag to my aunts about you

   Moonlight and Mischief

POSTCARD



To Myself,

Psychology & U3A,

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Town Hall.

POSTCARDS

★ TO MY ★
YOUNGER SELF



Hey you,

I know things feel confusing right now, and that's okay. ★

You don't have to have everything figured out. Just keep showing up. ⚽

You're stronger than you think, and your future self is so proud of you already. ★

Keep asking questions. Keep being kind. Keep believing in yourself. ⚡



You've got so much ahead of you. 😊

Keep dreaming,
Your Future Self ♡

POSTCARDS

— TO MY —
OLDER SELF



Hey you,

I hope you're proud of the person you've become.

I hope you've held on to the things that matter most.

I hope you've let go of what weighs you down.

I hope you've taken time to enjoy the little things.

I hope you've kept showing up for yourself and for others.

I hope you never forget how far you've come. ♡

Keep going.
Keep choosing you.

With respect and belief in you,
Your Younger Self ♡

