

January 14

Alex,

We're doing that thing where we talk at cross purposes again.

This is my fifth draft of this letter. I spent the first four trying to write out where I think we're miscommunicating, and trying to clear up what I meant and what I think you meant, and the more that I wrote, the more frustrated I got. And I figure if I'm frustrated writing something, it's a pretty good bet that you're going to be frustrated reading it, too. So in this draft, I'm not going to do that. I am, instead, just going to write out the things I think it's most important to say. (Don't worry -- a numbered list doesn't mean I'm mad. It's just how I organize my thoughts)

1. I'm not mad, at you or anything else.

2. I'm sorry that you bore the brunt of my frustration when the majority of it wasn't directed at you. It was good to get my feelings out on paper, but I probably shouldn't have sent it.

3. It was never my intention to accuse you of anything. I've just been trying to express how I feel, because I'm trying to be better at communicating, and better at looking out for me.

4. To that end, there are things that you wrote in this last letter that are unfair to me, and that hurt. It does not help me feel more supported to read that you think these disagreements are all in my head, or to hear you say that the reason I feel I'm not being listened to is because I'm not listening. Those comments came off as very dismissive and accusatory. I believe that wasn't your intention, but that is how it came across.

5. I am sorry for the things I have written that are, or have come across as unfair or hurtful to you.

6. I don't want you to stop telling me what you think. I don't ever want you to feel like you can't tell me something. Avoiding a potential disagreement should never become more important than being honest with each other.

7. You offered your support before I made the decision to be so involved in Lissa's life. You didn't offer it after. I read disapproval in that because I was braced for disapproval. I know now that wasn't fair to you, but I was saying that I needed to hear that someone trusted me because it was the one thing I wasn't hearing from anyone. Thank you for letting me hear it at the end of your letter, albeit in a roundabout way.

8. Stop being ridiculous.\* I self-doubt more than I thought I did, and I apparently need obscene amounts of validation, but that doesn't get you out of this friendship that easily.

9. I can tell you didn't read my whole letter, and I think I know where you stopped, but I didn't end after my "tirade" for a reason - those weren't the thoughts I wanted to leave you on. Go read the thoughts I did want to leave you on. Deal?

Your Friend,

Zoe

Alex -- I wrote this before I got the second half of your letter, but I'm giving it to you anyway because there are things here you need to read. You have got to stop assuming I'm looking for an opportunity to drop this friendship like a hot potato. :) Let this stand as my reassurance, and I'll get to the rest of what you have to say as soon as I can, okay?