

## MODULE 5: DELIVERING YOUR MESSAGE

### Lesson Overview

Gathering strong letters is only half the work. The way you **deliver** them to the Court makes all the difference. Judges may receive hundreds of pages in a sentencing packet. If your letters are scattered, repetitive, or poorly formatted, they risk being overlooked. This module shows how to present your letters as part of a clear, compelling sentencing package—one that supports your broader mitigation strategy.

### Key Concepts

1. Your Attorney Is the Conduit
  - ◇ All letters must go through your defense attorney.
  - ◇ Attorneys know local practices—some judges prefer letters attached to the sentencing memorandum; others want a separate exhibit.
  - ◇ Never bypass counsel by submitting directly to the Court.
2. Package Letters as Evidence of Character
  - ◇ Letters should not stand alone; they should be framed as supporting material for your narrative.
  - ◇ Example: If your memorandum highlights your role as a caregiver, include letters that illustrate that role.
3. Quality Over Quantity
  - ◇ Judges often skim. A dozen thoughtful letters carry more weight than 50 short ones.
  - ◇ Avoid duplication—each letter should tell a different story.
4. Professional Presentation
  - ◇ Letters should be typed, signed, and dated.
  - ◇ Organize in a logical sequence: family, work, community, faith, service.



- ◇ Include a table of contents for larger packets.
5. Integration with Your Statement
- ◇ Letters should reinforce themes in your personal statement: remorse, growth, community value, and readiness for change.
  - ◇ When letters and your own words echo the same truths, credibility increases.

## Steps to Deliver Effectively

1. Final Review With Counsel
  - ◇ Share your organized packet early enough for your attorney to review and advise.
  - ◇ Accept edits, exclusions, or rearrangements—strategy matters.
2. Create a Summary Sheet
  - ◇ Provide counsel with a one-page overview listing each writer, relationship, and key theme.
  - ◇ Judges may glance at this before diving into the packet.
3. Example:
  - ◇ Pastor Smith — Faith leader — Mentorship and service.
  - ◇ Maria Lopez — Employer — Reliability and honesty at work.
  - ◇ Aunt Sharon — Family — Caregiving role for aging parent.
4. Submit on Time
  - ◇ Meet the court’s deadlines for sentencing submissions.
  - ◇ Judges rarely consider late material.

## Reflection Journal Prompt

- » If a judge read only one page about your character, what three themes would you want them to remember?
- » Do your letters reflect those themes clearly and consistently?



## Worksheet: My Letter Packet Plan

Fill in the following before final submission:

- » Number of letters collected: \_\_\_\_\_
- » Key themes covered: \_\_\_\_\_
- » Who reviewed the letters for quality/consistency?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- » Have I given my attorney enough time to include them? Y/N

## Key Takeaway

How you present your letters matters as much as the letters themselves. Judges want to see sincerity, organization, and alignment with the broader sentencing package. By working closely with counsel and presenting letters professionally, you transform individual stories into a persuasive narrative about your character.

