

Hi Dad,

Thank you for opening the door for conversation. I would like to talk with you to clear ever more space for reconciliation, renewing and rebuilding our relationship. My commitment is to always be responsible for my own limited views on reality and to heal my inclination to deny my feelings by projecting them into my brain's image of you or anyone else. So, to first answer the question, was I "ticked off at you?" The answer to that is no, I was not. Honest. I was very conscious of what was going on for me and that wasn't it.

What was going on? Well, as you know, I do a lot of Spiritual work every day: meditation, holding a space of Love, WakeUp Sheets, etc. The goal of that work is simple. I hold it to be true that we each are Love. I am understanding, more and more, that Love is our essential nature (essence) and all we need do is "forgive" all thoughts and ENERGIES that are less than Love and we will come into full expression as the incredible Beings that we are! I see this Presence of Love in my children and strive to support themselves and me, as Dad, as Love. I am inspired by their ability to come back, time after time as that Sweetness and It's wisdom. I have looked at where I lost that ability to come back as Love and have wondered if you ever think about why we are not as close as we could be.

Sometimes - often - the healing process, I've discovered, is not "Dr. FeelGood." It requires real courage to be responsible for how I feel and how I see the world, others, and myself. To restore myself as Love when I lose that connection has become a big key for me! To consistently face and heal feelings that are painful and that I have been hiding from myself, in some cases I realize, for decades, continues to be one of the biggest challenges of my life. Issues that go back to early, early times, have interfered with our relationship, with many of my relationships for too long! This letter is part of my effort to change that dynamic in my life!

I have been doing a lot of processing lately. Yesterday, some of my old painful realities kind of came up in my face. I can see, writing this, that in my childhood, due to the effects of alcohol, it seemed to me that I never deserved my Dad. *(Red Flag - Each of us comes into this world knowing who we are as Love. When a parent is in denial, in the grip of alcohol, or even extreme emotionality, stress, loss or sickness, they usually become a Power Person - one who is not functioning as Love. Until resolved those Power Person behaviors will likely be replicated, throughout life, toward self and others when under stress! In these circumstances, frequently, the parent is absent to the child, emotionally unavailable, even when physically present. If the child is the object of blame by the parent then the child may come to the conclusion that they are the cause of the parent's absence and pain. This can lead, as we see here, to taking on a false identity through thoughts of self-deprecation like, "I don't deserve my father!" As an adult, Wake-Up sheets - likely Hydra sheets that lead to massive numbers of underlying issues - would be useful in healing the Power Person Dynamics of self blame, rejection, guilt and shame. As that healing occurs it becomes natural to be restored to a whole new level of the Presence of Love and to become more emotionally available to self and one's own spouse and children. Through this inner work of Forgiveness one can be restored to the Truth of who they are as Love. Be aware, however, that much of the unresolved confusion of those early years is likely to surface during this work and care must be taken to recognize the source of the confusion and pain is past unresolved dynamics and not the current relationship. It is also important to recognize that the same, or similar, processes may also be going on in the spouse which makes the relationship much more complicated and as tender as a newborn. We must remember, in the midst of all this process work, to take care of and tend to the baby - our relationship!)*

Rather than being ticked off at you, the pain of alcohol taking away my father, one more time, is what was up for healing yesterday. I acknowledge there used to be a tendency for me to cover that

pain, when it surfaced, with anger and alcohol. I've been sober for 19 years now and have mostly given up using hostility to anesthetize my pain. If there was any tinge of hostility left, I apologize, and in the future will own and heal any negative emotion as quickly as possible. I admire your perceptiveness from yesterday, because you picked up that I was, "in my stuff" and I would like to ask for your support to share and heal what I am going through.

The trigger for me yesterday was the glass of red wine next to you on the deck. I saw it and reacted like Pavlov's dog. In spite of myself, I was filled with fear, loss and hostility from the past. I share this with you now for two reasons, one is to process my feelings, to be responsible and let go - SO THAT WHATEVER YOU DO OR SAY in the future I WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD A SPACE OF LOVE INSIDE MYSELF when we are together or I think of you. This is not about manipulating you or getting you to change your behavior! (*Red Flag - WakeUp Sheets on regulatory speech perhaps reflecting manipulation and responsibility might be appropriate. mjr*) It's about continuing to create an honest relationship with you, especially in areas where honesty did not exist before.

The second reason is because I owe you the Truth. As part of your support team, I owe it to you to speak to you about things that I see as potential blind spots or trouble spots. I have been bothered recently by the thought that Cathy, in a significant way, has been a more faithful daughter to you than I have been a son. She spoke her honest thoughts to you, specifically about drinking, regardless of what feelings or reaction it might trigger. Her intentions may or may not have been loving ones, but my intentions are loving and supportive for both of us. (*Red Flag - WakeUp Sheets on comparing self to siblings/others might be helpful.*)

Dad, for years, Jack and I have treasured the opportunity to go to you with our life's challenges. I will continue to turn to you. We also have known and shared that we have to do it during the day, preferably a workday, because you are just not the same person at night or on Sunday afternoon. The father we cherish just isn't there. This is because of alcohol. There is a shift in you after you have had two or three drinks. Not every time maybe but certainly sometimes. There is often a strongly sarcastic energy (sometimes only toward the TV) that comes out that is not present in you when you are sober. Why did this glass of wine bring up so much hostility in me yesterday? I can only guess that it has to do with denial and dissociation over many years.

Fear and hostility, I recognize. is a Family Motto that has governed my whole life. I am seeing that it has been passed from generation to generation. I noticed it on the phone when I was offering Mom support in her effort to stop drinking. She admitted that she felt angry at the fact that I even brought it up!! Imagine that - after all I have been through with AA, detox and all ... I have been humbled completely in this area - and it still is not permitted in our family culture for me to offer support to Mom in her effort. That happened two days ago and brought up some tender feelings for me. The tools, I now see, used in our family to keep honest communication hidden are hostility, intimidation through threat and fear. I caught myself using threat just the other day with my wife, and you know how deeply I cherish her. It was chilling to observe how destructive an effect it could have had on our relationship had I just blundered through it unconsciously. Fortunately I caught it and was able to turn it into a moment of healing that strengthened our relationship because of what the honest communication, coming from Love, rather than threat, was able to open for each of us to own and heal.

I can remember being a child and even mentioning a word about you and Mom drinking and being harshly treated for bringing that subject up. It was taboo and not my place, as a child, to talk about. I learned that it wasn't safe to discuss. When I got older, I learned that I could express ideas that seemed unsafe by using sarcasm. Now I know the devastating effects on my own body of using sarcasm. The word actually comes from a term that means "to tear flesh." It is as

destructive to the body as smoking is, I suspect. So I don't do it anymore when I am conscious of my behavior. You only need to listen to Uncle Bill on any given holiday to notice how sarcasm is a means of expressing hostility that we were raised to suppress.

I see it in comments from Grandma. Regarding a book about the Irish, she told Debby, "That never happened. Nobody ever did that." This was a Pulitzer Prize winning autobiography of a child's memories - of course it happened. I am learning that this is how our brains work though. If something is painful, we think can make it go away by condemning even the thought of it. I realize that this, "trying to make things go away," to keep from feeling pain was the driving force behind my alcohol, drug abuse and addiction. What is a family motto? Could you imagine saying to Granny, when you were a child, "Mom, I'd like to have a serious talk about the way you talk to Dad. It really brings up pain for me when you say harsh things to him." I don't think you ever had that safe a relationship with either of your parents to do what we now have the opportunity to do. I am working to change the Family Motto that it is not safe to speak up, to on of creating a safe space for my wife, children and I to always be supported in telling each other the Truth.

I honor you and Mom for your efforts in creating a family structure that is so Loving that I am now sending you this note. You and Mom have done incredible work for our whole family line. (Red Flag - some WakeUp Sheets on conflicting perceptions of parents might open a space for healing conflicting behaviors I find myself doing).

Also, know that our relationship and our family, my family is more important to me than ANY issue. I am in it forever, and as a friend once said to me, "in it to win it!" I have learned that we can win as a family by always growing in Love by addressing issues as they arise. In too many families, these kind of unresolved issues shatter lives and get taken to the grave, literally.

That's all part of what was going on for me yesterday. I would like to talk with you about it in a positive space. I also, in a general way, commit to getting out of your face!! I noticed - and didn't like - my behavior at the cottage, telling you that "YOU HAVE TO CHANGE IF YOU WANT TO BE HEALTHY AT 77." That was a stupid (Red Flag - Wake-Up Sheets on "stupid" would be good. mjr) approach to you and not who I want to be. I promise to work toward always giving you space to do and be what you choose. As I now have the space to do and be what I choose. I realize I was playing out the family motto in regard to you, Dad, by not supporting your choices.

I guess this is about letting go of resentment that I created in myself because I felt I couldn't be honest with you in a safe way. If it's not appropriate for me to be around you in a certain state, I will make that choice for myself and find something to do! I imagine that this statement may bring up tender feelings for you, if so, notice that I am always on your support team. I am always comggggmitted to being your son to the best of my ability.

So, if you're feeling something like, "David, I know drinking is not the healthiest choice for me. I have thought about stopping, but, I think my life works fine with it and I enjoy it." Then I can support your right to choose and I begin to truly mind my business, knowing that you know where I stand - and being free from pretending it's not been a factor in my life or our relationship: Because it's been a huge factor.

I am 33 now, and I am responsible for me. You are responsible for you. In that context, I am ready to start again and support you in any way I can.

I Cherish you, David