

A GREAT AMENDS LETTER

Told by his ex-wife that he couldn't see her daughter directly, he WAS allowed to send a letter. After three sponsor edits, here is how it ended up:

Dear S. _____,

I'm writing to do what I can to set right the harms that I did during the years that I was in a relationship with your mom. I've chosen to type rather than phone for two reasons: First, my handwriting is pretty awful, and second, because I want you to have something tangible that you can look at later when life may be treating you rough. To tell you the truth, I'm tempted to let things just stay the way they are because your mom tells me that you have some good memories of the time we spent together. Part of me says why mess with that? The best answer I have is that I loved you and I'm certain deep in my heart whether you know it yet or not I did you harm. I'm sure that you were aware that during the years we were together I was an active alcoholic. **LET ME BE VERY CLEAR THAT THIS IN NO WAY WHATSOEVER RELIEVES ME OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS.** I used alcohol and drugs because they were the only things I knew that could give me the relief from the constant fear I felt. I was drawn to you and your family because I desperately wanted to love and to be loved, but I was also scared to death of the prospect of being responsible, especially to others. Emotionally I felt like I had one foot on the gas and the other on the brake. I'm sure that it was hard for you to figure out what was real - is the real Mike the one that wants to loves me or the one that's pushing me away? You weren't crazy, I was. You were a wonderful, lovable child and you had every right to expect consistent love, emotional support, and parenting from me. What you got instead was fear, chaos, confusion, and abandonment. I want you to know that I didn't fail to give you those things because you were unlovable or undeserving but because I was a sick and frightened man incapable of giving. If you feel emotionally ripped off it's because you were. If you feel abandoned you're not crazy, you were. I know at some deep emotional level it's hard not to believe that if you were really worthy and valuable that these things wouldn't have happened to you. Please believe me, this just isn't so. You are worthy and deserving of love then and now, it was I that failed you. S. _____, I hope that you'll accept my heartfelt regret for these and the unlisted harms that I did to you. Should you ever want to talk about any of this please give me a call. If I can ever be of any service to you as a friend I'd be honored.

Mike L. from Indianapolis, IN.