

Dear [REDACTED]

The people who brought us into this world, and ultimately to this place, are now gone, and all we have is each other. I love you, [REDACTED] But I don't feel like I know you. I don't know how to solve your problems. I don't know the full extent of your suffering. I don't even know how well you'll be doing six months from now. So, since I've established that I don't know much, I'll tell you what I believe:

- I believe you are NOT a bad person or a parasitic jerk.
- I believe you do love your family.
- I believe you have your own destiny and your own dreams to fulfill.
- I believe it is your right to live any way you wish.
- I believe you have potential.
- I believe you are a butthead, but...
- I believe you can harness it into determination and accomplish great things.

Unfortunately, it must also be said that...

- I believe you are sick with addiction. I said sick, because...
- I believe you are miserable, and no one would CHOOSE to be that way.
- I believe that if you don't confront it soon, you are going to die long before your time and leave your children with nothing.
- I believe your disease controls you, and makes you unable to make competent decisions and handle responsibility.
- I believe that you are so sick, only God can help you. And I might be standing in His way.

I know life isn't easy for you. All Mom ever wanted was for you to be content and self-sufficient. She thought about you constantly at the end. She left this world terrified for you and your boys. I want what she wanted for you. I want you to be safe, happy and self-reliant.

But it is entirely up to you. I can't make you want to get into recovery. I can't make you avoid the people in your life who help you to stay sick. For so many years, "Don't tell me how to live!" has been your battle cry.

I don't want to control your life, [REDACTED] I never have. All I want is for your decisions to not affect how I live. I also have a right to live how I choose, don't I? If you want to rightfully claim your choices, the consequences are yours and yours alone. When you come to me to handle the consequences of your actions, you are in fact demanding that I live like you for a little bit.

But I chose not to live like you, because I don't want to live the parts of your life that you don't like, either. I feel controlled when someone else wants me to pay their legal fees, bail them out of jail or make up their bills when they're short. When someone else makes me afraid to answer the phone or affects my sleep, I feel controlled. You refuse to be controlled. So do I. I will live my life. If you want to live yours, be an adult and own ALL of it – not just the “fun” parts. Adults handle their own problems and face their own consequences – they don't hand them off to someone else. Besides, it's not fair to you, to shield you from your own consequences. It's keeping you from learning to function like an adult, it's helping you to stay sick, and I won't do it.

In the coming days, [REDACTED] I am going to do some things that you are not going to like. You will get your inheritance in full. Mom wanted you to have the money. However, she wanted you to have it so you'd be secure. She was, in fact, terrified of what you would do with it. I promised Mom I wouldn't turn my back on you. But giving you so much money while you are so sick is like giving a suicidal person a loaded gun or giving a diabetic a truckload of candy bars. You will have food, shelter, medical insurance -- all the things you need to take your life any direction you want. But if you want to use, you have to pay for that yourself. I will take no active role in your financial affairs or your consequences, except to make sure that if you do want to get your life back, you can.

I'm asking you now, [REDACTED] go ahead and start fighting for your life. There is nothing I won't do to help you win. Some of the most inspiring people I know are addicts who did worse things than you. But they got into recovery. The things you have done, the lies you have told, the money problems you've had—they are not that unique. They're symptoms of the disease. [REDACTED] I can forgive you for being sick. I can even forgive you for refusing to get well. But if you do refuse to get well, I won't watch. There is no sense in watching if I can't save you. Only God can save you, and from now on, I am going to help you by stepping back and letting Him do it.

All I can do is love you, [REDACTED] The rest is up to you.