

STEP 4

A LETTER TO MY SON

My dear son,

As you work through the arduous exercise of Step 4, analyzing **who** and **what** you are, let me offer a few observations to help you figure out the differences between the “real” you and the images you project.

WHO ARE YOU?

First, let me say that you are the most important person in the lives of both of your parents. I know you frequently question why that is, but let it suffice to say that it is just human nature to love and protect one’s children. Some children make this phenomenon of nature easier than other children do. While you have tested this principle to the limit by actions such as lying, cheating, stealing from us, law-breaking, using drugs, and showing disrespect, none of these issues have caused your parents’ love or support to waiver in the slightest. We are committed to helping you and to supporting your endeavors for as long as we live.

Second, you are the most important person in your own life. In a world where so many other people desperately need help, a shoulder to cry on, and an ear to an open mind, it is sometimes (always?) hard to focus on your own life; but, focus you must and the sooner the better! Life is and can be more than mere survival...it can be full of challenge, accomplishment, pride, joy, comfort, and love...but only **you** can point yourself in those directions. Other people have already figured out that **they** are the most important people in **their** lives and most of them will have very little time or energy to spend on yours.

Third, you are the beneficiary of having grown up in an environment that has always set a good example of industriousness, responsibility, civility, honor and most importantly, love. You have been given a true gift; an insight into at least a few techniques that can lead to happiness and self-worth. Has your environment been perfect? Of course not, but the principles espoused by your parents and the way they were practiced in your home have given you a major advantage over other young adults who had no exposure to good role models.

Fourth, you are **all of these and more**: yourself, son, cousin, nephew, grandson, employee, neighbor, friend, counselor, writer, musician, artist, sponsor, member.....and all of these associations connote INclusion, not EXclusion. You are an important person in many roles, not on the outside looking in, but planted firmly **inside** with the ability to reach out and make a difference in everything you do.

Finally, you are a person in conflict. You are all grown up but still crave the freedom from responsibility that comes with being a child. You **want** to do the right things but seemingly have no idea how to go about doing them. You love your family but cannot find ways within yourself to express that love. You respect your parents, but your lack of self-discipline and short-fused temper cause you to appear disrespectful. You want to be independent and self-sufficient, but these goals are significantly impeded by major laziness.

WHAT ARE YOU?

In no particular order, here are my impressions of **what** you are:

Intelligent	Lazy
Capable	Confused
Conflicted	Healthy
Angry	Depressed
Unmotivated	Undisciplined
Irresponsible	Artistic
Unselfish	Kind
Polite	Anti-social
Dishonest	Failure
Emotional	Crude
Talented	Unprincipled

As you work through your self-analysis, it might be a good idea to separate your positive qualities from your less positive qualities. Having done that, I think it would be useful to ask yourself the following questions and write out your own answers:

How can I capitalize on and expand this **good** quality so that my life will be more positive?

OR

What can I do to overcome this deficiency in my personality so that my life will be more positive?

In order to effectively forge a new life plan with a positive direction, you will need to act on both the positive **and** negative aspects of your personality and behavior.

I hope this letter helps you get through Step 4. Remember, as I said in the first paragraph, these are my observations and impressions of you based on the images you project. They may be all wrong.....they may be all correct....or they may be somewhere in between.

I love you, son.

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