

Letters from an Alcoholic

I am an alcoholic. I need your help.

Don't lecture, blame or scold me. You wouldn't be angry with me for having cancer or diabetes. Alcoholism is a disease, too.

Don't pour out my liquor; it's just a waste because I can always find ways of getting more.

Don't let me provoke your anger. If you attack me verbally or physically, you will only confirm my bad opinion about myself. I hate myself enough already.

Don't let your love and anxiety for me lead you into doing what I ought to do for myself. If you assume my responsibilities, you make my failure to assume them permanent. My sense of guilt will be increased, and you will feel resentful.

Don't accept my promises. I'll promise anything to get off the hook. But the nature of my illness prevents me from keeping my promises, even though I mean them at the time.

Don't make empty threats. Once you have made a decision, stick to it.

Don't believe everything I tell you; it may be a lie. Denial of reality is a symptom of my illness. Moreover, I'm likely to lose respect for those I can fool too easily.

Don't let me take advantage of you or exploit you in any way. Love cannot exist for long without the dimension of justice.

Don't cover up for me or try in any way to spare me the consequences of my drinking. Don't lie for me, pay my bills, or meet my obligations. It may avert or reduce the very crisis that would prompt me to seek help. I can continue to deny that I have a drinking problem as long as you provide an automatic escape for the consequences of my drinking.

Above all, do learn all you can about alcoholism and your role in relation to me. Go to open AA meetings when you can. Attend Al-Anon meetings regularly, read the literature and keep in touch with Al-Anon members. They're the people who can help you see the whole situation clearly.

I love you.
Your Alcoholic

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A LETTER TO MY FAMILY

I want to introduce myself to you; I'm your qualifier and the reason you're here. You believe just because you gave me life and raised me that you know me...but you really don't. I'd like to use this time to introduce the real me to you so maybe you can gain a better understanding of why I am the way I am, why I do the things I do and why I've done some of the things I've done. I don't know if I was born an alcoholic/addict but I do know the first time I got high an addict was born.

First of all, you have to accept the fact that I think differently than you do. Some of this will make sense to you and some of this will sound like excuses that you've heard before, but just know that the ones that sound like excuses are based on my fact, my perspective, and the knowledge and experience of the people who are trying to help me get clean. These are people I have placed my trust and faith in because all they want from me is to succeed in my endeavor to stay clean for another day.

You have your own goals for me like going to college, getting a job, getting married and finally having kids so you can have grandkids and can show all of your friends their pictures. See these are your goals for me and not necessarily my goals for myself. Let me try to explain how I see things. See, you think I have a alcohol/drug problem but I don't; I have a living problem. You think I use alcohol/drugs but the reality is that alcohol/drugs use me. Alcohol/Drugs are for those of us that can't handle reality, and reality is for people like you that can't handle their alcohol/drugs. To me, reality is a nice place to visit but I really don't like living there. I live in constant fear of letting you down; of not living up to your expectations. I put off doing things out of fear and you call me a procrastinator, but procrastination is just a 5 syllable word for fear.

Alcohol/Drugs make me feel alive and normal, but they also make me paranoid, incoherent and both destructive and pathetically and relentlessly self-destructive. Then I would do unconscionable things in order to feel normal and alive again. Alcohol/Drugs gave me wings and then slowly took away my sky. I looked to drugs for courage and they made me a coward. You say that I had always been a sensitive, perceptive, joyful and exceptionally bright child, but on alcohol/drugs I became unrecognizable. You should try looking in the mirror and not knowing the reflection looking back at you. I long for the day I am able to look in the mirror and be OK with the person I see looking back. Like all kids, when I was really young I used to think there was a monster in my closet and under my bed and you would come into my room and reassure me that there wasn't one by opening the closet and looking under the bed. Now that I am older you can't convince me of that anymore and it's not your job to. But since I found alcohol/drugs I've come to the realization that there is a monster; but it's not in my closet or under the bed but inside of me, and that if I can't learn to ignore it, it will destroy me.

When I first started getting drunk/high it was pleasurable for awhile; I had finally experienced nirvana, and then the euphoria wore off and I began to see the ugly side of my using and I experienced hell. I found the higher the drugs got me the lower they brought me. After awhile I faced 2 choices, either I could suffer the pain of withdrawal or take more alcohol/drugs. I did the withdrawal thing more times than you'll ever know and it's not pleasurable at all; in fact it's just the opposite. If you remember there were times where I said I couldn't go to school or work because I had the flu, but more times than not it was because I was going through withdrawal.

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I guess the best way to describe withdrawal is insuperable depression and acute anxiety — a drawn-out agony. Some of the times I choose withdrawal because I didn't want to use anymore, that I hated who I had become, but for the most part it was because I didn't have a choice in the matter...I had run out of alcohol/drugs. You would think that after experiencing the emotional and physical pain of withdrawal that I would never let myself go through that again...right? See that's how you see it, but to me it just became a part of my using and a consequence I was willing to pay. You may call that insanity...I call that life.

I've been to enough meetings to know the readings by heart and one of the phrases that jumps out at me every time I hear it, is: "when we use alcohol/drugs we are slowly committing suicide". I never thought of it that way but now I totally understand what it means...but still I use. I'm sure you remember the show Mash; it was pretty popular when you were growing up. The theme song is actually titled "suicide is painless" and in its context, I'm sure it's true. But the slow suicide of my using is not painless in the least; I feel the pain and can see the flame of my life getting fainter every time I use.

All those times you yelled at me for my using you gave me exactly what I needed to feed my addiction. You thought you were doing it out of love but you were actually justifying to me what my mind had convinced me I was a long time ago. I look at myself as a failure; as a complete waste of space. There is a line from a song called Southern Cross and this line defines my past and it goes: "I never failed to fail because it's the easiest thing to do". When you yell and scream you just confirm to me that I am a failure and after awhile it becomes common place; not to mention expected. It is one thing if I think of myself as a loser or failure but to know that's how you see me as well makes it easier for my mind to convince me to use. My basic problem is that I flee from those who want me and I pursue my rejecters.

There are a few things you can do if you really want to help me.

I know by telling you these things I'm actually cutting off my main money source...you. I will never stop using as long as you keep giving me money or supporting me. I can only stop using when I hit my bottom and only I can put down the shovel and quit digging. When you bail me out, buy me a car, pay for my rent or give me money you aren't helping me at all; you are only handing me the shovel again and telling me to keep digging. You keep letting me come back home to live because you think you're helping me out but if your honest, you'll realize that you are doing it for purely selfish reasons. When you know I'm in the room next door you sleep better. The last thing I'll confess to you is the real reason I steal from you. I steal from you because I'm counting on you not calling the cops on me. I count on you not wanting me to go to jail; to have a criminal record. I steal from you because you keep letting me move back home.

You make the mistake of thinking that recovery is simply a matter of not drinking or using drugs. And you consider a relapse a sign of complete failure and long periods of abstinence a complete success. But these perceptions are too simplistic. My life is anything but simple and I'm not just talking about my using alcohol/drugs. The way my mind works, nothing is as easy as just doing it because my mind tries to convince me not to do it. It doesn't matter how simple of a task it is...even unloading the dishwasher is a mind struggle for me. My mind also loves to make every little thing that goes wrong

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a major crisis. Let me try to explain this in as simple terms as I possibly can. Let's say we both go outside in the morning and our cars don't start. You go in and call a mechanic and I go in and call suicide prevention. I'm what they call a W.C.S. person; which stands for worst case scenario. They say a mind is a terrible thing to waste; well my mind is a terrible thing to listen to. Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be...mine won't let me be happy. My mind keeps reminding me that there is only 18 inches between a halo and a noose.

Relapse isn't a requirement but it does happen to quite a few alcohol/addicts. The hard truth is that if there were 50 addicts in their 1st meeting together, more of us will be dead in 5 years then will have 5 years clean. The last time I relapsed it was because the bottom fell out faster than I could lower my standards. It's really difficult to solve a problem with the same mind that created it and God knows I've created a lot of problems for myself...and for you. I hope someday you will realize that I am not a bad person trying to get good; I'm a sick person trying to get well. I suffer from the disease of addiction. If you believe this you won't be so critical of me. For a critic is just a person who goes onto the battlefield after the battle has been fought and shoots the survivors. Believe me when I say this; I don't want to be an alcohol/addict as much as you wish you weren't a parent of one.

I love you.
Sincerely,
Your loved one battling addiction.

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Letters from an Alcoholic

Subject: Acknowledgment and Seeking Support for Alcoholism

Dear _____

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you with a heavy heart and a sincere desire to share something important about my life. It is not easy for me to open up about this, but I believe that honesty and transparency are crucial in relationships, especially when it comes to matters that affect our well-being.

Over the past few months, I have come to the realization that I am struggling with alcoholism. This admission is not easy, and I understand the impact it may have on those close to me. It is crucial for me to be forthright about my situation, as I am committed to taking responsibility for my actions and seeking the necessary help to address this issue.

Alcoholism is a complex and challenging condition, and I understand that it may be difficult for those around me to comprehend the extent of my struggle. I want you to know that this is not a choice but rather a battle that I am determined to face head-on. I am reaching out to you because I value our relationship and believe that having a support system is crucial in overcoming this challenge.

I have already taken some initial steps toward seeking professional help and attending support groups. However, I wanted you to be aware of my situation and to ask for your understanding and support as I embark on this journey of recovery. Your support means a great deal to me, and I am hopeful that, with the help of those around me, I can overcome this obstacle and rebuild my life.

I understand that this may come as a shock, and I am willing to answer any questions you may have or provide more information about my plan for recovery. I want to assure you that I am committed to making positive changes in my life and appreciate your understanding and encouragement during this challenging time.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I am grateful for the relationships I have in my life, and I am hopeful that, with your support, I can move forward on the path to recovery.

Sincerely, Your Alcoholic

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Letters from an Alcoholic

Subject: Sharing a Difficult Truth - Seeking Your Support

Dear Mom,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits. I've been struggling with something for quite some time now, and I've reached a point where I feel the need to share it with you, as I believe in the strength of our relationship and your unconditional love and support.

It's not easy for me to put into words, but I want to be honest with you about my current situation. Over the past few months, I've come to realize that I am grappling with alcoholism. This admission is difficult, and I understand the concerns and emotions it may evoke, but I believe that openness is crucial at this moment.

I want you to know that I am not sharing this to burden you, but rather because I value our relationship deeply and believe that your understanding and support can be instrumental in my journey toward recovery. Alcoholism is a challenge I am facing, and I am committed to taking the necessary steps to overcome it.

I've started seeking professional help and attending support groups to address this issue head-on. It's a process, and I am learning more about myself and how to navigate through this difficult time. Your understanding, love, and support mean the world to me, and I am hopeful that, with you by my side, I can navigate the path to recovery.

I understand that this may be a lot to take in, and I am willing to discuss this further if you have any questions or concerns. Please know that my decision to share this with you comes from a place of honesty and trust, and my commitment to overcoming this challenge is unwavering.

Thank you for being my pillar of strength throughout my life. I love you, and I am grateful for your understanding and support as I work towards a healthier and happier future.

Sincerely, Your Alcoholic

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Letters from an Alcoholic

Subject: A Letter from the Depths of Struggle

Dear _____

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits. It's with a heavy heart and a measure of humility that I attempt to put into words the challenges I've been facing lately. This isn't easy to express, but I believe that acknowledging my struggle is the first step toward recovery.

For a while now, I've been grappling with the weight of alcoholism. It's a difficult reality to confront, and I've often found myself lost in a cycle that seemed impossible to break. I want you to know that this admission is not a cry for pity or judgment but an earnest attempt to be transparent about my journey.

Alcohol has become more than just a casual indulgence; it has crept into the very fabric of my daily life, affecting my relationships, my health, and my overall well-being. The numbness it once provided has transformed into a relentless battle for control, and I find myself at a crossroads, recognizing the need for change.

I've taken a crucial step towards seeking help by attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. These gatherings have become a lifeline, providing a sense of understanding and community that I've desperately needed. It's a space where I can share my struggles and learn from others who have faced similar demons.

I am writing this letter not just as a confession but as a commitment to confront my demons and work towards a better version of myself. I know it won't be easy, and the road to recovery is long, but I am determined to rebuild my life and regain control over my actions.

I understand if this revelation is shocking or disappointing, and I am willing to face the consequences of my actions. But more than anything, I hope for your understanding and support as I navigate this challenging journey. It's a battle I cannot fight alone, and your encouragement means the world to me.

I am open to any questions you may have or discussions you'd like to initiate. I appreciate your time and patience as I embark on this path of recovery, and I hope that, with your support, I can emerge from the darkness into a brighter, sober future.

Thank you for being a part of my life.

Sincerely, Your Alcoholic