

LEGACY LETTER TO MY SON
A STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS LETTER OF LOVE AND HOPE AND LEGACY
BY ANONYMOUS

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No one lives forever. At your age you probably don't think much about the fact that I will not be around some day...nor should you, necessarily. But, I wanted to write something for you to read that tells you how much you have blessed my life. And, I wanted to put in writing some of the lessons I have learned and some of the ethics and values that are important to me. I expect to be around for a good long time, but if something should happen, perhaps what I have written will serve as strength to you as you go forward in your life.

You already have your own thoughts and beliefs. I respect those. Yet, I know that you love and respect me and I want to leave an accounting of my spiritual beliefs, a listing of the greatest lessons I have learned, and an expression of what I hope for you in your life. So here goes:

I believe that we come from a source of love and that we return to that source of love when we die. I have no factual proof of this...but then; many of the most important things in life are not subject to scientific proof. The first time I held you as an infant and looked into your eyes, I was surprised at the overwhelming feeling...no rather it was a knowing... that you were arriving from a source of great love. And, as I have been present at a few deaths through the years, I have had the feeling that those who die return to that same source. You may chuckle at the idea that a Unitarian Universalist would say such a thing. But, remember, we are free in our faith and this is what I have found to be true: We arrive on the earth from a source of love and return to a source of love when we die. I believe that the details cannot be fully known. It is a mystery that I realize, not a creed that itemizes the specifics. I hope that you will be open to awareness beyond the proven fact in your life.

I believe that every human being carries the light of the holy within them. The world we live in will try mightily to persuade you that being rich or powerful or beautiful is what makes you worthy. Don't believe it! Find that radiance within yourself and let it shine out! It has taken me many trials and numerous errors and down many roads to wake up to this reality... within me all of the time.

I believe that it is our purpose in life to love. Pure and simple: we were born to love. Easy sentence to write! But it has taken me many years to figure out what that means and, believe me, I am still learning. I had to learn to love myself first. I had to become aware of my wounds so that I would not project them onto others. I had to learn that no human being is perfect and that love is about finding the light in others beyond the imperfection. Being your mother has taught me so much about love. You were

a delight to parent: bright and funny and loving. I know that I have not always been a perfect mother. I have said things in anger or acted in ways that have hurt you, I am sure. If there is anything for which I have not asked your forgiveness and that you still hold as anger, I ask your forgiveness now. I keep learning that those we love disappoint us and we disappoint those we love. It is good to be quick to ask for forgiveness, to forgive and it is helpful to be eager to change our own ways.

I believe that one of the best themes in my life has been when I am helping or serving others. Of course we each have to take care of ourselves too, but living a life with an open heart in service to others is one of the greatest satisfactions there is. I hope that you will move in this direction in your life. I hope that whatever profession you choose, you will always keep those who are in need in your vision and that the work of your hands will benefit them in some way.

I want to say something about money. I don't believe I have taught you well about managing money or saving money. I hope that we can have a conversation about this in the near future. There is nothing magic about managing money. One has to pay attention to it, though. In my past I have had magical thinking about money and it has caused me to make decisions that were not helpful in the long term. Spending only what you have, making a budget and sticking to it, living simply and saving, and being generous are things that I learned to do later in life. I hope that you will make an effort to practice these things sooner than I did.

Most every parent wants their child to be content and joyous and full of purpose and generous and successful. But if I have learned anything in my five decades of life, it is that no one is perfect and that we evolve toward wholeness...and that it is hard work sometimes. We make mistakes. We choose to do things that hurt ourselves or others. We can get confused and wonder if we will ever get things right. We can feel ashamed of ourselves sometimes...lost ...lonely. Any person who says they have never lost their way, is not being honest. So....I pray... that you will not be hard on yourself when you find yourself looking at your imperfections in all of their glory. The important thing is to accept responsibility, be willing to get help when you need it, to ask for forgiveness of others if that is called for, forgive yourself if that is called for, and begin to learn, always to learn. Some of the biggest mistakes in my life have led me to the most important lessons and discoveries. Trite but true.

It has been very important to me to have people in my life with which I can be totally myself; with whom I can take off the masks and just be. Those who know me raw and vulnerable and real...and who love me because of, and in spite of it. You have always been a good friend and have valued friendship. I hope you will continue to give this a high priority.

I wish for you a marriage that brings you strength and comfort and fun and joy. I hope you find a person to marry who loves themselves (not sure what the right pronoun is here...but you well know that the gender of your love makes no difference to me) and who can love you from that place of self love. I can see that you have a good sense of yourself, that you think deeply about things and that you care about others. I hope you marry someone who does not expect you to complete them, but who feels complete

enough to want to share in a mature way a life of adventure and growth. I pray that you marry someone who, most of the time, is easy to be with, someone you respect, someone who is not hoping to change you, and someone with whom you laugh a lot. It took me a long time to find the right partner, because I had to become the right partner first.

I wish for a life that is full of good memories. I have so many memories of you that I cherish: Sitting under a blanket in the backyard looking up at the night sky. Making up stories with you and those plastic action figures you loved so much. What a special little boy you were ...and a wonderful man now. I remember all of the sports you tried and how you stuck with them even when you didn't play and how much I admired that. I remember how you have persevered through a really hard year recently. These memories are so much the richness of our lives.

If you decide to be a parent I hope that you will make spending time with your children a high priority. Although the advertising industry tries to convince us otherwise, it is not the newest toy that is important....or the most expensive sneakers. It is not even the huge vacations. It is TIME TOGETHER that makes a family.

I hope that you will be a voice for the bringing of justice in the world. I was never a star in this area. That is, I was never the one out front with the great rhetoric or moving inspiration. But I have shown up in Washington to march against two unjust wars. I have gone door to door speaking about candidates or causes. I have tried to speak up in the everyday world when I see wrong. Looking back, I see that all of these efforts were small but (when added to the efforts of others) essential. At this point in my life I have a sense that civil rights and women's rights and gay rights and peace and environmental justice are a part of my legacy as a person; that because of my small efforts with others, the world has grown more gentle and just.

Having said that, I hope that, overall, you will support the good in the world and go easy on the criticism. There is much to criticize in the world, but if you focus on noticing and rewarding what goes right, you will have less stress and more joy and change the world at the same time.

Almost all of my adult life I have been a member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation. You have grown up going to church every Sunday, and I think you have some idea of how important that can be in shaping a good life. I know that you are not church-active right now, and you may choose never to be. I just want to invite you not to rule it out as a possibility. This commitment to a religion and a community has been transformative for me in my life. It has provided me with flexible continuity in living my life and growing as a person, It has brought me many, many beautiful moments and inspiration. It has provided me a chance to know good people over time, and, perhaps most important, I know myself to be part of a continuing tradition that has served humankind for over three centuries. I hope you will consider such a commitment.

-I know that you have dreams about your future. And, I have no doubt that you will accomplish many of them. I will be here to support and help in any way I can. I hope, though, that you will also pay attention to the moments of the every day and not miss today by dreaming too much about tomorrow. I think you are actually much wiser about this than I was at your age.

And, you should know that as far as I am concerned you have accomplished a great deal already by being present in my life and bringing so much light into my world. Thank you.

With great love and respect,
Mom