



An Open Letter From An Addict

Dear Mom, Dad, Husband, Wife, Son, Daughter,

I am an addict. I need your help.

Don't lecture, blame or scold me. You wouldn't be angry at 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 of 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 and 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 addict.