

## METHAMPHETAMINE UPDATE

### The Letter That Couldn't Be Sent

The following was received from a local treatment provider who explained that it was written with the knowledge that it could not be sent. "I wrote it," he said, "to resolve my own feelings of helplessness in the matter."

Dear Mary,

You may be wondering why a total stranger would be writing you a letter. I am writing because I feel a kindred connection to people who share a common malady. I met your mother recently when she came to talk to me about your problem. She seemed really nice, but I had to straighten her out. I had to tell her that right now she is the one with the problem. At some point you may see the situation in the same way that your mother now sees it. By then you may have many problems and be ready to ask for help. By the time the situation becomes *your* problem life may be very different, and that is really what I wanted to talk to you about.

By the time you realize that the life drugs will give you isn't the life you want it may be that only a tragedy can shake you free. The grip gets unbelievably strong; so much so that you may not be able to want freedom. It may be, as it was for me, that a change will only come when the pain of addiction exceeds all of your fears of living drug free. I hope your pain comes sooner than mine did.

When I was using, drugs were interpreting reality for me. The interpretation was basically that drugs made life worth living. The other day I was doing an assignment from a self-help book relating to developing a personal mission statement. The assignment was to make a list of what makes life meaningful and it included the following items: my relationship with my wife and children; the ability to be a good parent; having loving relationships with my parents and other extended family; being able to have and be a good friend; being able to make progress in all areas of my life; feeling a sense of purpose and self-worth; being able to face emotions without retreating to the empty stare of a numbed soul and being able to like myself. After making the list I had one of those uncanny "I've been here before" feelings, so I dug around for the evidence. I found it in a journal from early recovery. A counselor had given me an assignment to make a list of things that addiction had taken away from me. It was identical to the list of things that now gave meaning to my life, things that recovery had given back. Tears of gratitude flowed from my eyes.

To a young person who is starting down the path that consumed me, I must say that I ended up living much of my life without the things that matter most to me. In fact I didn't even discover what they were until I stopped ingesting the substances that were thinking for me. I don't know what will make you happy; I can only hope that you won't waste decades finding out that it will not come from methamphetamine or any other substance.

Sincerely,  
The stranger

We hear that Mary is well today, and that letter, well maybe now a whole lot of Mary's will read it. Courtesy of the Methamphetamine Strike Force

