

7/28/14

Alright, I guess you're getting a hand-written letter. I hope you find a home for Benedict. As you can see, he makes himself quite comfy.

I'm enjoying the last day in San Diego. I ran 8 miles through Balboa Park. It was worth the sweat; I find I'm in an incredibly good mood afterwards. When I got back, I asked my brother to breakfast and he suggested we go to the Harvey Milk Diner off of University Ave. I tried to make small talk on the way there. I guess I feel uncomfortable with silence around him. (oops, I just spilled some of my coffee).

I asked what it was about his roommate (Gardenia) that makes her so fun to be around. "Initially, the drugs and alcohol," he replied in his edgy way. I took that to mean she uses a lot of drugs and alcohol and that makes her more outgoing. Now, after writing it down, he might be suggesting being under the influence of drugs and alcohol makes her a fun person. I don't suspect my brother of using drugs, other than alcohol.

He seems cool to me this visit. The last time I visited he seemed more interested in hanging around with me. I'm disappointed he doesn't ask me to spend time with him. I wish he would invite me out somewhere or plan something. I feel like I complain a lot about my perceived lack of initiative in my brother.

I asked my brother if he got my letter. "What did you think of my letter?" I asked him. Receiving no response, I asked him whether he got my letter. He asked me when I sent it, and he genuinely looked confused. It sucks that it got lost. Possibly, he received it and tossed it, and he just didn't tell me. I actually think he would tell me if he got the letter. He seems very direct and honest. Unfortunately, he didn't ask me what I wrote. I'm not sure I gave him much time to consider. I had important written messages that I wanted to communicate with him. Still, I get the sense my brother does not make the first move. He knows me as a person who will dive into a subject I want to discuss. Knowing this, he might

let me jump in rather than simply asking me what it is I want him to know.

I don't know what I think about all this. It's like _____ is on one side of a door, and I'm on the other. I open the door, and I expect to welcome me warmly to his side. I open the door expecting him to be curious about what is on my side. I see no interest on his face; I'm hurt. It slows me down and takes my breath away. I realize I am incredibly vain and condescending to expect my brother to have gratitude for me opening a door. But that's what I feel, at least right now. It's exhausting me.

Of course, I told him the heart of my message which was that it was irresponsible of all of our parents (our mother and two fathers) to have neglected his emotional well-being. I caught myself feeling embarrassed for being candid about my reflections. I sensed my gaze shifting left and right as I was trying to communicate with him; But then I held his gaze because it is important to me that I say what I feel (for myself) and because I really do want to improve my relationship with _____ said he does not blame our parents, but he also says he does not forgive them either. He explained forgiveness required blame. He did -- or rather, does not -- "blame them for the way I turned out, even though their decisions have contributed to who I am as a person." He said our dad is "ignorant and simple." "I'm not trying to be mean when I say 'ignorant,'" he explained. I agree with _____ that our biological father is low-functioning. He said our mother did the best she ~~she~~ could.

_____ remembers our step-father _____ telling him to eat his meal at some restaurant, and _____ (at age five) said he was not hungry. _____ responded: ok, well, you'll eat it later (or something like that). It was a curt, thoughtless comment to make to a five year old and the tone was harsh (as anyone who knew _____ thirty years ago would say). Anyway, it seems _____ asked to live with our biological father shortly after we moved from _____ to _____. I guess my mother let him because he lived with our father for a year; In hindsight, it was a bad idea. My brother said he felt like a loner in the family since age five, since the time he moved away from _____ and returned to live with our biological father.

According to him, living with dad "wasn't any better." "His wife was a bitch." "She was crazy; her kids even say she's crazy." I find it very hard to disagree with him. It occurs to me now that he and mom had very valuable information about my dad and (my dad's wife), and it would have been incredibly helpful to have this information before I visited my dad when I was thirteen. Why weren't we the kind of family that shared valuable information with each other?

I find it most shocking (and infuriating) that my brother claims we had the best relationship before he went away to live with our dad. "How old were you when you went to live with Dad?" I asked incredulously. "And how old was I?" "5 and 1, respectively," he answered. I could feel anger rising inside me. Partly, I did not like his tone when he said we had the best relationship. I felt accused of something wrong doing, and I wanted to retort that it was his decision to live with dad (and by the way, thanks for leaving me behind asshole). I held back a little but I'm proud I also spoke up for myself and told him I didn't think it believable that we had a meaningful relationship when I was one, or one that was damaged beyond repair because we lived apart. I remember him returning when I was five. It was hurtful to hear. It's painful now, and I wish I had told him that as soon as he said it. Will he always feel that alone? Is there any way to repair what damage or rift exists?

said asked him whether was a good father. asked me the same question, and when he did, I lied. I told him he was a good father. I was very curious about my brother's response. Did he lie like me to make feel better? Would believe him if he did? "I told him, no, he wasn't," explained. He said he told he appreciated the change he saw in in the 2000s, but he candidly answered's question by telling him he was a bad father. "I ~~do~~ admire you're honesty," I explained as I told him I didn't have the heart to be honest with

It's funny that is so oblivious to his conduct as a parent. How else could he possibly expect us to answer his question (honestly)?

Well, I'm fading here in this coffee shop. I need to send this letter and your gift. I've done quite a bit of venting in this letter. I wish I could be a better friend for you. You're a great one for me.
Benny