

**A courageous letter to families and friends of loved ones still suffering from addiction:**

My sister, Linda, is going through a metamorphosis directed by God. He is taking her through the process of learning life's lessons while being sober for the longest stretch of her life. As her family we sat by wringing our hands, shaking our heads and impotently "tough loving" her all the while her life spun out of control. In her book, Linda is speaking to the newly sober.

I would like to speak to those who have a loved one in addiction now: tough love is not ignoring while your loved one plunges head long into self-destruction. While I did pray for her everyday and finally (when it was too overwhelming for me) I gave her completely to God. I thought that was all I could do...

Several years later our younger brother asked me this question "Are we going to let what happened to Dad happen to Linda?" Bobby, Lisa and I formed a plan and intervened. Finally we were doing what a family is supposed to do - reach out with an ultimatum! You will get treatment or we will force you to. And sometimes force is necessary!! People mistakenly think that there is nothing they can do until the person "wants" help! They may want help somewhere deep inside but the fear of the unknown, which for them is the fear of dealing with life sober, prevents them from "wanting" help. Sometimes addicts do hit bottom on their own and turn toward help. For others their bottom is the ultimatum their family **and/or friends** give them! When we do not intervene we support the addiction. When we give an ultimatum and do not follow through we support the addiction.

I can tell you from experience that getting them sober is only the first step and that first step is a shaky one. Like a little child she learned to walk all over again. She is a toddler now in her sobriety but a maturing Christian. Do not expect sobriety to be the end of all their problems. Their problems were the reason for addiction. They only begin to deal with their problems after sobriety. This process takes time and as their support system we have to be patient and supportive through this process too. It takes much longer for this process than it does to simply get them sober. Emotional growth has been stunted by addiction. Although, for Linda this process seems to be going rapidly for others this process could take a very, very long time, years even – expect it. Sobriety only allows them to deal with what caused them to drink (use) soberly.

I thank our all-knowing Father in heaven for allowing myself, my sister, Lisa and my brother, Bobby to help Linda through this process. I thank Him for Linda's courage, perseverance and strength, which can only come from Him. I also want to thank Linda's friends who because of distance I do not know personally except for Linda telling me about them. You have all been an instrumental part of her recovery and of what we lovingly call "Linda's Team."

So proud of you Sis!  
Much love,  
Brenda

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Hi there!...I have been laying a little low with regard to writing lately... eagerly awaiting further instruction and divine guidance... Grace is never stationary, so 2 more books have been conceived, and only small beginnings there. The signings are steady and I look forward to meeting you if you are led to attend one.

I am still posting all activity and progress of “Vital Signs Of Recovery” on my web site (see Events page) in case you might care to look over my shoulder and witness grace unfold in small noteworthy unveilings:

My days never seem to be my own and people pleasing defects tend to wane in the further realization that I can not be everything to everyone. Family and friends have experienced situations that may seem like neglect at times. If you are reading this, you know who you are, and I cherish every moment I have with you all.

In truth we are closer than ever in Christ as I put God first and allow Him to maintain my spiritual fitness. The Holy Spirit continues to affirm each new direction as I obediently respond to its nudges.

My prayer and my hope is that we all are captivated by the love and the freedom that our awesome Father has for us and longs for us to walk in.

If you haven't read my book or if you have and didn't like it, don't lose heart ...it was not meant for you.....God is bigger than words on the pages of any book....even the Bible. But let us not forget that great stories written by those-who have touched Him and have been touched by Him-can reveal something of Him and His love that we might not see...on our own. With that being said, if you are so moved to read “Vital Signs Of Recovery” or the Bible or any other story written by someone who is developing an amazing relationship with our Lord, you might just be surprised by who you find there?

Touched by Him,

Linda Rudder