

Dear Family and Friends,

I am writing this letter to you all, because I have something very important that I wish to say. I want it heard by everyone so that it is understood that this needs to be taken seriously.

We are expecting a baby soon, precious to us especially because there was a real possibility that because of my PTSD and my cervical cancer, I may not have been able to give my best friend something that we wanted so badly, a baby.

Now that I have someone that I need to live my fullest for, I have begun to realise that I am not taking care of myself, and treating myself right.

It has been a struggle for me to learn to take care of myself, to learn how to live as a healthy adult, and when to draw the line, regardless of my history with that person.

However, I have discovered over a long period of time that certain people are standing in the way of my learning to be, and living as a healthy adult, mother and partner.

My PTSD does not define me, nor will it ever. It is however a piece of clothing that I can never take off and something that I must match the rest of my life's 'wardrobe' to. I now suffer from a lifelong medical condition that largely entails firm boundaries in order to partially function as a human being.

Unfortunately, there are people within my family, friend and acquaintance circles that have not, do not, and will not respect my boundaries. Repeated requests to do so, coupled with backlashes from this trespass of my personal space have not been sufficiently heeded.

I have heard my parents and grandparents complain about the treatment they have experienced at the hands of their parents. History has shown me through several generations that poor behaviour will not cease if you keep those people around.

There are boundaries in my life that are crossed on a regular basis, and it has never been acceptable, but now it is even more so of an issue.

My life, my body, my choices, my religious preferences, my partner, all of these areas are constantly trampled, opinions forced, actions sneakily done, manipulations of people, circumstance or truth, and personally invasive opinions.

Plainly put, I've reached a very healthy, but long overdue milestone, where I need to say that enough is enough. I am tired of being trampled, lied to, lied about, manipulated, backstabbed, bullied and maintaining ties with people who love me with one arm and stab me with the other.

Those who minimize, tolerate, cover, lie about, manipulate or flat out deny the actions and behaviours are accessories to the fact, and just as unhealthy.

My father and I have rarely, if ever, seen eye to eye. It has been a tumultuous, if not sometimes poisonous relationship, but never, ever healthy.

However, in order for respect to be demanded, it must be given, and it is at this impasse I find myself. My father does not respect me, and I do not respect him, and over the years I have come to the conclusion that this will never change.

This poses a serious issue for me, because in order to heal as far as possible, deal, and live with PTSD, boundaries must be respected.

My family, through its actions over the years has shown to their children that it is acceptable to lie, cheat, manipulate, backstab, hold themselves above the law, avoid responsibility and consequences, to bend rules to suit themselves, to emotionally and/or physically assault others, and that any means is acceptable to ram home a belief to someone else who resists.

Based on my father's continued actions, we children have learned that it is acceptable to be emotionally manipulative, selfish and vindictive, that no change needs to occur, but rather that others are always at fault.

Further, he has clearly indicated through his actions and behaviour that women should be willingly subject to men, must please their every physical whim, and tolerate bullying, childish, manipulative and downright degrading behaviour, either directly, or said to others.

From my mother I have learned that it is acceptable to allow this behaviour to present and continue in a partner, and that openly displaying and allowing your children to be taught this, is part of life.

I understand that my mother may have had her reasons to remain in such circumstances, and I will not judge for a decision that was not mine to make. However, I refuse to allow this thought process to continue beyond my generation.

I do not need PTSD, society, therapy or any other person to tell me that this behaviour is unhealthy; rather, I have come to the conclusion that it is the opposite of what I now know to be what is right for me and my family.

I refuse to live my life for fear of upsetting someone who has demonstrated an inability to teach healthy boundaries and coping mechanisms to his children. The damage has been done, and I choose to live my life in the healthiest manner for me, not what anyone else may think.

From this utterly unacceptable behaviour, I now struggle to have a self esteem; it is harder than working on my PTSD.

For my own health, and for that of my darling baby and partner, I am choosing to withdraw from my family, and create my own.

I do not wish any further contact with my father, or those who wish to hurt me by forcing this topic upon me. I cannot help the past, but I can help the future.

I have been able to excise every abusive person in my life, except for that of my father, and it is this that is holding me back. He may not be abusive now, but he was in the past, and his behaviour in the present brings fresh the memories of the past.

There are things that have happened in the past few years up until recently that are reminiscent of the past, not to mention completely unacceptable. I do not need another issue to arise to tell me that this will continue to affect me.

The stress, anxiety and other symptoms that this constantly sets off is heavily impacting my life, and I need it to stop.

To my siblings and other family members, I want to have a healthy relationship with you. It is, despite what you will be told, entirely possible to have a relationship with someone without having to choose a side.

You do not have to support one side or another, and anyone that pressures you into taking a side is unfairly putting their problems above your own rights to lead a free and happy life.

I do not willingly keep these memories. They do nothing but serve to poison me, torment my nights and ruin my days. I hate these memories with a passion because no matter what I do, they will not go away.

Regardless of whether or not responsibility is ever taken, whether people change or not, my PTSD stands for itself, and is going to be a lifelong reminder to all.

I'm not sorry that I am doing this, but rather that this is necessary at all, but I am not responsible for the fact that it is necessary for me to do this.

I'm sorry Dad that you will not be able to enjoy the freedom of seeing your grandchild grow up, and I know that this will hurt you badly. I'm not here to hurt you though, I'm here to do what is best for me, and I should not have to live an unhealthy life for fear of hurting your feelings.

Having to separate myself from my father, and potentially other people who may choose a side, is hurtful, but not nearly as hurtful and damaging as not being able to live a healthy and happy life. I choose what is right for me, and will be responsible for myself and my new family, what you do and say now is squarely upon your own head, no matter how you reason it.

Ability to handle things from the past rests squarely on how hard I choose to work in therapy and on myself, so that will be my focus for years to come. I look forward to the day where I have healed enough to be able to handle the past, but for now, it is not an option.

After much consideration, this letter has gone from 7 pages in length to 3, but if any of you feel the need to understand a little more, I am willing to give that longer version to you. Being healthy is a lifelong valid reason for my actions, please do not push this topic, or I will be forced to retreat from you also, in order to protect myself.

With Love,