

Apology Letter to Son from Dad

Dear [SON NAME],

I would like to share an important part of my recovery process with you by taking full and complete responsibility for my controlling and abusive behavior with you.

I was so happy when you were born and, unfortunately, I had my own plans and unrealistic expectations for who you were supposed to be. I always believed you should be perfect in every way --- how you acted and how you did in school and in sports. This was all about making me feel and look good and not about who you were as a young boy or who you really wanted to be. I was always in a hurry to have all those plans and expectations of mine for you to come true, such as being perfect, not ever getting mad or yelling like I did when I was angry, and acting like a little adult when you were only a child. I wanted you to learn the way I learned how to be a man, how to work hard and develop a proper work ethic that would get you ahead in life. I believed that would make you happy in the same way that I defined happiness and success just like what I learned from my dad.

[SON NAME], when you were very young, you started to witness years of verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse to you, your mom, and your brothers. You were also the target of my physical abuse toward you. I did not want you to cry, whine, or ever complain. It angered me when you did because I was fearful that someone would notice that I did not have a perfect child.

[SON NAME], I also know that I damaged you by blaming and shaming you as I used guilt, threatening and intimidating language, and telling you how disappointed I was in you because you did not perform up to my unrealistic expectations of who I wanted you to be. I also blamed you for the anger I felt---saying that you made me mad by not meeting my expectations of you; in fact, that was really caused by my own fears and insecurities outside our home. I am also aware of how I humiliated you at times.

[SON NAME], I hope you know that I have been very serious about learning about my anger. I am also learning to control my behavior and actions when I feel sad, hurt, and insecure so I don't turn these feelings into disrespectful anger (toward you, your mom, and your brothers). My anger will never go away completely, but I can handle it more effectively when it does come up so I do not hurt you and the other people I love. I promise you that I will continue my journey to apply the lessons I have learned to stop being emotionally, verbally, and psychologically abusive to you. You did not ever deserve this abusive behavior that I have done to you. I am now realizing at this stage in my life that all I ever really wanted for you was to create your own expectations on your own terms, to have your dreams and follow them, and to be happy.

[SON NAME], I am very sorry for how I have treated you in the past and I make a commitment to you that I will work hard, using what I have learned in my anger class, to make sure this kind of behavior does not happen with you in the future.

Love, Dad

