

# APOLOGY LETTER TO DAUGHTER

Dear [DAUGHTER NAME],

This is the time in my anger program when I would like to talk with you about a very important part of my recovery by taking full responsibility for my controlling and abusive behavior with you and your sister. I was really happy when you were born but, unfortunately, I had my own very rigid ideas about who you were supposed to be. I always believed you should be absolutely perfect: how you did in school and your activities and how you acted around me and others. This was all about making me feel and look good to other people and didn't really have much to do with who you actually were and who you really wanted to be.

My plans included you being the perfect child and you not ever getting mad or yelling like I did with you. These also included my expectation that you were always supposed to act like a little adult when, in fact, you were just a kid. I wanted you to learn the way I learned how to be a woman, how to work hard and earn a good living so that you could have a good life. I thought that this would make you happy, so you could experience success just like I felt I had as a mom and a working woman.

From the time when you were a very young child to the present, you have experienced and seen years of emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse directed at both you and your younger sister. I did not want you to whine when I asked you to do something or ever complain about anything. I got angry when you did this because I wanted to be completely in control of you and your life and also because I didn't want anyone to know that I was not a great parent. Instead of talking reasonably with you or disciplining you in a healthy way, I all too often escalated to the point of verbally abusing you by yelling and screaming at you. I wanted you to be afraid of me so you would do whatever I wanted you to do and be whoever I thought you should be.

I want you to know that I really do take full responsibility for my abusive anger with you in the past. I often told you that you were the one who made me mad by not listening to what you were told and not doing what I felt you should do. But, in fact, my anger was really related to my own insecurity and self-doubt from a long time ago and my fears about losing you. These were all ways that I tried to control you and any situation where I didn't like that was happening around me.

I really want you to know how important my anger management counseling program is to me. I truly want to learn more about who I really am and I want to learn ways to help me control my behavior when I am feeling hurt, disappointed, and fearful inside. In the past, I have always turned these feelings into disrespectful anger directed at you and your sister. I know I will never get rid of my anger completely but I will work hard to handle it more effectively when it does come up so I do not continue to hurt you, your sister, and anyone else whom I love. I promise you that I will continue this journey I have started with this class to use the skills and tools I have learned in counseling so that I can stop being emotionally, verbally, psychologically, and physically abusive to you.

You did not deserve to be treated in this abusive way by me or anyone else in your life. It was not your fault; it was mine. I am now realizing, finally, that you have grown into a young adult woman who has your own expectations for who you want to be and that, in the end, you need to and have the right to learn the facts of life on your own terms. You have now, and have always had, the right to have your own dreams for yourself and to follow them and to be happy in whatever way works for you.

I am very sorry for how I treated you when you were growing up and I make a strong commitment to you that I will work very hard to make sure that this controlling and abusive behavior is not a part of our relationship moving forward.

Love, Mom

