

A Final Vow to You

Once we meant something uniquely special to each other. To our sons, we always will. No man will ever love them as much as I do; no woman will ever love them as much as you do. To them, we will always be family, and when they think of their family, they will think of us. Today I can see they would feel any attack between us like an attack on them—so it's in our good relationship as their parents that they will think of the world as safe and themselves as worthy. I thank you for knowing these things before I did, and I'm truly sorry for the hurt my attacking caused to you and to them.

Our union made these three miracles—Zack, Tom, and Jason—who now depend entirely on us to tend the garden of their innocence. Through all my sadness, I will always thank you for our miracles and our chance to shelter them still. From today on I will experience my sadness as honest sadness and my grief as honest grief—and do my best never to distort them into hate, that fire that never says, “Enough.”

I will be generous with forgiveness—for two reasons:

- first, because our children's protection absolutely requires it—and
- second, because we deserve it ourselves, for I can see now that in forgiving I open the prison door and discover that all along I had been the prisoner.

I forgive both you and me for living in a time when people aren't taught how to grieve instead of lashing out. I forgive us for not knowing until now that true forgiveness has the four promises I practice today:

- I will not think or brood about what is forgiven.
- I will not speak of it or bring it up to you.
- I will not speak of it or bring it up to anyone else.
- I will not let it stand in the way of our protecting Zack, Tom, and Jason.

I have no right and, what's more, I have no wish to destroy anyone's one and only childhood by my resentments. I will not live in or argue the past. From today on, my eyes are on the future—and our partnership to shelter our miracles. If you should ever slip in this, our new partnership, I will see it not as an opportunity to criticize or play the victim, but instead as my chance to quietly save the day in a way that is respectful to you.

I am grateful for your loving relationship with our boys, including the ways in which you relate with them differently from my ways. They learn and grow from our different ways. I will protect and nurture your relationship with them. I will tell them every day about something good in them they get from you. I will gently but instantly stop any unloving statements about you from anyone else. By everything I say and do, I will show everyone close to me that ours is a respectful partnership for our boys.

I thank you again for our miracles—and for the chance to shelter them with you.