

ASK AMY, FROM WE-14

response, she cried, engaged in theatrics, pitied herself and essentially told me that she was giving up on our relationship because she “always messes up.”

I begged her to try to change — for me — but it appears she would much rather wallow in her own sorrow and cry about how much I hate her. I don’t hate her; I wish she would try harder so we could spend the rest of our lives together.

I haven’t seen her in almost a year now, and I haven’t spoken to her for months. I’m completely lost, and I have no idea how to deal with this.

— Lost, Confused and Sad Daughter

Dear Daughter: You are the child of an addict, and you have assumed the heavy burden that your mother’s addiction has bestowed upon you.

And like many children of addicts and narcissistic parents, you would very much like to force your parent toward change so that you might have the sort of healthy parent-child relationship you long for.

Unfortunately, your mother is not willing — or able — to change for you.

You can, however, change — and this change should be directed toward securing your own future health and happiness and accepting the lousy hand you’ve been played, as well as her limitations.

Your mother’s erratic and disappointing behavior has trained you to take re-

sponsibility for the outcome, but you need to find ways to lay down this weighty backpack you’ve been carrying.

Every human being longs for love and constancy, and you will find it — but likely not with your mother.

It is time now for you to commit to parenting yourself (and I have a feeling you’ll be very good at it). Engaging in trusting and emotionally healthy relationships with others will also help you to heal.

I suggest you join a “friends and family” support group such as Al-anon or Adult Children of Alcoholics (Adultchildren.org) and also read “Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: How to Heal from Distant, Rejecting or Self-Involved Parents,” by clinical psychologist Lindsay C. Gibson (2015) New Harbinger.

Dear Amy: My daughter is engaged to her college boyfriend. They are now living together.

Even though my daughter’s income is substantially below his, he insists that she pay 50 percent of their expenses. She is starting to fall behind and is going into debt in order to keep up.

I’d like to know your thoughts.

— Concerned Parent

Dear Concerned: I’m wondering why your daughter’s fiancé has the power to decide and dictate their household finances?

If they are looking ahead to a marriage where they will be true partners, then these important issues should be negoti-

ated and mutually decided upon — not dictated by one partner.

If she is managing her money responsibly but is not able to afford living with these terms, then something needs to change. It is ultimately extremely expensive to be in debt.

My greater point is that this is a red flag. The pressure of being in debt will add to the pressure of being with a partner who (at least from this account) sounds controlling.

Dear Amy: Like other readers, I was appalled at your response to “Anonymous,” the reader who complained about “free range” children at family events. These parents are not only lazy,

they are negligent. I can’t believe you stood up for them!

— Upset

Dear Upset: After warning about the hazards and dangers of children running “free range” at other people’s homes, I did stick up for these parents.

Anonymous did not mention that these children were rude or disruptive to others — only that they were permitted to run around on their own.

You can email Amy Dickinson at askamy@amydickinson.com or send a letter to Ask Amy, P.O. Box 194, Freeville, NY 13068. You can also follow her on Twitter @askingamy or Facebook.

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