

August 25, 1995

for SCS letters

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Doyle

Dear Henry and Stacy,

"So, whose side are you on, Henry?!"

You don't give a direct answer in your delightful memoir, but the stories you tell make the answer clear. You are on the side of humanity, and you refuse to accept the divisions of "our side" and "their side" defined by the arms manufacturers and politicians who secure their position by telling us who to fear and hate. You have devoted your professional life to improving the lives of people, wherever they may live or come from. You are clearly on the side of those who promote life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness -- what could be more American! I salute you.

Kathleen and I are reading your book during our holiday in Baja, Mexico. We are only 40 minutes from San Diego, and we may as well be a thousand miles away. We love it here, much as you love your hammock (sp?). My grandmother was Mexican and Kathleen's spiritual roots are Mayan, so we feel at home here. You must come and share it with us next Summer -- during August when it is too hot in Anna Maria and Minneapolis. Just fly to San Diego or Tijuana, and we will pick you up.

My son Jess had a relapse in April of the drug problem we discussed in the hammock. He thought he could use drugs again recreationally. Two weekends of a methamphetamine derivative (at 1/2 the dose of the others) and he was paranoid again. Fortunately, he did not require hospitalization this time, and needed antipsychotic drugs for only two weeks. The major reason was that he knew he needed help. I believe (hope?) that he now understands at all levels that he cannot handle most drugs (including alcohol). He has quit alcohol, marijuana and (in the last two weeks) cigarettes.

His personality has been transformed during this drug free period. He is extremely vulnerable, but there is a sweetness about him that had been lost for some time. In some ways he is 14 again.

And I learned an important lesson. I feel the need to tell you some of my feelings when we discussed my son and yours in the hammock. I was in the depths of my fear and depression over Jess's difficulties. Our discussions were an emotional watershed for me. At the same time, however, I recoiled a bit from your seeming objectivity about your own son's tragedy.

But during Jess's relapse episode, I discovered that I was the only one who could really connect with him and help him. And the reason was that I was the only one who had developed this strange sort of objectivity about his difficulties. It was not a reduction in concern or love for him, it was part of an unconscious realization that I had to help him and the rest of the family cope, and that I was of less help to anyone if I was overcome with emotion. And I was a much greater help to Jess than the first time around. I realize now that the first time through I was almost punishing Jess through my emotion, making him feel guilty for having hurt me. Perhaps he should feel guilty,

but my main job is to help him develop the skills necessary to live a life with some happiness.

I now have a different perspective on your style of coping. Inadvertently, you helped me to make the transition.

Jess started college last week, and he is ready to learn Spanish. He was down here in Mexico with us for two weeks, and we had Spanish lessons each morning (Kathleen's Spanish is very good). I would like to send him some place in Latin America or Spain for a few weeks or months. If you know of any good programs, or persons he could stay with while attending some program, I would be most interested. He is easy to get on with, but rather quiet at this point. My good friends are all in Germany and Switzerland (German in the latter is incomprehensible to anyone else), and Jess speaks some German -- but Spanish is so much more practical here in the Southwest.

Thanks again for the book, it is *echte* Enrico. And it resolved another puzzle for Kathleen and I: why you are not an Italophile. Remind me to tell you about the experience that made my daughter Alicia realize that she is not an Italophile. Riding in an auto driven by an Italian is central to her story as well, but on the autostrade from Milan to Venice.

With love

Jim & Kathleen Dwyer

Hope to see you soon. Perhaps at the special conference in your honor.