

A Real Friend

By: Jack LaValley

Dear Steve,

I want you to know how much that letter of reference means to me. I will elaborate on this just a little for the sake of clarity because you are at the very least my friend.

Over the years much has evolved between us in both personal and professional areas.

Though you may not be old enough to be my father, I have often wished you were because of the wisdom in your ways. I realize that you've seen things in me that concerned you. And by a miracle of miracles through your help, Christ's teachings, and very able counselors, I'm beginning to see these things myself. Some of my difficulties, I'm afraid go considerably deeper than the repercussions of my current physical hardships. Help is here though and is already making a difference at home. I'm feeling mentally and physically healthier and for those reasons I have some optimism for how things will go at school this year.

I am still interested in a career change. It seems I've become bored with the classroom material as you once anticipated I probably would become. I've shared my basic strategy for eventually accomplishing a change i.e.: getting certified to teach high school science. I also intend to stick with my writing although discouragement is very easy to come by in this area.

On the matter of disability I'm sure you know me as a fighter. I used to enjoy work of all kinds: everything from digging ditches to teaching children (though I confess that these last two years have too often wiped the smile off my face). Nevertheless, I plan to get healthy mentally and physically, to do well this year, and to go on to more exciting things. Unfortunately, I've learned that there are some powerful forces in the world and so I recognize the possibility of overriding factors. To that end, bleak as the image is, I've investigated into the business of disability to protect the kids in case I fail to live up to the standards of professional behavior acceptable to you, me, et al.

That's about it, except to say I wish to God I could take back all of my mistakes that have hurt you, the kids, parents, and colleagues. I wish I could just leave and plug my ears at the resounding sigh of relief I'm afraid could not be hidden by those I've disappointed the most and those who sympathize with them. The trouble is, I'm still alive and fighting like never before. I'm trying to benefit from my strengths, to correct my weaknesses of old and of late, and to fashion a life that God, myself, and my family can take a little pride in. So, please bear with me my friend, as I try to find out what I'm made of.

Thank you for standing by me,
Jack