

Letter No. 6

A Letter to Himself. Please can we talk?

My love,

Please don't go all strong and silent on me. I can see the old familiar signs. They remind me of how you used to be. You would come home, say hello, then disappear into yourself. The children would feel it I would see and wonder what's wrong? What's going on?

When we met it was the strong silent stability I fell for. Your calm approach to problems, your silent weighing up of situations, the patient measuring of your words before speaking - all so opposite to me, were the very things I loved about you. I still do.

You always said it was my bubblyness, spontaneity, outspokenness, that drew you to me. We are such opposites! And together we make a good team.

But there were times when you retreated into yourself and then I felt cut off, rejected, excluded, and hurt. You felt like a million miles away and I couldn't reach you. It left me feeling alone, wondering if I'd done something wrong, or if you were in trouble or worried. It was a lonely place for me when you were like that.

As I said the children felt it too. "Is Daddy ok?" they'd ask me. "Daddy is sad" our perceptive little one would say. She shouldn't have had to notice these things at only five years old. They needed you - to play, laugh and joke, be available, be aware, be the fun daddy they loved so much.

So not only was I lonely, but angry too. We needed you! No matter what was going on to put you in silent mode, I hated it when you'd leave us emotionally like that. I could get resentful and fall into self-pity. It left us vulnerable, not able to talk to each other, open to finding someone inappropriate to confide in instead.

We just didn't understand each other, but thankfully now we do. We are very different, me an extravert, you an introvert.

When I'm upset about something, you hear all about it, and help me to process a right and good way through all kinds of things with your well thought out feedback.

Over the years you've learned that your needs are different. You need time and space to work things out on your own. You need to walk and think and pray. You do best when you can take time in the woods or on the beach, having one of your "considering" times. Then you always come home with a new perspective and often a solution, and want to talk. They have been special times of closeness, sharing, understanding and tenderness.

I know I talk a lot. I need to be more patient to listen without interrupting, to hear you out, to not come with solutions but try to understand your feelings and empathise.

You are deep and thoughtful and sensitive. That's what I love about you.

I need you to be like that.

But you need me too, with the bouncy, bubbly and optimistic personality God gave me.

That's who we are, different and complementary. We are a team. A good team. A team that supports each other. That gets through life with all it brings, good and bad, laughing and crying and learning from mistakes. We can do it this time too! So how about you take all the time you need for one of your walks and when you come back, please, can we talk?

I love you,

Trish