

## Learn to say 'no'

**Dear Annie:** With your advice, I hope my family will be able to deal with a problem. Our 45-year-old daughter is at the heart of the issue. "Jane" has had a challenging past. She is an intelligent and motivated person, but starting in high school, she began a difficult life (mostly to do with her poor choices in relationships).

She had a son at age 19, got married and then divorced soon after. She floundered for five years or so. After several relationships, she found another man. In those few years, she gave up custody of her first child, left a full-time job and followed her new man to another country (for a job that didn't work out). Then she returned to the states, did everything she could to get pregnant again, and succeeded. Shortly thereafter, the relationship ended.

With our help, Jane relocated to another (smaller) city 150 miles from us. Briefly, she held a good job and was managing well in raising her second son. After three years, she was let go from her job. In the interim, she managed to live on welfare. Four years ago, she announced her intention of returning to college to get her teaching degree. We knew that she'd never be able to work long enough to repay her loans, but we were encouraging and supported her decision.

Now the present problem. In the past five years, my wife and I have "spotted" her money, to keep her afloat — approximately \$12,000.

Much of it went toward leased automobiles, but there has been more — \$100 and \$500 here and there for "incidentals." Fortunately, she will graduate in June. But her student loan

funds, which she was using to help pay rent and groceries, have ceased. Her usual summer job is uncertain. But most troubling of all, due to the coronavirus, her prospects of a teaching job in her area are also uncertain. She gets by month to month. Last summer, she asked us for funds to help her lease her (new) car. We gave her \$4,700. This goes on and on.

Last year, my wife and I retired. And without raiding our savings we cannot afford to support her anymore. June is approaching, and so is the fall. I am anticipating Jane will appear with another request for funds. My wife doesn't handle confrontations well, and much of our giving has been motivated either by avoidance or guilt. Besides just saying no, is there any other answer? — *Jane's Father*

**Dear Jane's Father:**

Tough love is tough to give. But you and your wife are doing your daughter no favors in the long-term. If you keep acting as her financial crutch, she'll be leaning on you forever. That's not just immoral; it's also unsustainable. Deplete your retirement savings, she'll still be asking for more when there's nothing left to give. And you'll be in dire straits right alongside her.

"Just saying no" is easier said than done; I know. It will be a hard conversation. Your daughter is not going to like it. But do not for one second accept any guilt she tries to lay at your feet. You've done nothing to earn that.

If you find the situation taking a heavy emotional toll on you and your wife, you might consider attending counseling or a support group such as Families Anonymous for help developing healthy boundaries.

### DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE  
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## Park: Appreciative of nature's rich gift

Continued from Page B1



Photos by David Campiche

**ABOVE:** Moss covered trees in the deep woods.

**RIGHT:** Harvested oyster mushrooms.

You too can walk privately and carefully along the plethora of forest trails and deserted beaches. Practice social distancing but come.

Why did Steve choose to retire to the peninsula? That answer is clear, here, in this land of forest and beach and crashing ocean waves. Lead-better Point State Park is surrounded on three sides by the Pacific Ocean and Willapa Bay, one of the most pristine venues in the United States.

I have descended into Death Valley and walked on the rim of the Grand Canyon. I studied in New York City and in Paris, France. I would go back in a flash. But here, in our small corner of the world, we are surrounded by landscape all as lovely as the high mountains and raging rivers.

Steve moves through a forest now inundated with gorse. He leads me on, stopping only to clip back the invasive bush. Bird song is sharp, soft, rolling and sweet. A rain lifts and pelts us for a few minutes. Then, the sun comes tumbling through.

We relish the deep green. We are free for a couple of hours; free of the pandemic and worry. Free in the land of persistent evergreen, ocean and the poetry trees offer, our silent friends with deep roots.

Mushrooms have a symbiotic relationship with the trees. They draw energy and nutrition through their mycelia. When the mushrooms die, they give back. So is the way of the forest. So it impacts us, this voice like a silent dog whistle, a subterranean mantra emanating from terra firma.

Two friends fashion their own way, an unfurling path through bramble, under tree and charging sky and beside the surge of bay water, of ebb and flow. After cutting a basket full of mushrooms we stumble back home, happy wanderers, appreciative always of nature's rich gift.



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