



Moving On: Reclaiming My Life

Setting a boundary is a profound and courageous step for me. I realize that my own health and physical needs require my complete focus; this is not giving up, but an act of fierce self-preservation. As I manage peripheral neuropathy and incontinence while navigating the transition to an assisted living community, I know I must conserve my daily energy. I simply do not have the capacity to carry a burden that legally and ethically belongs to others. Stepping back and handing the reins entirely to Rose and Larry is the right—and necessary—choice for my own well-being.

I Am No Longer the “Asshole”

That title—the one who handles the dirty work that others don’t want to put their hands on—has been a heavy, painful mantle for me to wear, especially when my sacrifices were met with silence rather than gratitude.

When I moved from the Bay Area to the Central Valley in 2018, I intentionally sought physical and emotional distance from an exhausting family dynamic. Yet, that deeply ingrained sense of moral obligation—fueled by a lifetime of being the eldest and the responsible one—kept pulling me back across that two-hour round trip to manage contractors, insurance companies, and roof repairs while Larry and Rose held the official powers of attorney.

The Trap of "Default Accountability"

My siblings hold the legal authorities and live in positions (or distances) that shield them from

day-to-day friction, yet they have long relied on my unwritten, historical programming to step into the breach. Because I care about my mother's safety and well-being, I have repeatedly stepped up. But I recognize now that this created an unfair dynamic:

- **The Legal Duty vs. The Practical Duty:** Larry and Rose hold the power of attorney; therefore, the institutional and legal accountability belongs to them.
- **The Emotional Tax:** I have been the one absorbing the physical labor, the driving, and the frustration, while receiving neither the authority to direct things smoothly nor the basic courtesy of a "thank you."

Untangling Moral Obligation from Family Scapegoating

I now understand why I felt like the designated "asshole" when I enforced boundaries or expressed frustration, while my siblings appeared as the "good children" who conveniently popped in for cameo appearances. I recognize this as a classic dysfunctional family role: the family relied on me to absorb the friction and keep things functioning so the others did not have to look at the dysfunction.

Stepping in "when they wouldn't" felt like a moral imperative to me, but it also reactivated every old resentment about being the one expected to sacrifice. Every time I drove to Fremont to bail out a situation my siblings were ignoring, I was feeding a dynamic that only wounded me.

Re-evaluating the "I Must Step In" Rule

I retired to protect my peace and distance myself from this exact vortex. When an issue arises with my mother's home or care, I am implementing new rules for myself:

- **Check the Legal Responsibility:** Larry and Rose have the power of attorney. Legally and logistically, the problems belong to them to coordinate, even if they are "too busy" or 500 miles away.
- **Allow Natural Consequences:** I am learning that the hardest part of setting a boundary is letting the family experience the friction they are trying to avoid. If my siblings fail to handle a task, it highlights their inaction, not my failure.
- **Redefine My Role:** I am retired, I live hours away, and I have formally given up responsibility for her care. Choosing not to rescue Rose and Larry when they drop the ball is not a lack of love for my mother; it is a vital defense of my own mental health and well-being at 69 years old.

I have spent decades carrying the weight of family expectations. I realize now that I do not have to keep earning a title that was unfairly assigned to me just because I am the eldest.

Striving to be the "good boy" touched the very core of why those expectations and the resulting resentments carried such a heavy, devastating weight. Trying to live up to an impossible script—where I was cast as the perpetual giver while others played supporting roles—created a grief so deep that it required alcohol for me to survive.

Mourning the loss of what could have been—the educational dreams, the professional aspirations, and the unconditional fairness I deserved—is heavy work. I recognize now that the first Old English 800 malt liquor I drank at 18 was an attempt to numb that specific grief, which

bridges the gap between my past pain and my ongoing recovery.

By bringing this into the light, I am stripping the old cycle of its power. I no longer have to drink over the loss of what could have been, nor do I have to keep performing a role written by a family dynamic that was unfair from the start. My sobriety, my boundaries, and my self-awareness today are the ultimate proof that I survived the script and chose a different path for my life.

“No” is a Complete Sentence

Yes, within your spiritual and recovery framework, **“No” is entirely a complete sentence**—and knowing that Rose or Larry *can* step in only reinforces why setting that boundary is clean, honest, and necessary.

"No" Does Not Require Justification

As you've reflected in your *Three Rules*, **“No” is a complete sentence (no reason needs to be given)**. You do not owe an elaborate excuse, a defensive explanation, or an apology for honoring your physical energy, your distance, and your personal peace. Giving reasons often just opens up an unnecessary debate or an internal courtroom where you feel forced to defend your boundary.

Legal Responsibility vs. "Default Accountability"

Rose and Larry hold the official, legal powers of attorney for your mother's health and financial affairs.

- **The Legal Blueprint:** The institutional and legal duty rests on Rose and Larry.
- **The Trap:** When you step into the breach simply because they are "too busy" or slow to act, you absorb an unnecessary **emotional tax** and fuel an endless loop of premeditated resentment.
- **Allowing Natural Consequences:** As long as you step in to rescue the situation, your siblings have zero incentive to handle the duties assigned to them. Letting them experience the friction of their own legal roles is not a lack of love for your mother; it is allowing reality to sit where it legally and ethically belongs.

Preventing Premeditated Resentment

Saying "Yes" purely out of habit, guilt, or historical expectation is not an act of true mercy; it is acting out an automatic script of obligatory sacrifice. When you say "Yes" while your spirit is saying "No," you internally keep score (*"I'm driving two hours round trip while they make cameo appearances"*), which breeds bitterness and re-litigates decades of family inequity.

Applying the Serenity Prayer to Your Jurisdiction

- **Acceptance (The Unchangeable):** You cannot change how Rose or Larry choose to manage their duties, how quickly they act, or whether they feel disappointed by your

boundary.

- **Courage (The Changeable):** You have total jurisdiction over your own choices, your physical capacity, and protecting your health.
- **Wisdom (The Difference):** Wisdom is recognizing that managing your siblings' responsibilities is outside your jurisdiction, while protecting your present peace is your primary responsibility.

By delivering a firm, polite "No," you surrender the middleman role, step off the treadmill of external expectations, and allow Rose and Larry to carry the duties that are rightfully theirs.