

To those who never gave up, even when we gave up on ourselves.

You didn't sign up for this. You didn't ask for sleepless nights. The empty promises. The lies. The worry. The chaos. The silence. The fear that the next phone call might be the phone call. But you stayed. Or maybe you had to step back, but you never stopped loving us. Not really. This letter is for you.

We Know We Hurt You

Maybe we never said it clearly enough, or maybe we didn't say it at all. But we know. We know we took more than we gave. We know we pushed you away and then resented you for staying gone. We know we weren't ourselves.

Addiction is loud. It drowns out the voice of reason, and even the voice of love. But deep down, we always hoped you hadn't stopped believing we could come back.

Thank You for Not Giving Up

Some of you prayed. Some of you pleaded. Some of you had to draw hard lines, knowing it would hurt. Some of you walked away, hoping it would shock us into waking up. Some of you were the only light left in a very dark place.

Thank you for loving us when we were hard to love. For carrying hope when we had none. For being a safe place, we ran to, or the firm hand that refused to enable.

What You Need to Hear

None of this was your fault. You didn't cause our addiction. You couldn't fix it, no matter how hard you tried. You are not weak for being tired. You are not cold for having boundaries. You are not selfish for needing healing of your own.

If we could go back and undo the damage, we would. But what we can do, what we are doing is choosing to live differently from this day forward.

You Are Part of This Victory

This book is about overcoming. About truth-telling. About healing. And about winning battles that no one ever saw but you.

- If we made it, you are part of the reason.
- If we're still trying—you're still part of the hope.

Thank you for walking with us, fighting for us, and never letting go of who we could become. We won't forget it. With deep love and gratitude,

—Those of us who got free