

A letter to Anaïs Nin's psychologist regarding her husband of 52 years...

Letter from Anaïs Nin to Inge Bogner:

Los Angeles, December 1975

Dear Inge:

What I have to write you about is not new for you but it has become critical. You know how many years you worked to eradicate my sense of guilt towards Hugo. Once I said to you: "What would happen if I stayed away completely?" You answered: "Knowing you, you could not live with your guilt."

The subject came up again when I met a Dr. Joy. A year and a half ago, he quit a promising doctor's practice. He went to the East. He returned a mystic who had cured himself of an illness and discovered he had strong healing powers. He came to see me. He read the *Diaries* before coming and had the instant intuition: too much giving, a tendency to sacrifice, guilt. Yesterday he brought the [recording of his] talk on the meaning of cancer, which is possibly an obstacle to growth and freedom, a growth gone wrong. Martyrdom? No, I said, not martyrdom, but sacrifice and guilt. Why should the cancer have come at the best moment in my life? When I had love, honors, enough royalties to not have to lecture?

But I had guilt for being happy when Hugo was handicapped and felt a sense of failure. As you know, instinctively, when I was very ill, I wrote you I could not return to Hugo. You suggested I wait until I could come to N.Y.

But now I am lying here with the same fistula draining, and while it is draining I have to be fed intravenously. When I was ill I felt Hugo was the source of my illness, that it was like a lifelong stress, effort, deception and unhappiness. We are never at peace or happy together. I wrote many times: he is my burden—he is a thorn in my side. There is a conflict between compassion and the need to be free.

Dr. Joy feels I may not get well until I let go of this, that I weaken and over-protect Hugo, that I don't let him go. Will he let me go? Should I ask him to come and see me? Should I let you tell him?

It is now a matter of my survival. I don't want a divorce. I don't want people to know. I want nothing injurious to him. I want no recriminations—I want a loving, warm separation, and when I'm well I will visit him.

I thought making the separation in my mind was enough, but not if guilt hurts me, not if there is any doubt that I may use illness to stay here.

If the illness is an expression of guilt, then I need your help too. How sorry I am not able to see you.

Do you agree with Dr. Joy? He says when we deprive others of all experience we interfere with their growth.

Do I see Hugo as much weaker than he is? Am I projecting?

Perhaps he felt peaceful this year. We always quarreled.

Please help me.

Whatever he has become conscious of, can he release me?

I will phone you too, but I can explain things better by letter.

Needless to say, I will always take care of him.

With the best will in the world we are not good for each other.

Please tell me where Hugo is now, how much he is aware of. Whether I should see him. Write him. Could he see this letter? He always said he would never stand in the way of my growth. Now will he not stand in the way of my recovery?

Anaïs