

Living Apart From Your Children

Most parents living apart from their children settle on frequent dinners or, when living in different cities, zoom calls. Where families once lived together, now the kids move out when they hit adulthood. Families physically distant keep in touch with a mix of love and anxiety (usually with more love.)

Which brings us to Earnest, divorced with three children.

His ex-wife and children had moved to another city. Earnest accepted they found him too controlling—actually, strangling. He was in a position many separated parents faced, though his loved ones did not fully love him back—they loved and feared him. Earnest knew he was *too* Earnest—but that was who he was.

How could he cope with living apart from his family?

Some men take up new hobbies. Some go to dating services or try to find new friends or even start a new family. Some move to where their children are. None of that worked for Earnest. His children especially were living their own lives, beyond his control. He could not help them with big decisions. He could not support their choices.

Yes, previously he had not helped them with big decisions and never supported their choices. He understood that. But Earnest could change. He had been in therapy—for years—and recognized his behaviour was wrong and felt sorry afterwards. With that kind of progress, Earnest knew he could re-insert himself into his children's lives and they would finally appreciate it!

He started with an education fund for his grandchildren, which he and his children would jointly control. He purchased each of his children a new house, offering his personal low monthly interest. He bought them vacations, to places he selected.

When they rejected his offers, Earnest was sorry, even though he knew he had been right. He took up a hobby. He bought fish tanks, stocking them with fish and live plants, creating complete environments he totally controlled. The fish stared at him through the glass whenever he approached, eager for food, even though overeating killed them.