

Dear Debra,

I have just finished reading your Guardian article...my Mother's Day treat and I actually really mean this! For 8 years I have been struggling with my middle child's drug use...my son, my middle child, is now 23, my daughters are 25 (a freelance writer like you!) and 13 years old. He started 'getting into drugs' aged 15 when we lived in Oxford and it has been a hard, sometimes overwhelmingly anxious time for me ever since. Now, he is living near me in London. I had to get my son to leave home when he was 19 also. I could no longer live surrounded by such tension, distrust and emotional destruction. It was a deeply unhealthy situation for all the family. The last few paragraphs of your article touched me deeply. My eyes filled with tears and I felt I wanted to make contact with you. I would really like to write a longer email to you but this is an immediate 'straight- from- the- heart' one, if you know what I mean! I have just told my 13 year old that I would like to get in touch with you. She said that you might think I am strange! I hope that this is not the case. I asked her to read the article and we discussed whom it reminded her of. Her brother, of course. I told her that I found your article immensely comforting as it proved that we are not alone in this situation.

My story and 'journey' with my son is a long and difficult one. Now, he has a part- time place at music Technology College. He is a bright young man with 10 GCSE's but he, too, never got round to completing his 'A' levels, despite attending an excellent school in Oxford. Now, he blames me for 'sending' him to such a 'posh' school and says he 'hates' me for it. I tried my best to do what I thought was best.

I still feel anxious and nervous about his future. I have just found out that he has taken £70 from his bank account over the weekend. I just hope it wasn't £70 of drugs money. I seem to always anticipate the worst and my anxiety drains the energy I need for the rest of my family and my full-time job.

If you are able, it would be great to keep in touch with you. I would value the opportunity to share my sorrow/hopes/fears with other mothers who are tangled up in this drug-damaged mess.

All good wishes on Mother's Day to another forever-loving mother!

I sincerely hope you do not mind a 'stranger' writing to you in this way.