

Hi John,

My name is Emily and I will be providing feedback today. Thank you for completing the unit!

1. I like these answers. Love, consideration, and acceptance all seem to work together to create a good family environment. I would love to know more of your thoughts on these.
2. This is a very thoughtful answer. Siblings do indeed share unique connections from growing up together, and the bonds that siblings form are very hard to break. It is sad to think that family members will one day die, but as you said, is important to appreciate those connections while they exist. It seems like you understand those connections viscerally.
3. This is also a thoughtful answer. It makes me think of your second factor in keeping a family happy, consideration. In some ways, the love family members have for one another is more important than where the family is living. Perhaps choosing where a family lives is a decision a family can make together -- for example, if the family is made up of just parents and children, the parents can pay attention to how their children are feeling and see when and if things need to change.
4. This house is beautiful; you are clearly a very talented artist. I love the detail of the house. I also love that it seems very big, big enough for a large loving family.
5. Good answer. It seems like Billy values masculinity and how he and his son appear to other men. I can also see how Billy's values might contradict with his idea that the mother would teach the son to "behave."
6. This is interesting; I like how you point out that some fathers are more involved than others. I would love to know more of your thoughts on how fathers want their sons to live in the world. Does how a father treats/teaches his son depend on the father's own background?
7. \*I like the first answer. From Billy's song, I think his idea of how to raise his son is very different from yours. Billy wants to create a very specific kind of person through his son; whereas you recognize that the son is his own person and will be happy if he follows his heart. \*This is also a very interesting answer. At the surface it seems similar to Billy's ideas, which involve raising a tough son. But Billy's ideas are almost violent and all external -- they're all about how other people (men) see Billy's son. Your idea of strength is less about being able to physically fight an enemy and more about being able to face adversity without losing who you are as a person. \*This is also interesting; someone doing the right thing means that good things will happen to that person, and that person will not get into trouble. It also means that that person will make others' lives better, too.
8. I think you skipped #8.
9. In this letter, I like how you say you are going to give your son advice, but you also make sure to say that you respect your son's choices and give advice from a place of love. It shows that you respect your son as a person and only want the best for him. I also like how you tell him to follow the Golden Rule, to treat others the way he wants to be treated. It shows that you want him to treat everybody as people who are beautiful and deserving of respect, and you walk the walk by showing that you treat your own son with respect as well.

10. I think it is nice that you were humble enough to admit that you don't know as much about giving advice to a daughter as you would to a son. It is also nice that you explain how boys often act and that while you have advice for her daughter, you also respect that she is her own person who can make her own choices. I wonder if you would want to take some of the material from your letter to your daughter and put it in the letter to your son -- if your daughter needs to watch out for boys who only want to have sex with her or improve their own image, then your son needs to be careful to respect women and not treat them that way.
11. #11 skipped
12. Well said. It is interesting that even though you understand girls are just as capable of doing things as boys, you would naturally feel more protective and want to restrict her freedoms. Would you be able to use intentionality in order to give a daughter the same opportunities as a son? What would you have to do or think about in order to trust a daughter? What could you do with a son to make sure he doesn't make other daughters' parents worry?
13. (Keep in mind I'm responding to these next three questions one by one, I haven't read the other two yet!) Well, I learned that that type of haircut is called a taper fade! The character is interesting, of course. He seems sort of perfect -- good-looking, smart, funny, introverted. I would be interested to see how his character develops through the story.
14. That's quite a dark backstory, that should make for a really complex character and an interesting plot. I'm glad that you gave your character some issues that many people face; it probably makes him more relatable.
15. I would see this play/movie! Your writing of the blurb was fun and engaging ("most shocking..."). It's also cool how most of the plot revolves less around physical movement or something happening *to* the character, and more about the character trying to overcome his personal demons. Have you ever read anything by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (Crime and Punishment, etc.)? Those books are long, but they are often about a character struggling with personal demons -- you read a chapter where maybe a character is just talking to someone in a room, but with all the inner thoughts and dialogue, it's still as dramatic as a thriller. Your story seems very similar, a man trying to do the best with what he has but still facing significant challenges.
16. I think your thoughts on this are very insightful. It is easy to see how growing up with a mother in prison would be hard on a child. Do you think there could be mixed emotions, or just resentment? Do you think the child's understanding of his mother could change over time? In 25 years, have we learned anything new about the nature of domestic violence and emotional abuse?
17. I appreciate your heartfelt answer, as well as your understanding of its nuances (e.g. if there is a danger to the child). It reminds me of one of your first answers, in which you talked at length about the unbreakable bonds between siblings and other family members. It is indeed hard to make a decision about whether to keep someone in your life if you don't have every opportunity to know that person.

18. I like your answer -- you are creative in coming up with activities that don't require a lot of equipment or space, and you also get at a really important part of a parent-child relationship, that just being together is valuable.
19. Interesting answer. It seems like Diane did not have many of these supports, whether a father or an older woman to look out for her. If someone observes a woman like Diane, in an abusive relationship and without supports, what kinds of services could that person direct Diane to? Do such services exist? What kinds of supports might we as a society create so that people like Diane don't fall through the cracks?
20. I can imagine this would be a very difficult letter for the real father of Diane's son to write. You make a beautiful apology to the son, admitting what you did and that you can't make it better, and you write your advice to the son from a place of that apology and out of love.

Thank you for sending in your answers! Your writing is interesting and engaging, and you are very good at putting yourself into the shoes of whatever character you're writing from.

Best,  
Emily