

Nicoletta's letter

Hi, guys, Nicoletta here.

I was supposed to be there with you but unfortunately for a silly and bothersome flu I had to give up on the idea. I'm really so sorry, because for me it was important to spend another morning with you. Last week I couldn't be there, either, because of an exam. And this time it is really a burden for me because it's been over a month since we last saw each other and I assure you that I have thought of you over and over in this period: on Christmas Day, at New Year's, throughout the holidays. And every time I thought of you I was sad. Yes, to think of you there made me sad.

You have won over my heart, seriously, because even though you have made mistakes, you've been brave enough to change, to admit your faults and emerge from the tunnel that would have further ruined your lives. You're paying the price of your errors, and you're doing so with such dignity and humanity that it is to your credit, and I have discovered a human universe different from anything else I had encountered in all my life.

That's why being obliged to be absent is really a burden for me.

At the outset of this project I had a thousand doubts and fears. Today I can say, instead, that this experience is proving to be one of the deepest and most meaningful in my life. It is only through dialogue and the attempt to reach reciprocal comprehension, difficult though it may be, that we can try to overcome the dramatic difficulties that we have faced, each on his own "side" of the barricade.

And it is the fall of this barricade between us that makes me hope for tolerance and comprehension for our society some day. Perhaps it's just a dream, but I want to continue to cultivate it together with you. All my best.

- Roberto's letter to Nicoletta

I heard your letter through Marcella's voice and I cried. I read it again alone in my cell, and I cried.

Since the Sycamore Tree Project began it's been and still is a roller coaster of emotions. Since you're my daughter's age I want to call you "angel": yes, you're our angel. You are proof of how wonderful life is. Your humility, your simplicity, your sensitivity have been like a flash of lightning to my heart, which from time to time is still immersed in the deepest darkness.

You know I'm a Buddhist. In my creed the deepest roots to reach light are: wisdom, compassion and courage; you have all three! What a great innate gift. You manage to make me feel like a normal man; even more than that, with your words I feel useful. Thank you.

Like all the others, I felt your absence tangibly. These meetings have opened up a way to transformation, really strong and effective support and recuperation. We can testify to the good, to the inner peace and awareness that can be acquired through this amazing experience.

I'm convinced that this machine for good will never stop. That's the only way for your and our dream to become a reality.

With all my heart I hope we can stay in touch, in order to keep helping one another and sharing throughout the rest of our lives