

ENGLISH

Letter from son to father,

I feel good, I lately feel better than ever. I have good friends, a great room, a liberating ability to move (elevator).

I'm pretty good physically and am mentally very sharp. I'm much more capable than before both mentally .... I hope this is reflected in my results at school ... as well as creatively.

I feel balanced and harmonious. I can give more love to the people around me, as well as help and inspire them. And for myself I feel respect and love. I have another reason to be happy, I have very nice parents. Not only because they gave me a new room and elevator .... and not because I am allowed to throw parties and go to parties, but because they have been good parents my entire life.

Yet there is an unfortunate aspect. It often seems like they do not see that I have changed so much, or perhaps they don't care.

Then there is the constant nagging about my hair, the reason why is unclear to me. The arguments they usually throw in my face, often unnecessarily and grumpily, never seem to be based on anything. Moreover, this arguing has lately more and more become an insulting of my taste and appearance.

Facing a "false" coming from you there is a "true" coming from me.

Facing an "ugly" coming from you is a "beautiful" coming from me.

That makes you furious.

You can call me stubborn, but you are as well .

I know it is difficult for parents to give in to their children, they probably think this affects their authority or something. For the children as well, it is difficult to give in to parents. I try as much as possible to not take part in the power struggle between parents and children. But perhaps, though it must be subconsciously, I do this in order to get out from under your authority.

This long hair issue is by the way a stereotypical example of the sixties

(r)evolution. Nevertheless, I would like to stress that I do not do this to challenge you. Moreover, this parents-children power struggle is relative. The bomma (grandma) from Schoten found my hair to be very good-looking, and she said that if I wanted to keep it that way I should. And she is not hypocritical ... Once she told me ... you have gained weight, you do not look good.

Your only more or less valid argument is the fact that long hair gets dirty faster than short hair . That's true, although you really exaggerate this point. It does get dirty a bit faster but this is largely compensated by the fact that I wash my my hair 2 to 3 times a week more often than before. You claim that I ALWAYS have greasy hair, this is a complete untruth. There are plenty of long-haired men and women who wash their hair only 1 time per week, and their hair is fine. Whereas I who wash my hair 2 to 3 times a week and who eats more naturally would then have an acute grease-head?

It is of course true that you mom, for now, still have to help me wash my hair.

I know you're busy, but please do not let my disability be a stumbling block again.

The so-called dandruff issue is so exaggerated that I do not want to go into it too deeply. Long or short hair, what does that matter when it comes to dandruff? I used to see the dandruff on my head between my short hairs.

You know that I will not grow or cut my hair just because it's a fashion trend. I don't care about fashion trends, have I ever asked for a Millet (note PL : an expensive jacket) or a New Beat outfit.

You reproach me that I let my hair grow under influence of my friends. That's largely true. I chose to do that and there might have been some influencing, but there is nothing wrong with that. You are always influenced by the people around you, you are as well.

This is by the way characteristic of young people. Are you going to blame me for that.

Then again, in complete contradiction with the previous argument, you are angry again because I did not cut my hair like Bob (note PL: Bob Van den Broeck, a friend from high school) . Now supposedly I should do the same as one of my friends. Why do you think he did that anyway, because he had to from his mother. I do not know and you do not know either. But I do know, he told me this in seriousness a few times, that he now really regrets it.

Often you refer to indigenous /natural people to show how bad our contemporary habits are. Well, there were many indigenous people and great civilizations of antiquity where long hair was appropriate for a man. It was even considered manly, though probably they were not much concerned with imposing restrictions on a person's appearance. That seems to me to rather be a feature of our modern, frustrated, civil society. Where everyone is supposed to be walking the line.

Early humans, the Indians, the Vikings, the ancient Greeks, the Maya, the Chinese, the Aztecs, .... had long hair.

These people lived a lot more natural, at a higher level or wiser than we are in our industrialized and commercialized non-society.

Even with you it's ingrained that boys should have short hair and that they're not neat otherwise . You are progressive and not petty, so you do not take offense to a long-haired guy. But if that guy turns out to be your son, then this ingrained cultural urge comes up again. Because even the most progressive people are often still too conservative when it comes to their own children.

I hope I will never have such a problem, and I will not do anything I may likely regret for a long time. To cut my hair in order to do you a favor or for those 5000 francs, is actually to deny myself a bit, at the expense of my own being. If I do that, then within 10 years I might be denying my political and ideological ideas in order to get ahead.

To conclude, just this, I hope you will leave my hair to me, and that doesn't mean that I am outside of your authority or anything like that .

It is your word against my word.

It is your taste against my taste.

It is your opinion against my opinion.

But it is still is and remains my hair.

Note: Perry wrote this letter to us in response to my (dad) question why he does not want to cut his hair. Perry was 17 years old and was in the sixth grade of high school studying Greek/Latin.

Antwerp, 1988