

LAURA ON LIFE

# Dear Stranger ...

Dear Stranger,  
It wasn't your fault, I know. It was your young son, just on the verge of adulthood, who decided to pick up a weapon and assault my son without provocation. He left marks that may scar, but worse are the marks you cannot see.

Your son told you he didn't mean to hurt him, but people do not turn a weapon on someone if they don't intend to hurt them.

My son is certainly not without faults, but he's never maliciously hurt anyone in his life. It is now his right, his responsibility to decide whether to press charges against your child.

What happened in the cycle of your lives that would bring a kid to this point? What



Laura Snyder

kind of hate must be in his heart for him to want to hurt someone that way?

Respect may be one of the characteristics that he is lacking. Respect for the police is there. I saw it. But respect for life, people, and property is something with which he is not familiar, I suspect. A child who is not taught humility

never learns respect. Perhaps the only thing that would teach the boy respect at this late date is spending some time behind bars. On the other hand, maybe my son could set an example of humility by not pressing charges. But would your son respect him for that? He'd be relieved, of course, but would he have learned any lessons, or would he consider my son a wimp for taking the high road?

If he could see the future, my son's decision would be an easy one to make. It is difficult to know whether, if he were to press charges, he would simply be starting the process of taking a future low-life off the streets or whether he would be

conferring a criminal record on someone who made a harmful but impulsive mistake?

Who is your son, Stranger? Do you know? Has he been this close to a life-changing disaster before and come away unscathed each time? Does he need someone to take the next step so that he can finally come to his senses and realize that he must turn his life around now before it's too late?

Or is he the angel you think he is? You say he's never been in trouble before, but I've heard he's been in trouble a great deal in

school and is disrespectful to the teachers. You say he babysits for your younger children and that you depend on him for many things. But does that mean he's actually dependable?

Whatever he is, whoever he is, he hurt my son and I may never forgive him for that.

Stranger, your son needs help. He doesn't need you to forget about this or brush it

under the rug or make excuses for him. You need to help him in ways that count. He has to change his life, and you as his parent, may have to make that change for him.

Step up, Stranger... Step up.

*Laura Snyder is a nationally syndicated columnist, author & speaker. You can reach Laura at [lsnyder@lauraonline.com](mailto:lsnyder@lauraonline.com) Or visit her website [www.lauraonline.com](http://www.lauraonline.com) for more info.*

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