

September 25, 2005

Dear Mr. Clauss,

I wanted to write a letter telling you how much I appreciate your thoughtfulness. Today people email, call, or send cards, or simply say “Thanks”, but I wanted to send you something more formal and permanent to express my appreciation.

We have known each other for several years. I always thought you were a nice person. I welcomed the day you became my boss at work. I never dreamed in the beginning that you would treat me with the curious mix of respect and love that I associate with you now. I am not one of your daughters. I am not a female friend. But somehow you were a father, a friend, and a boss to me.

People always want to “deal with the person in charge”. It makes them feel better to think they are talking to someone who can make others jump. That is so tiresome to the person who does the work. It is humiliating. Most “people in charge” cannot resist the temptation of accepting this honor. You did. When someone called to ask about a specific situation I was dealing with, you referred him or her to me, saying that it was my job and not something you dealt with. You honored me, and my work. Thank you.

You gave me my space. I had to be in the office forty hours a week in my capacity as occupational nurse. I could manage to get my other work done in a much shorter time frame. You never went out looking for more work to “keep me occupied”. You honored that I got my work done and let me read or knit or work puzzles without forcing me to look busy when I wasn’t. Thank you.

When Jon Rawson was so bedeviling the foremen that we were in danger of massive resignations, you arranged for them to come to my office for lunch and breaks. We both knew that Mr. Rawson avoided my office because I smoked, so they would be safe there. What I didn’t think of at the time, was that you were keeping me safe, too. Thank you.

You are such a decent human being. You are always reaching outward and thinking of others. Even on the few occasions that you reprimanded me, you did it with kindness.

Thank you so much. I am honored to know you.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Smith