

Grace in the Turn to US



My love, Shatz,

I've been sleeping pretty well on this trip while taking care of Mom, but last night was different. I woke up around two or three in the morning after a dream about you. It was such a good dream. Nothing dramatic, nothing heavy. We were just laughing, goofing off, being silly together. It stayed with me in that quiet, lingering way dreams sometimes do, and as I lay there awake, it reminded me of what I love about you and about us.

We've had a really good life. Truly. When I look back over the seasons we've lived through together, I feel deep gratitude. I don't carry many regrets, but there are a few, and I want to be honest about them. One of them is how much I disappeared into my striving.

It's been a long road. Longer than I sometimes admit. Fifteen years, really, working so hard to get ahead, to recover, to prove something. The recovery itself was brutal. The medication injury from the benzos took so much out of me. Leaving and going to Madigan was a good thing, but even then, I felt like I had to show I was still someone. Still worthy. Still impressive. And that pattern followed me again later, wanting to do well, wanting to be noticed, wanting to be first. I think some of that was running from pain, especially from losing Greg and the way that chapter ended. And then the ending at AnchorPoint was hard. Disillusioning. On one hand, I feel

good about what I gave and what I built. On the other, I'm still grieving how it all came apart.

I know I have a gift. I believe I've stewarded it well in many ways. But if I'm honest, I've lived with too much throttle and not enough brakes. And now here I am, in this strange and quiet in between, trying to figure out who I am without the roles, without the organization, without constantly proving something. I'll still speak. I'll still write. I'll still create. But letting the professional identity move to the back seat, at least for now, feels like the work in front of me.

That dream with you brought something into focus. It reminded me how much I want to laugh with you. I want to play with you. I want this next decade of our lives to feel different, lighter, freer, more us. And I'll be honest; I don't fully know how to do that yet. My mind doesn't shut off easily. It's full of ideas, books, projects, and thoughts that all want out at once. Sometimes that creativity is a gift. Sometimes it's exhausting, for you and for me.

As I look ahead, I want to approach this next phase of our life the way I ride a motorcycle, with everything I've

learned along the way. I still love speed. I still love momentum and the thrill that comes with it. But real riding teaches you that the joy isn't just in going fast, it's in staying whole. When you're trail braking into those thrilling, hair-splitting turns, it isn't dramatic



inputs that carry you through. It's subtlety. Two fingers on the brake, gentle and steady pressure, a hand still on the throttle making small, intentional adjustments. Just enough braking to load the front wheel, just enough restraint to keep the bike settled as you lean in. Too much brake and you lose it. Too much throttle and you run wide. But when you get it right, there's a tremendous satisfaction in it, a smoothness and confidence that feels almost effortless. That's the thrill I want to have with us. Loving the speed, the excitement, the forward motion, while knowing

that braking, real braking, is part of what keeps us upright, intact, and still enjoying the ride together.

In the dream, there was no agenda. No pressure. No outcome to manage. Just



laughter, yours and mine. And I know dreams are just dreams. I'm not turning it into something mystical or prophetic. But it does say something about where my heart is pointing and what I want to protect and grow with you.

I want travel. I want play. I want moments that don't need to be

productive to be meaningful. I want us. And I'm praying about how we do that, how we realign, how we make space, how we let God guide us without becoming stiff or joyless in the process.

I don't have this all figured out. But I wanted you to know what stirred in me last night, and how deeply I love you. I want the next chapter to be written together, with more laughter than striving, more presence than proving, and more freedom than fear.

*Always in love with only you,
Jeff*