

Dear Steve,

My name is Peter. I'm 24 years old, and I have asthma. I've had it for most of my life, since I was a little kid. At times, it's gotten a whole lot better, and sometimes it hardly effects me at all. Sometimes, though, it gets worse for a few months and then disappears. I can't figure out why. Right now, it's worse than it's ever been.

I graduated from college a year ago. I like my job, personal relationships are no big deal, and my money's okay. I'm living at home with my mother and her boyfriend, but I just got a job in New York, and I'll be moving in a couple of months.

I'd like to be free of this once and for all,
Peter - Richmond, VA

Dear Peter,

Asthma "attacks" are generally induced by exercise, allergies, stress, or a combination of these factors. However, allergies are also caused by stress—an over sensitivity to others' emotions. Asthma takes this one step further: it is a result of worrying about triggering someone else's sadness and worry.

In your case, the object of your worry could have been (and could be) our mom. I wouldn't be surprised if you grew up worrying about triggering her sadness. If you grew up "too fast", or if you do so now, she might try to "suffocate" you. There is no blame, and this is not done consciously, but the body doesn't know that. You might inadvertently be trying to second-guess others' reactions too much. The fear of triggering a negative" response manifests in a fear of breathing, and may be coming up now because of your plans of moving away. The pattern, if unchecked, may even extend to other people in your life—past, present, and future.

The limiting thought pattern may look like this: "If I express my ideas and my feelings too much, if I disagree, if I 'grow up' too fast, if I become free and breathe deeply, having my own life, I'll be responsible for making someone else sad." Personally, I wouldn't want that thought pattern hanging around causing havoc in MY body. You probably don't want it in yours either!

Release the fear. Know that you do not intend hurt others. Affirm the strength in others, and ask for the support you need and want for YOUR life.

Positive Thought To Manifest: I allow others to support me on my freedom. I am response-able for my feelings. Others are response-able for their feelings.

Live free, breathe deep, and bless others on their journey through life,
Steve