Dear Gary, 4/20/77

As I'm sure you expected, t e effort to improve lasted only a brief period. I do not recall whether you ever gave this mind-set a medical name or whether you indicated it is such a condition. One of the oppresaives to me is that I fear it is an illness. If I want to do anything about it I can't so that fact that I want to is immaterial. I am left with the worry but not a guilt feeling.

One of the reasons I have taken the time to write Lil rather than speak is that it avoids personal confrontation and permits independent thought if she wants that. She clearly does not. Thus I was writing her this monring when she came in to talk. It was very unsatisfactory. I broke it off when I feared I would get more upset. I feel these upsets as I did not before therefore I eliminate them. Feel physically. Like very high blood pressure, I imagine.

Some times afterward when I walked past her to go out for the mail she stopped me to say, with apparent sincerity, that she was sorry for having alleged that I consider myself perfect and act that way, that she knows better, doesn't know why she said it and that she does apologize for it. I thanked her for the apology and told her I believe she should be asking herself why she always alleges this knowing it is not true and why she refuses to face the basic issues and uses such devices as a substitute. I'd said it earlier and there was no response. Either time.

Your letter of the 12th has me going to the other extreme. I detect in it, I think, friendly concern. I do want to reassure you on this and I believe I can, without deceiving either of us. I am in such a state that I do not want to do any of my work and perhaps this will help me work out of the mood.

I think you are trying to give me a pep talk. Not in any demeaning sense. In this you have a non-sequitur and are illogical. You assure me that I am wrong in saying I made mistakes way back and that "at each point in your leife" I did "<u>your best</u>," your emphasis. Whether or not I did my best is unrelated to whether or not I erred. I have no problem with myself over having done the best I could or was then able to. I dom not lash myself with not having done what in retrospect I now believe I should have. Considering all the circumstances, including the kind of person I am, particularly with my ignorance of such matters, I am not galled by not having done what I now see I should have at least tried. I was trusting when I should not have been trusting. I doubt this will ever change. I was blinded by the physical manifestations - and they were real enough - and did not consider they were not of physical origin. But I do not now see how I can expect other of the myself of then. This is separate from saying that I erred then. The fact is that I did and why should I try to kid myself about it? Because I am without doubt that "You did what you felt needed to be done," which I'm satisfied is true, does not relate to whether I did do what needed to be done. I did not. You follow with "a post hoc decision that you did wrong is always suspect" and the separate thought that "there is no way of knowing whether it would have made a difference." I agree with the latter. No question. But I also know that the approach I took and the thoughts I had were not what in retrospect I think I should have tried. You go into the post hoc decision as the fiction psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers get into. No argument. I do not know. But I do think that today my efforts would be entirely different. Whether or not they succeeded. If they did not I would be exactly where I am now, knowing that I had done my best.

I do not think it is a "trap" to "believe thate even with hindsight you should have known what should have been done." Hindsight tells me that which is established by later but relatively recent medical tests have confirmed, that the causes were not physical.

"The fact is that that nobody is to blame - you and Lil eachas lived your own way and it didn t work out as well as you and those who care about you would have liked."

Retrospection after these trauma is not easy but it is my belief we had a good

marriage. When this changed I think I can now see clearly and have for some years. I did not then. That nobody is to blame I agree. If I am correct in wht there was this change there is no possibility of questioning your opinion.

Thereafter, however, we did not each live our own way. Initially I lived her way.

This was wrong, as I now look back on it. I should not have. That I did wrecked my life and hers and ours. Whether or it this would have happened any was is conjectural. There is no way of knowing.

No matter how pure or unselfish my motive, and here also I have no doubts, I did neither of us a favor. She had become like one of Pavlov's dogs. No matter how compassionate, tolerant or supportive I may have intended being the plain and simple fact is that we would both have been much better off if I had just broken up what was painful to me, what had become not only empty but a lodestone. Instead I indulged everything.

To the degree one can be certain in such personal and emotional matters I am certain that my failings and errors do not oppress me. It is as you said and as I have often told Lil, I did the best I could. I have tried so many time to tell here that there is no question of guilt. That if there were it would be irrelevant. I am sure I believe this and I'm sure it is true. We were beyond out depth, submerged in the unknown.

If I am unskilled in such things I believe that the fact I am asleep almost as soon as my head touches the pillow is a sign guilt feelings do not oppress me. In fact I am aware of none. Customarily I awaken in my sleep. I decided to return to sleep and I do. No sheep-counting - ever. If I had such feelings I do not believe this would be the case.

What worries me is manifestation of Lil's guilt feelings, whatever she says, whatever she does and does not do. I made myself clear yesterday. This morning she was up an hour and a half earlier thwan when she is early. She went putside immediately and as I discovered when I took a second batch of mail to the box she immediately and properly transplanted the misplaced seedum. After our unsatisfactory discussion, which I did not initiate, she then went out and spent more time than she should have in the garden spot. What she did I do not know. It included removing stones. A few minutes ago she told me there were four buckets of them down there. She knows the only use I have for these stones is building up the shoulder on the road. The garden has been plowed for a week. There has been no rain. Those stone had to come out, she handles the garden and I do the heavy work, and she knows I have gone though it and removed and used the visible stones. There have been five days since the tax season ended. She stopped taking new clients before it ended to be sure she could service them all, whatever the delay or emergency. She also knows that although I made no demands I needed these stones for the shoulder. I did not ask this of her. Of all the things she could have done on her own she opted this one. Correctly. Guiltily? I don't know.

Decisions to withdraw are probably never easy, less so after so many years. However, if this is the way it goes here you have been of much help.

Your enclosures represent excellence. It is courageous work, socially necessary, not just useful. If you hear more about them you'll know.

Many thanks,