Re: Patient Gregor Samsa

November 21, 2011

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Samsa,

I want to inform you that after careful observation and testing of your son—one Gregor Samsa—I have found a diagnosis for his condition. Young Gregor suffers from an extreme condition of **Agoraphobia** and **Atychiphobia**, along with a developing case of **Clinical Depression**.

Gregor fears leaving his room and often finds himself, “hurried under the couch” (21). He is deeply afraid of people and being out in public—on account of his outward “horrible vermin” (4) appearance. Gregor’s agoraphobia—his fear of the public—has pushed him to remain hidden in his room, and more specifically out the sight of everyone, including you: his own parents. Although he finds the area underneath the couch small and told me, “he could hardly breathe in that narrow space” (23), he still doesn’t want burden his family by being out and about in his own room. Although Gregor's condition is a result of his transformation, your isolation of him isn’t helping the matter. By leaving him alone and not interacting with him for “the first fourteen days” of his transformation, you have exacerbated his fear of not only the general public, but you—his intimate family—as well. This personal rejection is also compounding his clinical depression, a depression I think stemmed earlier than his metamorphosis several months ago.

Gregor’s intense fear of failure, or Atychiphobia, is also another concern. Gregor spoke to me at great length of your financial difficulties and often feels, “quite hot with shame and regret” when you “begin to talk of the need to earn money” (27). Gregor’s past work ethic, and his current inability to work, has been eating away at him since his tragic transformation. As far as I can see, you have taken his “money with gratitude…although there is no longer much warm affection given in return” (25) for the time he has sacrificed to take of your family debt. I am afraid Gregor no longer sees value in his life, and may “entirely stop eating” (41), and give up on living if he, and even if you as his parents, continue to pressure him to be the family workhorse so to speak.

Gregor need love and reassurance during this difficult time. He needs his family to come together and offer his support. If you continue to shun him, or if you continue to abuse him with the “chief clerk’s stick” (18) or with “fruit,” namely apples (35), you will only push Gregor deeper into his fear and into his devastating depression.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 1-800-dont-call. I am always available for you and Gregor—whom I greatly admire.

Sincerely,

AMBER L. RUTAN. M.D.