

By **Alastair Darling**, *BBC Scotlandshire's Favourite Agony*



Sometimes even the best families have problems to which I don't know the answers, though I have lots of questions.

Here's a sad letter from my uppity nephew Scott, who thinks he can run his own affairs better than Dave and I can.□

His uncle and I are seriously concerned that we he won't be able to manage without his money.

For years we have subtly told him that he's too wee, too poor and too stupid, but he is listening to unsuitable friends like the Danes, and not us any more.

How do readers think I should answer him?

We're at our wits' end and desperate for suggestions on what to do!

Dear Uncle Dave and Aunty Alistair,

I have tried to approach you about moving back into my own flat on several occasions. I had hoped we could talk about this sensibly but as you seem determined to ignore any discussion of the subject I feel I have to put this in writing.

I also tried to chat to Uncle Fred over his breakfast Shreddies but he got quite distressed and nearly choked something about paying for his annual holidays and car if I struck out on my own. It was all quite confusing; you have always said he was being over generous helping me out. Perhaps you can clarify this for me.

I do want you to know how much I appreciate your help and support over these many years, especially your kind assistance in managing all my really important financial affairs. Your willingness to handle all the money matters, pay the bills, buy my clothes and still be generous enough to give me pocket money will not be forgotten. But it's time for me to stand on my own two feet and open my own bank account; I'll get my wages paid directly into it. You won't have to worry about scrimping and saving just to give me a few bob to cover my college course expenses and bus fares.

I've been to a bank manager Uncle Fred knows and gave him a breakdown of all my income and outgoings. He assures me that my income is sufficient to cover everything and was quite impressed with how I have managed to "balance the books" with just pocket money. He gave me some good advice on direct debits and savings accounts; you don't have a savings account do you? They seem to be a very good idea. I know you warned me it was all very complicated but with a little application I found it really fairly simple. I know you don't think that I'm not up to the task but I am now confident I can manage.

I also asked him about renting out the spare rooms in my flat and was surprised at how alarmed he became. He seemed to think you already rented them out and have been using the money to pay off a substantial loan. I told him what you said about the rooms not being worth renting however he would like you to phone him as soon as possible.

Could we perhaps arrange a date for you to remove the scrap cars from the garden and those chemicals you've been storing in the garden shed? I would really like to get this done soon, the people in the area think it may be a health hazard and I don't want to get off on the wrong foot with new neighbours.

On the subject of neighbours, I'm afraid I'm a bit uncomfortable with being dragged into your disputes with Mr Jones and Mrs Smith; people are beginning to think I'm a bit of a bully. So unless it involves me personally I'm afraid in future you'll have to deal with them yourself.

I know you have been talking about giving up the family membership at the club due to some of the committee decisions. But as it's a family membership if you were to give it up I wouldn't be allowed on the premises. Recently I asked you as a committee man to sound out the other committee members about my individual membership. I was wondering why you haven't done this yet. If there is some sort of problem I would like to sort it out before I move. I've heard some rumours, but all the regulars I've spoken to seem happy for me to continue as a full member.

Don't worry about Aunty Betty, I know you think that with the price of petrol being what it is, you can't afford to run her back and forward to the doctors and the shops. She's been so generous in the past helping out all the family in time of need I think it's time we looked after her. I'll be able to afford to get my own car when I move so I'll be happy to take on that responsibility.

Hope we don't fall out over this, there will still be lots of things we can do together and I'll only be a phone call away if you need my help. After all this won't stop us being family.

Yours sincerely,

Scott.

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