

JOEL. Oh, well, then it's all their fault and you can blame them for all your problems. Everyday, I have clients in my office going on and on about how their parents screwed them up.

SARAH. And what do you say to them?

JOEL. Get over it!

SARAH. I can't have this conversation with you.

JOEL. You're never going to be comfortable with them until you're comfortable with yourself.

SARAH. All right.

JOEL. Their behavior isn't going to change until you change your behavior.

SARAH. All right!

(The DOORBELL rings.)

JOEL. *(Referring to the door.)* So you're going to tell them?

SARAH. Don't you tell them.

JOEL. I'm not going to tell them. Are you going to tell them?

SARAH. I swear to God, Joel. Don't you say anything.

JOEL. I am not going to say anything.

BOB. Kids? They're here.



End

RS#8 Joel, Sarah, Bob

Start



JOEL. What do you want right now? This moment?

SARAH. You're talking like a therapist.

JOEL. I'm not talking like a therapist. (*To Bob.*) Am I talking like a therapist?

BOB. Yeah.

JOEL. (*To Sarah.*) Okay, I'm talking like a therapist. So indulge me. Even if it's something you're sure Mom and Dad would be very unhappy about. What do you want most for yourself right now?

SARAH. (*After a beat.*) I want to be with Bob.

JOEL. Okay.

SARAH. Oh, I have your permission? Well, thank you very much.

JOEL. Why do you have to have someone's permission?

SARAH. Because that's the way I was raised, okay? I was raised to be sensitive to other people's feelings. We always have to be "nice." Everything has to be "nice." God forbid anybody's feelings should be hurt.

JOEL. What about *your* feelings?

SARAH. I have no time to consider my feelings. I spend my whole life worrying about *their* feelings.

JOEL. Hey, I'm concerned about their feelings, too, but ...

SARAH. Oh, really? You weren't so concerned about their feelings when you got divorced. They were traumatized.

JOEL. I was concerned about their feelings. But I took responsibility for my own actions.

SARAH. Oh, well, forgive me for not being as self-actualized as you.

JOEL. Look, whatever resentment you have towards me ...

SARAH. Is nothing compared to the resentment I have towards them!

JOEL. Oh. Well, now we're getting somewhere.

SARAH. I just want to live my own life.

JOEL. So who's stopping you?

SARAH. They are.

JOEL. They are?

SARAH. Yes.

JOEL. Well. Can I just say one thing about that? ... Baloney.

SARAH. I don't need this right now.

JOEL. The only one who's keeping you from living your own life is you. But when you consider your own feelings, it's scary, isn't it? Feelings are scary. Because then you have to take responsibility for yourself.

SARAH. Therapist!

JOEL. Yes! I'm a therapist! I can't not be a therapist. And you can't expect Mom and Dad to not be parents. That's who they are. They're not going to change. If you want your relationship with them to be different, you're the one who's going to have to change.

SARAH. They won't let me.