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The Troubled One

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Making Magic
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Dear Mr. Rosewater,

It is with a heavy heart and a heavier conscience that I send you this letter. When I gave birth almost twelve years ago, I do not think I could have anticipated what fate would befall my children. I realize that you are not solely responsible for their welfare, but someone needs to step forward and take responsibility for what has occurred, particularly with the troubled one.

As a parent, I can simply no longer abide by your behavior. It is my hope that this letter can make you see the error of your ways and take appropriate steps to fix the problem before it's too late. Where to begin? I guess I'll start by talking a little about responsibility. Above all else, a child needs love, attention, protection and guidance. While I do not doubt the existence of the first, the remaining qualities have been sorely lacking.

Let's tackle the problems with the troubled one, an issue at a time:

#1 – You Give Away Too Much Power

Children by their nature test limits. They learn by trial and error, gauging what is acceptable by what they are allowed to get away with. As creatures of desire, it is their prerogative to grab as much power as they can. This is where the parent is supposed to step in. You need to limit what they are allowed to do and how they do it. Otherwise, with time, the child spins out of control.

That is exactly what is going on here. The troubled one has gobbled up so much power that it's obscene. You basically let him walk all over you and the siblings. I mean, how is one of the siblings supposed to feel like they matter when it's clear to anyone who takes the simplest of glances that the trouble one has the lion's share of the power?

You need to put an end to the madness. Let the troubled one know that there are limits. And then set them. And then follow through and keep them. Allow the other siblings to dream that perhaps one day each of them might be on equal footing with the troubled one.

#2 – You Don't Set Boundaries

Just as with the limits of power, a parent must also create boundaries for acceptable behavior. There are things appropriate for a child to do and things that are not. If a child is left with free range to do whatever he or she wishes, the parent creates a very unstable environment that leads to all sorts of problems.

I don't mean to blast you section after section, but come on! It's as if the troubled one is not subject to the same rules as all the other siblings. If one of them breaks a rule, you crack down on them like a SWAT team, but if the troubled one does it, it's like you have amnesia. You have to be consistent or you send horrible messages.

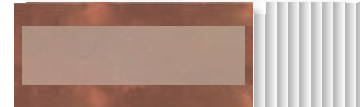
Crack down on the troubled one. Enforce the rules you've set up. Demonstrate that life is about following the guidelines that have been established. This is not being mean. You are providing the child with an important tool, a metaphorical umbrella to later help them protect themselves from the rain of adult life.

#3 – You Play Favorites

Children are very attentive. They notice what you do. They can recall what you've already forgotten that you've done. They keep track of everything. And they compare notes. As such, it's crucial that you treat all your children equally. Because they will notice. And it will affect them. You are setting the standard for how they are going to think about themselves. When you consistently put one sibling over another, you are indirectly telling them that sibling is better, more worthy of your attention.

As for the troubled one, it's not since my days at the academy that I have seen such blatant favoritism. Time and time again it appears that you just keep giving the advantage to the troubled one, often in such a distorted manner that it's blatantly insulting to the siblings. And it's had a deep and lasting impact. Everyone involved recognizes this bias.

All I can say is stop it! You wonder why the troubled one acts in such a manner? Because you allow it. Just stop it! It's completely under your control.



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#4 – You Spoil The Troubled One

Generosity is a worthy trait. But too much of anything, even air or water, can be dangerous. As a parent your intuition is to provide for your child. But giving them too much can also cause problems and counter much of the good you are trying to do.

You've given the troubled one control of too much. It dwarfs the responsibilities of the siblings. Of course they are in opposition, you've given one child the majority of the Christmas presents. That causes resentment and sets up unreal expectations. Power issues are not always about quality; sometimes they are simply about quantity.

I'm not quite sure how to morph this situation into something workable. I think the only answer is to go back to the beginning and start over. Give the troubled one a fair shake and then stop. Acknowledge your past mistakes and correct them letting the troubled one know that things are going to change.

#5 – You Don't Follow Through On Discipline

Limiting power is important. Setting boundaries is important. Equal treatment is important. Proper distribution of responsibilities is important. But none of it matters if you don't follow through. You can't tinker with everything one week and revert back the next. Otherwise, you are teaching the exact opposite lesson of what you want. And then things just continue to spiral out of control. Discipline requires consistency. Ongoing consistency.

This is probably your biggest problem with the troubled one. You say that you're making changes, and you do, but then time goes by and you keep allowing things to revert back to their old ways. I think you like to ignore that you do this, but you need to face the fact and own up to it.

You are not going to turn the troubled one around in a day. It's going to take a concerted effort over a long period of time to create honest change. Otherwise, it's just water down the drain.

My intent with this letter is a constructive one. I want to see you solve the problem of the troubled one once and for all. But be aware this won't be easy and it is bound to cause some strife internally and externally. But it's the right thing to do.

Make it so I can simply call my boy "The Color Blue" rather than the troubled one.

Sincerely,

The Color Pie

The Topic – Why Is R&D Hosing Blue?

Tough love!

All R&D has been trying to do during the last several years is bring blue in line with the other colors. It's not our intent to hose blue but when you go from where blue was to where blue needs to be, it's clearly a step down in power level. I like to think of the entire process as R&D empowering the four other colors of the game. Allow the "siblings" to not have to live in their brother's shadow. But that's all a matter of perspective.

So, if you're a fan of blue, why are we hosing it? Because it's needs to be hosed. If you honestly think that it doesn't deserve it, then either you don't understand where blue's power level was in relation to the other colors or you just enjoy the game having a spoiled child (which means you don't appreciate the importance of a balanced color wheel).

To the fans of all the other colors, you're welcome.

Now that you know what I'm talking about, you might want to take a second look at the letter.

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