

CONFIDENTIAL CHAT / The original readers' forum of information, ideas & advice

Giving children attention

Dear **Flannel Mouth** — I read your letter to **Grasshopper** which was printed in the Chat. I don't know what **Grasshopper's** request was, but I am writing to tell you that I enjoyed reading your letter.

I have five children, ages 3 months to 8 years. What you were able to do with your children when they were young is what I am trying to do with mine.

My husband and I also look at our children for what they are — five individuals. We also provide them with books to read, tools, paint, clay, crayons, blocks of wood and glue, and creative toys, etc.

We try to show the older children what is available for them in their community such as, summer park programs, library, museums, nature walks.

But there are two things you described that I would like to do with my children.

You wrote: "I talked to them a great deal, explaining everything I could."

This has always been my intention, but I find I fall flat on my face many times, mainly because of the amount of time and work spent with my little ones.

I enjoy my children, and enjoy talking with the older ones more as they get older, but I find I often do not have the energy to do so.

The younger ones are still too dependent upon me. I know from experience that as the younger ones get older, I will have more time, but I am impatient for that time now.

I would love to have more time now to spend with my older children.

You also wrote: "I often felt I had six only children."

Again, you have six individual people as we have five individual people. I think that from your statement, you were able to "work with and develop" each and every individual.

This is my wish with my children. I know that they are individuals and that each has different needs and desires. But I cannot say at this point that I often feel I have five only children. With the younger children, I find it confusing, at times; especially the time I'd love to spend separately with each of my children.

I think it's important to give each child his own separate special attention, but I also find this hard to achieve as often as I would like.

Treasures And Colors

No way for her to guarantee birth of a daughter

Dear **I'll Never Have A Little Girl** — I know exactly how you feel! I had two sons and love them dearly. They are sensitive, affectionate and a joy, most of the time. They are real boys!

But how badly I wanted a daughter. After the birth of our second son, I had to decide seriously about a third pregnancy.

I didn't want a third son.

We even considered some of the "methods" for choosing a baby's sex, but gave up the idea because we thought we might be tampering with nature.

Finally, I wrote my first letter to the Chat and adoption, which we had considered even before we were married, seemed the only way to get the little girl I wanted so badly.

Our daughter came to us from Korea two years ago. We love her and are so proud of her and her accomplishments. I love to make those frilly little girl outfits that I used to pass up when sewing for the boys.

But you know what? Although, I feel my family has rounded off by having a daughter and it feels complete, I still feel jealous when others deliver baby girls.

My heart is saddened when friends have new daughters, especially when they were "mistake" pregnancies, or they really didn't care what they had.

Sometimes, I feel I was punished and that my one real dream in life was not and never will be granted.

Sure, I could have another baby and another, but I still need to care for and love all of them even if they were not the chosen sex.

Emotionally, I can't do that now. And the reason for their births, if they

were boys, would be wrong. I wanted both boys, no matter what.

They were chosen and accepted. Please understand that. I never would exchange either of them (if possible) for a daughter.

They are precious people. But, how I wish and how often I cry (as I did when I read your letter to my husband) for that daughter I'll never have.

There is nothing I won't do for my adopted daughter, but I know as much as she grows in my heart, she never grew from a seed within me.

I'd like to feel as some of you Chatters do (remembering your letters to me about your adoptive children) that no matter where they grew, they're still yours.

Yes, I'm her mother and she's my daughter, but still "I'll never have a little girl," either.

I realize that many of you are going to be angry about this letter, but I feel that I should be true to my feelings even if they are different than other people's.

Daisy Sunshine

Dear **Arts And Cats** — I've been following the letters on saving energy. I was glad when I read, "When the weather is warm, why not let the sun do the work and enjoy the fresh, clean clothes and clean air," in your letter. I have hung clothes out in cold weather and when they dried, they felt like cardboard! There's nothing I love more than sheets that smell of sunshine. Thanks for bringing that point up.

Bongo

Dear **Burnt Ash** — Even in late-middle-age, I still rebel against fast-paced life; disliked it even in my teens. I've always needed time to look around, time to think things over, time to savor life. Finally, I decided I've earned the right to life in a country-style setting. Gardening, birds, quiet walks are an important part of my life.

Kitchen Litter

Dear **Happily Ever After, Pussycat, I Love My Family, Fishwife, Cookie Monster's Cook, Marshmel, Olivia and Peace On Our Shores** — Thank you so much for all the great ideas. We gave **Sister** a plant (from my cuttings) and very pretty thank-you notes. Many of my friends also benefited because I shared your ideas. Once again Chatters always come through. Thanks again.

Big Momma Of Three

Writing to Chat . . .

Letters to Chatters in general or a particular Chatter by pen name should be addressed to Confidential Chat, Boston Globe, Boston, Mass. 02107.

When a letter is addressed to a contributor for whom the Chat has an address, it is always forwarded if not printed.

ANN LANDERS



A flimsy issue

Dear Readers:

Remember the reader who was having an argument with her sister-in-law about the proper way to set up toilet tissue? She was certain the right way was with the paper coming from the top — over the roll. Her sister-in-law insisted the paper should come down under the roll. I sided with her sister-in-law because that's the way my mother did it. Actually, I very nearly didn't print the letter because it seemed so inconsequential. Well, folks, I couldn't have been more mistaken.

In short order I was bombarded with letters from the four corners — including Samoa, Guadalajara, Athens and Mexico City. I had no idea so many people cared about toilet paper. Here's a sampling of what turns people on these days:

Dear **Ann Landers**:

Obviously you have never been a maid in a ladies' lavatory or you would have known that toilet paper should be dispensed from the top over. I've worked in several hotels and we are taught to set up the rolls in that way. Why? Don't ask me, but it's part of the instruction and when you work for a living you do as you are told.

—Need My Paycheck

Dear **Ann Landers**:

That letter signed "Paper Crazy" really got to me. I don't know why your mother thought it was best to have the paper come down close to the wall. I'll bet you never had any cats or dogs in your house. Well, we do — two of each — and if we ever let the toilet paper hang down — even two squares — it would be all over the place. The little darlings just love to drag the stuff around. So rethink your answer, dearie.

—Tidy in Tallahassee

Dear **Ann Landers**:

Of course you are right about toilet paper being dispensed so it comes down from under the roll. The proof is the fancy, expensive kind with the printed designs. Why make it elegant if it's not going to be seen? And who can see it unless it's set up to hang down toward the wall — sort of like a painting. Stick to your guns, Annie.

—Also From Iowa

Dear **Ann Landers**:

I was very happy to see you print that letter about the toilet paper. It so happens I was taught, like you, to put the paper on the roller so it comes from under. My husband (a hot-tempered fellow with a serious booze problem) goes berserk if I don't do it the other way. You wouldn't believe the yelling if he should find the tissue "upside down," as he calls it.

Thanks to **Al-Anon** I have learned to accept what I cannot change, so I go along with it, but I know, deep down in my heart, that I am right.

I am waiting until he is sober enough to read and then I will show him your column. He thinks you are very smart.

—Another Admirer

Are your parents too strict? Hard to reach? Ann Landers' booklet, "Bugged By Parents? How to Get More Freedom," could help you bridge the generation gap. Send 50 cents in coin with your request and a long, stamped, self-addressed envelope to Ann Landers, P.O. Box 11995, Chicago, Ill. 60611.