



Playing Favorites

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I have twins. They are adorable and smart and spunky. The problem is I prefer one of them and I know I can't hide it and don't know what to do. I know all parents have a favorite child, but with twins it is more difficult. What do you suggest?

Shawn

Dear Shawn,

First of all, I would suggest you drop the idea that "ALL" parents have a favorite child. That is not true. Secondly, I would suggest you examine yourself (not the kids) and figure out why you like one better than the other. If it is because the one you prefer is most like you, you might want to examine that child's faults and take a gander at yours in the process.

If you come closer to understanding why you prefer one, you have a better chance of dealing with the issue. I hope I don't have to say to focus on what is particularly good about your least favorite child, and never, ever, do or say anything to confirm that you prefer one over the other, although they probably suspect.

This is a difficult situation, and you will need enormous willpower, discipline and love to keep yourself and your children in a healthy relationship. I'm not a psychiatrist, but it seems to me that thinking of them as completely separate entities, as individuals, rather than half of a twinship might help.

Speaking of psychiatry, if you don't get a handle on this, talk to a professional. Your children are too important to leave to fate.

Best,

Aunt Bossy

Overwhelming Pain

Dear Aunt Bossy, My baby, Darcy, died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. It has been a year and I hardly want to keep living myself. My worry is that my grief and my obsession over losing my baby affects my other child and my husband. I have tried to keep Darcy's spirit alive by talking about her, celebrating her birthday, and making sure she is considered a part of our family, but my son, who is three years older than she is, has started questioning that and I think he might be jealous. My husband is heartbroken over our loss, too, but he appears to be able to move on a little bit better than I can.

What can I do? I can never forget my little girl, but I don't want that to ruin my family.

Jane

Dear Janet,

This is such an overwhelming and sad story, and such an enormous challenge, that I recommend that you, and perhaps your husband, see a counselor ASAP. You can't be expected to come to terms with this all by yourself.

I hesitate to give any advice because this is so important, but my common sense tells me that you should be very careful that you don't let your son think that he is less important than your lost child. If a child feels that he or she is more valuable without life, it can become emotionally, and even physically, destructive. Be sure to let your son know he is special and try to celebrate things that put him in the spotlight, and him alone.

You will never get over this loss. However, you can keep your sweet baby close to your heart forever and surround yourself with love. I believe in prayer, so I hope it is all right to pray for your strength in moving forward. Please let me know how you are doing.

Love to you and your family,

Aunt Bossy