

By Harriett Muhammad

DEAR HARRIETT,

I'm the mother of two girls, Edith and Janice, who have four years between them—Edith being the oldest. Edith has never given me much trouble. She is a good student, she's respectful and a pretty normal girl.

But my other child, Janice, has been steadily getting harder to get along with and control. She seems to be turned against me, her sister and her father. For a little background on this matter — my husband and I are middle class people. We own our own home and a small apt. unit and we both work very hard to get the things we have.

I have always planned to give my daughters the best kind of life that I could. When they were small, this posed no problem, as they both were kept quite satisfied. But when Edith entered high school, the expense to give them both everything was too much, and I decided to splurge a little more on Edith since she was dating and in need of more things. I had it planned that when Edith went to college she would go to the best and not be in need of anything. I knew that when Edith finished I could do the same thing for Janice when she started college.

Well, I had been getting little petty complaints from Janice about Edith having more than she did — even though I had explained to both of them what I was going to do. Now, Janice is a high school sophomore and Edith is a university sophomore — attending a very good university. Edith doesn't have to work, she has plenty of everything and is doing well.

But Janice is turning out to be scholastically below average and has no interest

of powdered sugar to cream and whip till it stands in mounds.

Make a circle of whipped cream on chilled cake layer, and fill with strawberries which have been drained of

in going ahead with her education. She chronically complains about my favoring Edith with more things (although she is in NO way lacking anything that her friends have), and has recently made a turn for the worse. She said if she wouldn't get what she wanted, she would take it. It has gotten so that I have to keep all valuables under lock and key to keep my own daughter from stealing from me.

I have to lock up my room each time I leave as well as my silverware! Both my husband and I have tried to talk with her, we've threatened her, punished her and as a last resort even whipped her, but absolutely nothing takes effect on her. She is quickly becoming a juvenile delinquent. I'm wondering what's the matter with her understanding. Do you think my giving in to her will make her just that much worse? MRS. R. M. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DEAR MRS. R. M.

Both you and Janice are going to have to give in to each other and try to develop more closer bonds than what the dollar can provide. You have put too much stress on what your money can get you, and this has rubbed off on your daughter. Janice is the product of her upbringing.

It's a dangerous thing to bring up children openly favoring one over the other. It would have been more wise for you to live within your means and have taught your girls to be appreciative of what you were able to provide for them.

No middle class child is in a deprived state when it comes to material things,

but many are deprived of love and attention because their parents are so busy indulging in this "rat race". Oh yes, you love Janice, she's your daughter, but what have you done to let her KNOW you love her. Have you told her recently that you love her or have you taken it for granted that she knows she is loved. More than likely she is measuring your love for her by what she is given as compared to Edith.

This problem was a long time in the making and its not going to work out quickly. Hold a peace council with Janice and ask her what you could do to be a better mother to her. If she should want some of the things that Edith has, when you're able, get them for her as a starter.

This will help break down some of this hostility in her. Then plan to start spending more time with her — talking with her and doing things together so that you can build up her confidence in you. Keep this up and don't do anything in the future that will make Janice feel slighted when it comes to Edith.

Janice may not go to college and this may be your last chance to do something for her, because if this situation is allowed to continue she'll more than likely leave home at the earliest time and your relations will always remain strained.

SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND? WRITE AND TELL ME ABOUT IT.

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