

# Tattling and control concern mom; too much loyalty

Dear Dr. Brothers: I guess I might be one of those rare young mothers today who wants her daughter to grow up to be independent and strong that she is never afraid to be herself. Both her father and her 8-year-old brother seem to want to control her and take charge. With my son, it's a question of his always reporting back to me if he thinks she's done something wrong or gotten out of line in some way. With her dad, it's often what I consider being overly protective — not wanting her to try new things in case she stumbles or rips a new dress. I want her to be an astronaut or be president if she so desires when she grows up, not be limited to being a cheerleader or baton twirler.

What can I do without being mean or hurting my darling son's or husband's feelings?

— C.T.

**Dear C.T.: The kind of tattling you apparently see in your boy's behavior isn't unusual behavior in siblings of either sex.**

**Partly, they're often eager to get more of a parent's attention, or they fear being left out simply because they have a younger brother or sister who seems to get all the attention. Also, tattling can be due to a genuine need to protect a younger child from harm; by telling an adult, the tattler is shifting the responsibility for the other child's well-being to the adult.**

**Talk with him and try to find out what's actually behind his behavior. If, in fact, he's kept her from harm's way, thank him, but make sure he knows the difference between this and tattling merely for the sake of getting attention himself.**

**Let your husband know that every child — girls included — needs to learn to build the confidence and self-assurance to be able to try new things.**

**Encourage him to help make her strong and independent, not a clinging, anxious, frightened**



## Dr. Joyce Brothers

### ● Ask Dr. Brothers

**person who's afraid of life.**

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Dear Dr. Brothers: I'm a 32-year-old single mother of a 15-year-old son, and since his father's death seven years ago, my brother has been his role model and best buddy. Unfortunately, I've recently had a major disagreement with my brother over my son's loyalty to another teen who's in serious trouble at school for bullying and sexually abusing a young girl. My brother, who was a big athlete on campus, keeps talking about the importance of team loyalty and how good men stick together. I've tried to teach my son the importance of truth, kindness and having respect for girls. My boy is a good youngster, and I don't think he should even consider standing up for this rotten kid, loyalty or no loyalty.

— M.T.

**Dear M.T.: I agree with you and think you should continue talking with your son and your brother on this issue. Loyalty isn't always an admirable quality. Members of the Mafia have been known for having loyalty to killers and other members even when they committed cruel criminal acts. Street gangs have the same code. This is wrong, misplaced loyalty, such as a family member may have when he or she knowingly shelters and protects a son, husband or daughter if he or she is guilty of a crime.**

**If the young man who's been accused of this crime is innocent and your son has proof, then that, of course, is another matter. Team members can be loyal to each other in terms of the game, but if a member of any team commits a crime, then being loyal to that**

**person is also a crime.**

Dear Dr. Brothers: My husband and I are now starting to go into our usual slump that always sets in after the holidays. We start snapping at each other, complaining about everything and being grumpy and

negative to friends, neighbors and relatives.

Often, one of us also decides that none of these is really worth much. What is this, and is there any possible way to avoid it? It all makes me wonder if the season that people celebrate is worth that much.

Maybe we should just close the doors for the entire month of December and pretend we have the flu, measles or some other contagious disease.

— T.A.

**Dear T.A.: There are better ways to avoid these post-holiday blues that seem to afflict so many**

**people at this time.**

**One of the easiest ways to solve some of these problems is to simplify — edit the lists of tasks and gifts, and try to remember that less is really more.**

**One way to help us eliminate half of the things we think we HAVE to do is to arrange to spend more time and effort trying to help those in our community who are underprivileged, as well as helping organizations like UNICEF to try to save people who are homeless and starving in other countries.**

**Part of our blues is somewhere**

**deep inside. We're aware that most of us suffer from our excesses, and this can lead to both anger and guilt, and can translate into depression. Sleep deprivation because of too much partying and other activity makes us exhausted and unable to sleep when we finally have the opportunity. In earlier days, when a Christmas stocking was filled with an apple, an orange, a few walnuts or penny candy, holidays were quieter, and in many ways happier. Post-holiday depression was generally not a problem.**

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# Minor drug charges won't mean jail time

WICHITA (AP) — Unlike the rest of Sedgwick County, people found to be possessing small amounts of illegal drugs in Wichita no longer get sent to jail.

Instead, those caught with less than a quarter-gram of meth or cocaine are charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, given notice to appear in a misdemeanor courtroom and released.

Possession of a quarter-gram of illegal drugs used to be prosecuted as a felony in Wichita.

The city began treating it as a misdemeanor about two years ago so detectives could focus on more serious drug investigations, said Deputy Police Chief Tom Stolz.

“To be honest with you, there’s so many paraphernalia cases that we could clog the District Court system if we charged them all as felonies,” he said.

State law makes possession of any amount of cocaine or meth a felony, but a spokesman for the attorney general’s office said punishment was a local jurisdiction issue.

Deputy District Attorney Kim Parker said Wichita police cases involving smaller amounts of drugs are still prosecuted if a suspect has a prior criminal record or is a known gang member who is considered a threat to the community.

State sentencing guidelines require probation for first-time offenders convicted of felony drug possession.

In cases filed in Wichita Municipal Court as misdemeanors, Parker said, a person can be sentenced to up to a year in jail. Typically, first-time offenders in both courts are placed on probation.

Sgt. Chester Pinkston, president of Wichita’s Fraternal Order of Police, said some Wichita officers have complained that the new policy allows drug users to go unpunished.

Sedgwick County Sheriff Gary Steed said his deputies still pursue felony charges for people found with small amounts of cocaine or meth.

But he said he understands why Wichita has changed its policy.

“You can’t hardly blame them for using their resources the best way they can,” he said.

Paul Morrison, who becomes attorney general Monday, said Johnson County prosecutors routinely filed felony charges against people arrested for possession of less than a quarter-gram of drugs.

**“To be honest with you, there’s so many paraphernalia cases that we could clog the District Court system if we charged them all as felonies.”**

Tom Stolz,  
deputy police chief

In 1993, Sedgwick County prosecutors stopped filing charges with “testable” amounts of cocaine, such as residue in crack pipes, and began requiring “measurable” amounts. The minimum measurable amount in Sedgwick County was considered 0.1 grams.

About two years ago, at the request of police, the threshold for Wichita police cases was raised to 0.25 grams.

Suspects caught with small amounts of drugs were still booked into the Sedgwick County Jail. A narcotics detective would then prepare a probable-cause affidavit for prosecutors.

The drugs would be tested at the Sedgwick County Forensic Science Center, which could take 30 days.

In November, police officials take narcotics detectives, prosecutors and the Forensic Science Center out of cases that would ultimately lead to misdemeanor charges, Stolz said.

Small baggies each containing a quarter-gram of white powder were displayed on bulletin boards at the police department’s four substations.

Officers were told that anything less than the amount in the bag was considered to be “residue” and did not merit felony charges.

Officers were asked to issue Municipal Court misdemeanor citations for possession of drug paraphernalia.

The drugs are seized, but suspects are released after getting the citations.

Stolz said he doesn’t know how many drug cases fall below the 0.25-gram threshold. The department handles 1,600 to 1,700 drug cases a year.