

# Parenting Tip

## Who cleans up?

By John Rosemond

**Question:** I have 3 kids ages 8, 6, and 4. I need help solving the “pick up the playroom” dilemma. When an area in which they’ve been playing needs to be picked up and straightened, the 8-year-old always ends up doing all the work. The other two continue to play or just pretend to be helping. The oldest complains that it’s not fair and he’s right. What can I do to insure that they all do their share?

**Answer:** This very common problem is the result of parents who think children are adults. One aspect of emotional adulthood (not to be confused with chronological adulthood), is the understanding that cooperation with others is usually necessary to accomplishing anything of value and, furthermore, that cooperation results in short- and long-term benefit to all concerned.

Children are not adults, which may seem self-evident but obviously is not. When siblings are assigned to the same task, it’s typical that one or two siblings will do as little as possible while one — usually the oldest — does all the work. That’s human nature, which is fundamentally irresponsible and always looking for the easy way out.

The solution to this problem is to rotate tasks among the kids. Picking up the playroom is a good example. The first time it needs to be picked up, assign it to the oldest child. Send the other two kids elsewhere. The second time it needs straightening, assign it to the middle child. The youngest performs the next cleaning and then it’s back to the oldest.

Voila! The job gets done and none of them complains that “it’s not fair!” Or, they all complain, which, after all, is only fair.

**Question:** I have a follow-up question. Let’s say it’s the middle child’s turn and he holds everyone up by dawdling. What should I do then?

**Answer:** I have an equally simple solution; furthermore, I’ve never heard of it failing. If a child plods through a task, taking, say, thirty minutes to do what can easily be done in five or ten minutes, simply go in, pleasantly dismiss him (as if nothing is wrong), and do the job yourself.

Then, that evening, send him to bed immediately after dinner. It’s important that you not warn him of this in advance or threaten him with it; simply do it. When he gets over his shock and awe and asks why he has to go to bed so early, tell him that his inability to do the earlier task in a timely fashion tells you he’s not getting enough sleep. So, you’re going to help him with his sleep problem.

Then next time the playroom needs picking up, assign it to him again. When he points out that it’s a sibling’s turn, tell him that it is his turn until he does it quickly and properly. When he cries out that it’s not fair, simply say, “I completely agree,” and walk away.

My experience has been that two doses of that will cure the problem.

# Marriage Tip

No. 79

## The Minimum Time Commitment To Just Maintain A Marriage

By Bill and Pam Ferrel

Couples Need T.I.M.E.together.

Here is what we believe is the minimum time commitment you should have in order to just maintain the minimum of connectness in a couple.

This is not to deepen or grow a relationship, but just maintain the minimum connectedness needed for a healthy strong marriage.

**TEN** to twenty minutes to talk together alone every day. Time in the car with the kids listening doesn't count.

**INVEST** in a weekly date night (or breakfast or lunch) together for at least four hours. It takes a couple of hours to emotionally connect.

**MAKE** a monthly "day away" policy. At least once a month spend eight to twelve uninterrupted hours together to reconnect. You can spend the time doing things you both enjoy: errands, shopping, exercising, or a relaxing activity or hobby.

**ESCAPE** quarterly or at least biannually for a 48-hour weekend.

Remember, this is not to deepen or grow a relationship, but just maintain the minimum connectedness needed for a healthy strong marriage.



# Spiritual Tip

## 101 Proofs for God: #3 Three Sticks

By Jim Stephens

From the website:  
[www.101ProofsForGod.Com](http://www.101ProofsForGod.Com)

Let's imagine that you are walking through the woods with a friend in a very secluded area. As you are walking, you see something on the path in front of you. When you get up close, it turns out to be three sticks that look like this.



What goes through your mind? How did those sticks appear like that?

Please give me a number on a scale from 0 to 100. Closer to zero means that the sticks happened to become shaped like that totally at random with no interference from any unusual force. There is zero significance or meaning to the pattern.

A number closer to 100 would mean that you are more and more certain that some intelligent being arranged the sticks in exactly that pattern with some specific purpose in mind. The intention of the intelligent being is to send a message which has meaning and possibly value to an observer.

There is no right or wrong answer. This is just a line of reasoning.

My guess is that most people would give a number in the high 90's, although I haven't yet done the experiment.

OK, next step. Let's go a little further down the path. This time you encounter four sticks instead of three sticks. Look at the two pictures of 4 sticks below and think again of a number between 0 and 100.



Did your number go higher or lower? I'm pretty confident when I say that I think your number would go higher. It's getting less and less likely that this was an accident and more and more likely that the arrangement was done by some intelligent being.

One more picture and then my conclusion. Imagine again you are walking in the woods and encounter 5 sticks that look like this.

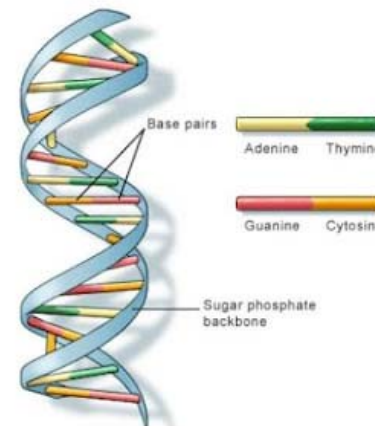


What number between 0 and 100 would describe whether this is random or put there by an intelligent being.

I don't know what number you are at right now, but if your number keeps going up, there will be some point at which it will get infinitesimally close to 100 as I keep adding more and more sticks.

What about 6 sticks, 7 sticks, ...100 sticks, ...1000 sticks in an arrangement that looks ordered?

I haven't even gotten started. I can go all the way up to 3 billion sticks. Take a look at this picture of "sticks":



U.S. National Library of Medicine

Here's a quote from Wikipedia:

"The human (*Homo sapiens*) genome is stored on 23 chromosome pairs and in the small mitochondrial DNA. Twenty-two of the 23 chromosomes belong to autosomal chromosome pairs, while the remaining pair is sex determinative. The haploid human genome (ex. sperm or ova) occupies a total of just over three billion DNA base pairs.

The haploid human genome contains about 23,000 protein-coding genes..."

Now imagine that you are walking with a friend in the woods and you come upon 3 sticks, then a little while later 4, then a little further on 5 sticks, on and on, ... 100 sticks arranged as I have described. Every time you come to a new set of sticks, your friend denies that any intelligent being could possibly have left this structure on the trail. After all, neither of you can see any intelligent being anywhere around can you?

What do you do? Do you laugh at the foolishness of your friend? Or do you cry silently for him because he is so unable to see the obvious for some reason.

3 billion "sticks" all lined up and organized ... There must be a God.

(This article is a summary of the longer article on the website, [www.101ProofsForGod.com](http://www.101ProofsForGod.com).)

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