



• LESSON FROM MY
LITTLE ONE

Love Makes a Family

AS A MOM, there is almost nothing more important to me than making sure my children learn kindness and empathy. I want them to know that love wins. I want them to understand that there is not just one kind of family: They come in all shapes, sizes, and colors with different beliefs and traditions. The thing is, I've never known if my kids are listening or understanding what I say.

Then, during our last beach vacation, my 6-year-old, Gemma, was collecting rocks and “making a family.” She had a hodgepodge of shells, stones, and even a little piece of wood, so I asked her to tell me about them. She started identifying: two mom rocks, three dad rocks, five kid rocks.

I pointed out that they weren't all actually rocks; some were shells. I asked her, “Why don't you make a rock family and a shell family and they can be friends?” She looked at me, puzzled, and said, “But they are all a family: rocks, shells, two moms, three dads. A whole family.” And she was right. I felt embarrassed that I suggested shells with shells and rocks with rocks. But I also realized that my kids *have* been listening to me! Gemma reminded me that whether shells or rocks, different or the same, what makes a family is love.

—Brienne Manz
@strollerinthe city



• SENT

To: Baby manufacturer Subject: Missing parts—important!!!!

I received your product on August 24, 2015, at 3:25 P.M. Baby: Girl Version took 13 hours to be delivered and had to be ordered nine months ahead of time, but I had been advised of those possibilities and had no complaints.

Unfortunately, mine did not come with teeth. Surely you did not intend this?

My Baby has been forced to grow her own! This leaves us in a nightmarish hellscape even now, years later. I have tried to explain to my wailing child that the pain she is feeling in her mouth is “just teeth ripping through your soft flesh.”

This has not reassured her in the slightest. It's crazy to expect someone with such a

limited vocabulary to be sophisticated enough to grow her own set of teeth.

A representative on your hotline explained that nursing would have been more painful if my Baby had come with teeth. As it was, my Baby was very effective at clamping my nipples using her bony gums like two tiny cinder blocks, and I fail to see how teeth could have made that experience much worse.

The bottom line is that after all the money I've spent on your product, I cannot accept that you failed to provide a basic part. I would like this matter escalated to a manager, and I expect to be compensated for pain and suffering (mine and the Baby's).

I am tempted to say that I will never order your product again, but I think we would love the Baby Brother expansion pack. Given the circumstances, I expect to receive a discount. Twenty percent off my hospital bill and/or delivery time will sufficiently resolve this matter. Thank you.

—Riane Konc

AT LEAST THERE'S THIS

The veil surrounding pregnancy loss continues to lift—in a big way. Recent evidence: Dylan Dreyer, cohost of the third hour of the *Today* show, is blogging about secondary infertility. Hilaria Baldwin documented her miscarriage in real time on her Instagram feed. And March of Dimes recently launched the #UnspokenStories series to give women everywhere a platform for speaking about fertility, miscarriage, and pregnancy complications. To share your story with the organization, submit text, video, or audio at unspokenstories.org or via email to UnspokenStories@marchofdimes.org.

