

Tales from a Tattletale

Growing up I was labeled a Tattletale by my older siblings. There was a wide age gap of 10-12 years between us and I was always following them around to see what they were up to. Of course, this was not looked upon favorably especially by my older brother Lee. This was the start of a long period of sibling rivalry.

He was always getting into trouble, and I took it upon myself to assist in that effort. Every time he did something wrong, I told my Mom or Dad. One time, I picked the lock on his bedroom door and found him passed out. I ran down stairs as fast as I could and told right away. I was always laying in wait, watching for him to do something wrong just so I could get him into trouble. He was such an easy target.

One day the tables turned, apparently Lee got sick being told on, who wouldn't? The retaliation started; first he hung me over the second floor railing by my feet. I screamed and cried but no one came to help me. Then, I was playing with a salt shaker and spilled it all over the carpet, Lee caught me, and he told on me and I got in big trouble.

Unfortunately, this behavior really affected our relationship well into our adult years. The fact is, nobody likes a tattletale. For years, he never trusted me and it put a strain on our relationship, in fact, we didn't have much of a relationship. Tattling needs to be curtailed at a young age, it only invites hard feelings, bickering and fighting among children. There was nothing positive that came out of my rampage of telling, in fact, if I am honest, I delighted in getting him in trouble because somehow it gained favor for me in my parent's eyes. You should never delight in someone else's misfortune.

This is a dangerous game and if you have children you should seriously consider the long term effects a tattletale can have on your family relationships. Parents can control the urge by letting your kids know it is

unacceptable to tell and you only want to hear about it if someone is at risk of being hurt.

My brother and I have mending our old feuds, but there isn't a holiday gathering that goes by without Lee telling everyone what a "Brat" I used to be and how I told on him constantly. We laugh about it now, but I can assure you it was no laughing matter at the time.

P. S. Many of you have reached out to contact me through the paper and have asked that I put my email address on my articles for comments. I thank you for your support over the years and I hope you enjoy this new feedback vehicle. Jcrosstalk@aol.com