

# three rooms of three year olds

Ok. There are three rooms. Each is filled with three year olds. There is a load of toys in each room - more by far than children. In all three rooms, most kids take toys and say, "Mine, not yours!" Also, most of the three year olds who see a toy being snatched up want that specific toy, even though there are plenty of others. So basically, almost all of the three year olds have a first reaction to get toys and hold onto them. As time goes on, however, the rooms start to differ.

***In room #1*** ... two big kids band together. The smarter one employs the other in guarding the stock while he goes out to conquer new acquisitions.

***In room #2*** ... some children find that they can use their toys as weapons. Yes, although many of the children in room #2 were playing calmly and quietly, the ones who started wielding toy weaponry against fictitious enemies and other children have fun exploring the feeling of power they got from out and out attacks.

***In room #3*** ... one very clever girl started paying other kids to acquire new toys. She would issue scraps of paper – let's call them 'mine not yours certificates' - that could be used at a later time for the use of said toys.

In short, all three rooms had an initial, *hunter/gatherer* time where naturally, many children grabbed as many toys as possible. At no time during this period did the children seem malicious or bad, however. They were just being kids. But as time went on, during a period of – shall we say exploratory ventures, or perhaps an *age of exploration* - certain three year olds simply had to use their cleverness and strength to invent ways of having more and more fun.

It is interesting to note that at no time during the hunter/gatherer period, nor the ensuing age of exploration, did the idea of sharing come up as a first recourse. So, what do you think happened

next? You guessed it. Adults who were watching over the three rooms decided that the three year olds needed help. They needed guidance from someone who was a little more mature. The adults decided that the three year olds needed the voice of authority or some clear consequences to coax them to share.

Almost all of the kids had the same reaction. They were indignant. They felt entitled to the toys - actually to all of the toys. But after a time they started to realize that if the sharing could be tried, it might actually work out better for everyone concerned. The constant fighting and protecting of toy commodities was getting old. Sharing did seem more fun than aggression. And so, the three rooms of three year olds lived happily ever after.

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Is it possible that humankind is not much past the three year old stage? Is it possible that humankind can get past it's rather self-centeredness and consider sharing? Or are we entitled to all of the toys on the planet? Don't you sometimes wish that there was some being that is more mature than us or some set of consequences that could persuade us to get along? What if we had a mother who has been watching? What if she steps in to exact consequences? Would we be indignant and feel entitled – or would we grow up?