

## A MEMORANDUM FROM A CHILD

Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all I ask for. I'm only testing you.

Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it. It lets me know where I stand.

Don't use force with me. It teaches me that power is all that counts. I will respond more readily to being led.

Don't be inconsistent. That confuses me and makes me try harder to get away with everything that I can.

Don't make promises; you may not be able to keep them. That will discourage my trust in you.

Don't fall for my provocations when I say and do things just to upset you. Then I'll try for more such "victories."

Don't be too upset when I say "I hate you." I don't mean it, but I want you to feel sorry for what you have done to me.

Don't make me feel smaller than I am. I will make up for it by behaving like a "big shot."

Don't let my "bad habits" get me a lot of your attention. It only encourages me to continue them.

Don't correct me in front of people. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.

Don't try to discuss my behavior in the heat of a conflict. For some reason my hearing is not very good at this time and my-cooperation is even worse. It is all right to take the action required, but let's not talk about it until later.

Don't try to preach to me. You'd be surprised how well I know what's right and wrong.

Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins. I have to learn to make mistakes without feeling that I am no good.

Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.

Don't demand explanations for my wrong behavior. Sometimes I really don't know why I did it.

Don't tax my honesty too much. I am easily frightened into telling lies.

Don't forget that I love to experiment. I learn from it, so please put up with it.

Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn from experience.

Don't answer silly or meaningless questions. I just want you to keep busy with me.

Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. I may learn to enjoy poor health if it gets me much attention.

Don't put me off when I ask HONEST questions. If you do, you will find that I stop asking and seek my information elsewhere.

Don't ever think that it is beneath your dignity to apologize to me. An honest apology makes me feel surprisingly warm toward you.

Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible. It gives me too much to live up to.

Don't worry about the little amount of time we spend together. It is how we spend it that counts.

Don't let my fears arouse your anxiety. Then I will become more afraid. Show me courage.

Don't forget that I can't thrive without lots of understanding and encouragement.