



Making the Terrible Twos Terrific! (John Rosemond Book 16)

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Focusing on the developmental period spanning age eighteen to thirty-six-months, which renowned parenting expert John Rosemond dubs, "the twos," "Making the "Terrible" Twos Terrific!" offers practical parenting advice to ensure that every child's "twos" are terrific. By offering comprehensive tips on everything from toilet training to developing good habits for bedtime, as well as disciplinary techniques to control aggressive behaviors, "Making the "Terrible" Twos Terrific!" approaches parenting in a straightforward, accessible manner that is easy for parents to implement and achieve success with their toddlers. No bribing, meltdowns, nudging, or cajoling are necessary. All parents need is consistent, firm, and loving interactions with their toddler to guide him or her during the developmental years. The methods described by Rosemond also translate to success throughout other life endeavors such as school, relationship building, and even productivity in the distant tween and teen years. To ensure that earthquaking foot stomps, decibel-shattering screaming, and consistently stubborn behavior are not the norm for your toddler, consult Rosemond's "Making the "Terrible" Twos Terrific!."

Making the Terrible Twos Terrific! (John Rosemond Book 16) Details

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Karin says

There were several overarching approaches to parenting with which I agree in this book: not making the child the center of the universe or in control of the family, promoting independence and self-sufficiency from a young age, setting consistent boundaries and expectations, etc. For those reasons, I haven't rated this lower. But there were also many things about this book that were ridiculous. Saw your child's bedroom door in half to create a Dutch door? Teach your child to clean her soiled underwear by swishing it IN THE TOILET? Ummmm.....no way. I also found it ironic that someone who promoted teaching self-sufficiency and setting expectations for toddlers simultaneously claims that two-year-olds are incapable of remembering anything for longer than 10 minutes, sitting still for longer than 30 seconds, or comprehending the word "don't," none of which comport with reality in my experience. The author also clearly had a sky-high opinion of himself, repeatedly including vignettes of grateful parents congratulating him on how his methods had worked perfectly. Finally, despite his representations to the contrary, the author came across as misogynistic, directing almost all of his advice to mothers and characterizing fathers as no more than secondary "assistants" to mothers during infancy. As a working mom married to a stay-at-home dad who could never be described as the "assistant" parent, it never ceases to amaze me how many parenting resources in 2017 are still mom-centered.

Rox says

EXCELLENT read. I actually laughed aloud a time or two. Cannot wait to implement a lot of these strategies. The only "negative" is the last bit - Mr. Rosemond recommends a child being at home with a parent until at least age 3 (a la - no daycare). As with most families in this day and age, dual working parents is a necessity - not necessarily a choice. Otherwise, though - GREAT stuff! Now I guess I need to start potty-training my 19 month old before he turns 2! :)

Nicki Nelson says

Reading this again, since it's been 4 years since I've had a two-year old and I'm prepping for my 1.5 year old who already has some 'great' toddler behavior starting :). Also, reading at the same time as Rosemond's Teen-proofing. I love Rosemond for his no nonsense approach of loving your kids enough to discipline them-parenting advice, using his own experience as well as his knowledge from counseling. I wish I would have discovered him years ago. Also found his podcasts and enjoy them as well. I learn SO much that isn't in other 'pop' parenting magazines and literature that I followed for years.

Sarah says

I'm so frustrated because I've heard some of the general parenting principles taught here before and agreed with them, but Rosemond spends so much time spewing hate toward those who disagree with him and packaging his advice in an overly simplistic misogynistic package that I just can't pick through it to find the

good stuff (and there really is some). Instead, I'm going in search of Christian parenting books that aren't so full of self-righteous hatred and bitterness.

Whitney says

I thought some of the insights on development and a toddler's need for independence were good, but most of this was pretty outdated. I disagreed whole-heartedly with just about the whole chapters on potty training and sleep. I got a few ideas on how to deal with the tantrums, the constant defiance and testing of limits, but that's about it.

Kristen Gebbia says

I love John Rosemond's down-to-earth, common sense approach to raising kids. Sometimes I read books/articles about parenting and end up feeling guilty, overwhelmed, or even more confused. Not so with Rosemond's writing! Answers to questions about child training are clear, to the point, and simple to follow.

Some of my favorite thoughts from this book would be these:

*The two-year old has probably spent most of his life thinking the universe revolves around him. When he cried, mother picked him up, fed him, and tended to his needs. Now he's beginning to realize that he actually isn't the center of the universe. Adults are expecting him to be more independent and he himself naturally wants independence. But he also wants everyone to continue orbiting around him and his "commands". Thus comes the rough waters known as the "terrible twos" as the toddler tries to transition into the more independent stage of childhood.

*Most two-year olds need less intervention from adults; set up a safe environment for them and LET THEM PLAY, EXPLORE, and GROW on their own as comes naturally. We are raising them to be independent adults, and that starts in toddler-hood.

*Turn off the tv and READ to your child to promote brain development and mental independence.

*Chill out. Most "behavioral problems" (bed wetting, temper tantrums, etc) are just phases. If you treat them with a matter-of-fact attitude they will run their course faster. But if you make a big deal out of them, the toddler will too and it will take longer to work through.

*Young toddlers can't comprehend how the word "don't" cancels the command. So when you say "don't jump off the couch", the toddler only understands "jump on the couch". Keep commands positive ("you may jump on your trampoline") or simply say "no" and remove the toddler from the couch.

*Be authoritative and simple in communicating commands. Instead of saying, "Are you ready to take a nap?" or "It's time for a nap, okay?" be authoritative and tell your toddler, "It's nap time". Don't use 20 words when 5 will get the point across.

*Two-year olds don't need "play groups" or any early-development programs. Those sort of things only exist to make moms feel like they're doing more for their child. Toddlers don't understand the concept of sharing or other social skills until around the age of three, so save yourself the headache of trying to constantly referee a group of squabbling two-year-olds and just let your child grow and explore on their own. By the time children are 7 or 8, no significant difference has been shown between the toddlers who attended play groups and head-start programs and those who didn't.

All that being said, it's hard to find a child training book that I completely agree with. I'm not a huge fan of Rosemond's time-out sessions; I tend to agree with Micheal Pearl that the lonely dark corners of time out sessions prepare children for the lonely dark corners of jail cells. Time outs have their time and place; I just feel like Rosemond might recommend it in excess.

Cayla says

I don't often read a book that I so fully and totally disagree with. I think the best thing that came from this book is that I realized that, at least to a certain extent, I do have a parenting philosophy. I think toddlers are people, understand more than we think, and can be fun parts of the family. This seems opposite to this author's views. By the middle of the book, I found myself just reading to find more ridiculous things to highlight, rather than reading to learn. A few example of things I particularly disagreed with -

* The author is a big proponent of just saying "because" as a reason for anything. He feels that it is pointless to give kids a reason and feels that giving reasons suggest that kids can argue. I, however, think kids understand more than we think. We can give a reason and answer questions, but be firm in our decision.

* The author is very against taking toddlers out to eat and is even against family dinners! He thinks toddlers should eat first and everyone else should eat at a different time. I think family dinners are hugely important! I also see no reason toddlers can't learn to eat out politely. I don't even see how, in the author's world, it would work for the toddler to eat first. Does he really think the parents will later relax if they eat while the toddler is running around the house unattended? Here's a quote: "To be perfectly clear, I don't think toddlers should be allowed in restaurants that have waitstaff." Wow, he's not even saying he doesn't suggest taking them; he doesn't think they should be allowed in!

* The author discussed that toddlers have a short term memory, but he really exaggerated the point. For example, he suggested that timeout can only be a few seconds because toddlers can't remember past that. Although I actually agree that a 5 second timeout (what I use with my daughter) is strangely effective at her age, the idea that toddlers' memories are that short is a little silly. My daughter seems to have no trouble remembering the cookie she had on the weekend all week long when she asks for a "cookie, cookie, cookie" at every meal. I think she can probably remember that hitting was bad for an equally long period of time.

* He said not to use "don't" with toddlers since they just hear the rest of the sentence. So, he suggests, "don't hit mom" would become "hit mom" to their ears. Pu-lease!!!! I'm pretty sure my child understands "don't" just as well as she understands "no." Such hogwash!

* The author is very pro stay-at-home parent. I don't want to completely criticize him on this because I do think it is a somewhat "brave" position right now, but I think his reasoning doesn't add up. He suggests a completely hands-off parenting style, but then indicates that it is entirely necessary for the well-being of the child to stay home. If he really wants a hands-off parenting style - not much interaction with the child, telling the child to go play, etc., then isn't daycare kind of perfect? At daycare, the kids go off and play for the day (while supervised) and then the parents collect them. I think stay-at-home parents are so fantastic for families who can make that work, but I don't think it's the only way to raise a happy kid.

* The author is pretty anti early-childhood education. He mentioned that you can see no gains beyond the first couple years of elementary school. I actually don't know enough on the subject to argue with him on this point, but this seems pretty contrary to what I've otherwise heard. I plan to research further for my own curiosity.

The final thing I didn't like about the book was that there was very little actual content and then tons of Q and A. The questions were often very similar. It's actually amazing that I found so much I didn't like in such a short book!

Marie says

Pretty good! Very useful and doable tips and tricks for navigating the often-stormy seas of toddlerhood. Every child is different, but the lessons learned in this book are easily adaptable to each family's individual needs. I have begun implementing some of the methods with my 18-mo-old and have seen them work pretty well. The overarching message woven throughout the book is one of hope: as long as your child is healthy and happy, you're succeeding at parenting. I like positive-message books like that. It gives me hope that the next year and a half won't be bad. I even turned around and handed the book to a colleague with a child the same age after I'd finished reading it!

So where did it lose that last, fifth star? In the last chapter. Parents, if you work outside the home, skip the final chapter. (view spoiler)

Amanda says

This book so far is fantastic. It's no-nonsense, or more common sense, which feels like what I lack a lot of the time. I'm not that far in, yet, but already know that this is going to be helpful to me. It's somewhat in the vein of 1-2-3 Magic, with more background, and Making Children Mind Without Losing Yours, with a definite focus on toddlers (who seem a little left out for bigger issues with bigger kids in that book). I have to laugh a little because the library copy I have has several scribbled on pages (obviously the work of some 2y/o whose parent was desperately trying to learn). I can just imagine the irony when it was discovered...

This is the best parenting book I've ever read. It includes enough reasoning behind "why" toddlers are insane in the membrane, without being dry and includes lots of questions from real parents of 2-4yr olds with practical answers/solutions. I'm going to have to buy this one to keep as a reference.

Laura says

I was all set to give this book five stars (surprising even me considering how much I was offended by the last book I read by Rosemond). I really appreciated his description of meeting all a child's needs (ALL) until they're around 18 months, when they are old enough to start to learn that they aren't the center of the universe. He talks about child-proofing, containing rather than correcting bad behavior (because punishment doesn't do any good when you're two), and generally advocates a gentle, kind approach to helping two-year olds and their parents navigate this tough time.

Awesome.

But then he told me that co-sleeping and the family bed is insidious and that it creates dependent, whiny children who will never learn how to separate from their co-dependent parents.

Boo hiss about that.

I'm learned you've got to just take what helps from John Rosemond (as with any parenting book) and learn to look past his crazy posturing on certain issues.

Randy says

John Rosemond knows first-hand that the terrible twos can be a traumatic and disruptive period in the life of the family. He has also learned that it doesn't have to be this way. The application of a few basic principles can transform the experience of toddler-rearing from one of chaos and frustration to one of confidence and progress. The transition the two-year-old must undergo and his resistance to it show why this can be such a difficult time. He has been the center of the universe for the first eighteen months of his life, and properly so, but now his parents have to lead him away from that egocentrism to an understanding that the parents are now at the center. They have to make him believe in them; by conveying unconditional love and personal strength they have to, in effect, become his heroes.

This can be achieved when parents become what Rosemond calls "benevolent dictators." To describe this concept in summary and without clarification almost certainly runs the risk of misrepresenting the idea as one of authoritarian parents. All I can say here is that we have to keep separate the idea of authoritarian parents from that of authoritative parents. The two are not at all the same. The former, from a posture of insecurity, "demand" the attention of a child, while the latter project self-confidence and "command" the child's attention. Authoritative parents certainly listen to the opinions of their little ones, but they do not try to reason with them or convince them, as that is a lost cause when two year olds are involved. As such, the child is free to disagree but not free to disobey. Rosemond would have three understandings communicated from parent to child. First, "I am the center of attention in your life, but you are no longer the center of attention in mine." Second, "You will do what I, your parent, tell you to do." And third, "You will do what I tell you, bottom line, because I say so." These can sound so heavy handed until we realize that school teachers, if they are good ones, communicate these same understandings to their students.

The chapter on "creative discipline" I found particularly interesting. According to Rosemond, "one of the most unfortunate and prevailing attitudes toward disciplining children is the emphasis placed on punishment" (p.83). He is convinced that the key to effective discipline is not punishment, which is reactive, but management, which is proactive. (There is a time and a place for punishment but it is not to be the primary disciplinary approach). This means that the most effective time for dealing with misbehaviour is before it occurs. You have accepted that a certain problem is likely to occur in a certain situation, so you plan ahead how you are going to deal with it, and communicate that to the child. Then when the problem occurs, you are not flustered or thrown off balance. Instead, you know exactly what you are going to do and you do it, and that confidence and control in itself communicates a valuable lesson to the child.

A good example he gives is of the child who throws tantrums in the store whenever a parent takes him shopping. A proactive approach would have the parent communicate clearly to the child exactly what will happen if he misbehaves in that manner - they will leave the store, go home, and then, say, the child has to stay inside the rest of the day - and then follow through when it happens. No second chances, no negotiations, the parent takes the child home and follows through on the planned consequences, and over the next few weeks a dramatic change should happen in the child's in-store behavior. It is unavoidable that in the short term there will be wasted shopping trips, but in order to minimize their number, he recommends a few "dry runs" when nothing is really needed from the store.

Trying to discipline a two year old can very easily degenerate into power struggles that fluster and frustrate the parent more than the toddler. One key to preventing this is by ensuring that when the child misbehaves, it's the child, not the parent, who feels bad. The parents make the rules and enforce them "dispassionately, without any great to-do." Patience and some ingenuity are needed by the parent, as two year olds are very persistent little people and can hold out a long time. So if, for example, a child refuses to pick up his toys, it's useless to tell him he won't be able to go outside later because he has no concept of "later." He only knows about "now." The parent would be better off to just shrug, walk away, and wait for a strategic moment. This moment will arrive when the child wants to go outside and is told that he can go outside only after he has picked up his toys. He may pitch a fit but inevitably will give in and pick them up. This is a "nonpunitive way of asserting your authority that is emotionally cost-effective and keeps you out of power struggles."

Rosemond also discusses bedtime problems, potty training, and day care issues in this very helpful, easy to read book that sheds much light on an important precedent-setting stage. It need not be terrible if, equipped with knowledge, understanding, and patience, we parents lovingly and confidently take charge and do our best to lead the way.

Genean says

I learned the terrible two's can be terrific if you're a middle-aged grandpa who doesn't have a toddler in the house and likes to dote on his grandkids and make money by overly pontificating in books. My feelings are very ambivalent about this book--details below.

The somewhat helpful things I learned:

- It's normal and therefore expected behavior for 2's to throw tantrums and scream and thrash. Nothing is wrong with your child or you as a parent when this happens. Learn to count on it happening. Have a plan to put into action. Stay unruffled and unemotional if at all possible.
- 2's aren't ready to sit in a time-out with a timer for several minutes. Too young. It's good enough to tell them to sit down, wait a couple seconds, and then tell them, "Okay, you can get up now." Gradually increase the amount of time they spend sitting in time out by a few seconds. (I have found this is working well when Smith tackles Oa, hits her head with his baseball bat, or hits us in the head with baseballs or other objects.)
- The best toys for kids are those from the bygone era of the '50's due to their high "play value" and ability to allow for make believe and pretend: e.g., lincoln logs, blocks, toy dolls, legos, and cardboard boxes, as well as basic art supplies like crayons, markers, and playdough. I would also add balls and sports equipment of all kinds.
- TV rots kids brains. We all know this. Who knows if it can be a factor in ADD and other disorders or not, but let's just say it's unattractive and highly disturbing to look over and see your child sitting passively, eyes glazed, nearly drooling. It can't be making them happy, and it sure doesn't make you feel like a successful parent. Go outside and get fresh air and exercise. That's what Rosemond says, and that's already what we do.
- If a toddler is rough with a younger baby, quarantine the baby from the toddler for 1-2 weeks. Do not let the toddler within several feet of the baby. The 2 year old must relearn that interacting with the baby is a privilege and that gentle behavior is the only acceptable behavior. After a couple weeks, gradually allow the toddler to have limited, brief, supervised interactions with the baby and help by handing diapers or pacifiers to help out. (I think Rosemond has lost his marbles on this one. On paper it looks like a good idea, but the execution is impossible. I separated Oa and Smith for a half a day by using a baby gate. It was a complete failure because he would poke her and push her over when she stood up at the baby gate in the doorway.

Also, he threw things at her while in their car seats and enjoyed scratching and hitting her until I separated them. He still has good enough aim to throw things at her. Fortunately he doesn't know how to spit yet. Either back to the drawing board on this one Rosemond, or come to my house for a day and prove to me that it's possible to implement!)

-Rosemond has many insights on sleep training and potty training 2's; however, Smith sleeps fine at night and we haven't started potty training yet, so I didn't pay careful attention to those chapters.

Kelly Schuknecht says

A few months ago I was nearly at my wits end with my 3-year-old son. A friend recommended this book and mentioned that the “terrible twos” for boys can sometimes hit later. I decided to give it a try. It took me a little while to get into Rosemond’s writing style. He has a very philosophical approach to this development stage, but as I read on, this approach began to help me see my children (then 5, 3 and 1) in a different light.

Early in the book he talks about stages of development and developmental needs. One of his biggest cautions in this area is television – which, according to Rosemond, contributes absolutely nothing to a child’s developmental growth. As a parent of 3 young children (all born within 4 years), I admit, the television can be my best friend whenever I want to get something done. Reading his views on television in the beginning made me almost stop reading...after all, how can a man whose children are now grown possibly remember how time-consuming children are at this age and understand how heavenly it can be for mothers to have them sit in silence, if only for 30 minutes? But, I decided to continue reading with an open mind.

I can understand why there are negative reviews for this book. Rosemond’s views are not always fun to read...especially if you are guilty of the behaviors he attacks (such as allowing your children to watch TV or sharing a “family bed”). At times my opinions differed from Rosemond’s. I’m not a child psychologist, but as a parent of 3, I believe I have learned a little about parenting throughout the years that earns me some credibility. Rosemond would lose some points in my mind whenever he would discuss how his approach did not work with his first child (a boy) and then how he did it “right” the second time with his daughter and how that proved the method is effective. Having three children, I’ve learned that what worked for my first (a girl) didn’t work for my second (a boy), and my third (a boy) seems to require his own individual approach to everything. I don’t believe that one approach to anything when it comes to parenting is “one method fits all.” However, the one main message I have taken away from this book is that when something doesn’t work, re-evaluate and try something else. I feel like I’ve been given a new perspective on parenthood and a number of ideas for how to handle some of the main issues that parents deal with during the “terrible twos,” which Rosemond explains can be anytime between 18 to 36 months.

Overall, I recommend this book for parents (and caregivers) of young children.

Rachel says

To start off I will list what I liked about this book. Rosemond is against children watching television (check 1, so am I), he believes that fewer toys equals a more active imagination and a simpler childhood (check 2, so do I), he believes that a child needs to be able to explore his surroundings with minimal interference (check 3, I do too) and thus talks extensively about childproofing the home.

I thought it was interesting how he discussed not using the word “don’t” when disciplining a child because

“don’t” is an abstract word that “refers to the absence of an action”. This is too complicated for a young child to grasp and therefore Rosemond says we should give a direction and tell the child what to do, such as “get down”. I’ve been trying this with my daughter and it actually seems to be working so hurrah!

And what else did I like.... Hmmmm.....

Well, now let me tell you what I didn’t like.

As a reviewer has already stated before me, John Rosemond is adamantly against co-sleeping, however, he seems to be confusing the term co-sleeping with bed sharing. The terms are not interchangeable. I’m a bed sharing mama and wouldn’t have it any other way. My fifteen-month old daughter has been sleeping with me since she was only a few weeks old and it’s made a world of difference to our family life. My daughter sleeps right through in the knowledge that her mama is right there beside her, protecting her, and I actually get a fairly good night’s sleep. Don’t get me wrong, I have sleepless nights too (don’t we all?) but in general I’m calmer, more relaxed, less stressed, and more productive than my non-bed sharing mama counterparts.

Rosemond would not look kindly on my family’s sleeping arrangements because when he talks about “co-sleeping” what he really means is “bed sharing”. Many professionals are opposed to bed sharing (some more than others) but almost all who work in the children’s sector would not deny the benefits that co-sleeping (when a child sleeps in close proximity to a parent, if not sharing the same bed) has on an infant. It’s almost common knowledge now that a baby is far better off sleeping in the same room as his parents for at least the first six months, if not one year. Co-sleeping drastically – drastically! – decreases the chance of SIDS in an infant. A baby actually learns to regulate his own heartbeat by listening to that of his mother.

Of course Rosemond uses the age-old argument that the child will become too dependent on the parent and not be able to dis-attach and eventually move to his own room, which is a complete fallacy, not to mention a contradiction on Rosemond’s part. In a later chapter that discusses day care centres and nursery care, Rosemond states that a child is better off in fulltime care with his primary caregiver until at least the age of three (true!) and that the parent-child relationship “forms an emotional attachment that secures the child’s trust in the environment. Trusting that the world is a safe, nurturing place, the child can begin the long journey toward emancipation with confidence, moving away from his or her parents and into the world.” In other words, if you establish a secure attachment with your child (whether through bed sharing, breastfeeding, or by not sending him to nursery) he will find it easier – not harder – to emancipate himself away from his parents and move towards independence. But it needs to be done in his own time! You can’t force it.

Generally, we’re looking at an age no less than three years for this process to be completed. Please don’t misunderstand me, I’m not saying everyone needs to sleep with their child until the age of three. We all have busy lives, commitments and obligations that would make this a near impossible task (I certainly can’t guarantee that my daughter will still be in my bed by the age of three) but the point is that if you try to separate your child prematurely, before he is ready, then you will most likely encounter some resistance. This does not mean you’ve made a clingier child by bed sharing, it just means you’ll have to help him ease into the new sleeping arrangements as he isn’t fully ready yet. But up until that point what you’ll have done for your child is nothing short of amazing.

One of Rosemond’s biggest arguments against co-sleeping is that parents need time together. This is absolutely true and I fully agree that your marriage must come first in all things, but this doesn’t have to be to the detriment of your child’s emotional wellbeing. I think too often Rosemond advocates an action based on convenience for the parents. Unfortunately, parenting won’t always be convenient for us and the lives we lived before becoming parents, but such is life. For instance, in one chapter a parent wrote in asking for advice on how to keep order with the children as they were due to go to a family reunion the following month at Disney World. Rosemond spent his entire reply spouting his views that young children should not

go to adult events such as reunions. He didn't even bother trying to give them any advice other than tell them not to go. Well, thanks Mr Rosemond, I'm sure that was really helpful for the family.

He is also completely against children eating at the dinner table with their parents. He thinks they should be in their own room at their own table. Personally I believe it is good for a child to be included in the family as much as possible so they can learn from observation and discussion and imitation on how to behave and what is expected. It may not always be convenient but convenience and parenting don't really mix anyway.

So in conclusion I must say that I do not recommend this book. I know there will be many parents who don't agree with my views and that's okay but I hope I've managed to offer my thoughts in a coherent way so that some people might find it helpful.

Good luck in all your parenting endeavours!

Ericafitzgerald11 says

I was surprised at how awful I thought this book was, because I loved Rosemond's "Parenting by the Book." It was so foundational to my parenting philosophy as a new mom that I was sure this one would be great too. And at first it was. I wholeheartedly agree with his recommendations to reduce or eliminate TV and cut back the toys to a few carefully chosen items that spark imagination. I also appreciated the reminders about parental authority and the need for clearly, concisely stating expectations. What baffled me was that he seemed to suggest it is virtually impossible to change a particular behavior between the ages of two and three, so you just have to manage it. I couldn't disagree more! Training is absolutely crucial at that age, where our kids are so impressionable and in need of our guidance. It is our job to teach them right from wrong and require obedience, not just grit our teeth in hopes that things will look up as they get older. He also said multiple times that toddlers don't belong at family mealtime; they should be fed beforehand and allowed to roam while the family eats. His discipline ideas were pretty odd and not biblical. I'll give it a couple stars for a few good ideas, but overall I definitely would not recommend this book.

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