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Almost Persuaded*

I'm writing this the day after Christmas. My six-year-old daughter, Sharon, had asked Santa Claus for a candle-making kit, and yesterday it showed up on schedule. At 6:30 in the morning she burst into our room and announced that she and I were going to make a candle.

The kit contained large, flat sheets of colored wax and string to be used as a wick. The directions indicated that candle-making is a three-step process. First, you place the wax in an oven to heat it until it's soft and pliable. Then you take it out of the oven, roll it around a wick, and mold it into any shape that pleases. Finally, you place the completed candle in cold water until it becomes hard. Unfortunately neither Sharon nor I bothered with the written instructions on our first attempts.

As soon as my daughter drew one of the thin, brittle sheets of wax from the carton, she tried to force it into the shape of a turtle—the shape that was shown on the box. The results were predictable—many shattered pieces of wax and many tears of frustration.

I confidently showed Sharon that the wax had to be melted first. After it had been in the oven ten minutes, I was able to shape it. Follow-

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