



Source: Steven Erlanger, 'Promising freedom, Hamas pressures journalists', *New York Times online*, 10/09/07.

Tags: [art](#), [child/parent](#), [workplace](#)

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You must make it brighter. Clouds are not black. They might sometimes be very, very dark grey but never, ever black.

Does anyone need to change their glass of water? Do you? You've used a lot of brown in your picture and your water is very dirty now. Your brush isn't going to be clean for when you use the nice yellow and orange paint. You must keep your water clean, otherwise all your colours will look the same. [Pause] But you will use orange and yellow, won't you? Because none of your flowers at home are brown, are they?

Well, they shouldn't be brown. You must tell your mummy to throw them away and replace them with some new, fresh flowers, with pretty colours. Oh. Well. [Pause] Ask her to throw them away. Next time she comes to see you, ask her to throw them away and maybe she'll bring you some new flowers. Yes, and your photobook. I'm sure she'll remember next time. No, it doesn't hurt them. They die very quietly and calmly. They just do. Why don't you paint some lovely pink flowers in your picture? Then you can show your mummy how lovely they are and how good you have been and she'll be very proud of you. Change your glass of water first. Off you go—don't run! Be very careful...

Oh, now that's lovely! That's very, very good. Do you go to this park with your mummy and daddy? Just grandma? And does she push you on the swings? What are they? They look like swings to me, darling. What kind of stones? Gravestones? [Pause] I don't think they're red. They're not normally red. Use your grey paint. [Pause] Next time you go to the...park, with your grandma, you must find someone to help clean off the red pen. There should be someone in the park who will help you. Yes, it is very bad. Of course she was very angry, it's a very bad thing to do. Don't be scared, she wasn't angry with you. If the red pen hasn't gone next time you go to the park, go with your grandma to find a grown-up to help you. Yes, maybe the police. Don't do anything without checking with your grandma first.

Stop shouting! Stop it! What's all this noise about? Sit down, both of you. No, no, I don't want to hear you telling tales, I don't care who did it first. Sit down. You! Sit down, be quiet! [Pause] You know you're not allowed to draw things like that. Of course you can't. Because it's wrong and we won't allow it. Bad enough that one of you decided to do this—and then you come right along and copy him! Just take another piece of paper and start

again—both of you. No, I'm not taking sides, I want you to both start again. Go to the front and get a new piece of paper. I don't want to see any more of this nonsense. Pick something else to paint, something different. I won't even mark it if you're naughty and you draw the same horrible things again. Now, I've moved you once already—one of you will have to work outside in the corridor if you don't behave. Be good, and start again, both of you. There isn't much time left so sit down and concentrate. Shh.

And what's this? Is it a horse? Your uncle! Why is he crawling like that? Oh dear. Did he go to hospital? Why not? Hospital isn't a prison, darling. He would have been safe there. Of course they'll make him go home! They wouldn't keep him there forever! Your daddy is wrong, the doctors aren't allowed to keep him there for the rest of his life, they would make him go home at some point. It's not like that. Is your uncle alright now? That's good. How did they take him home? In a car? [Pause] An aeroplane? [Pause] Because sometimes people have two homes, darling. I don't know where his other home is, I'm sorry. He probably lived there before he came to live with you and daddy. And he's there now. Careful with that blue—don't smudge the green bit. Is that grass? Is that the garden? Yes, he probably does have a swimming pool. That's nice, isn't it?

Okay, everybody, it's almost lunchtime. Try to finish your pictures; when you finish your picture—shhh, listen to me! When you finish your picture, go to the sink and pour away your water and put your paints on the side. Be very careful not to spill your water, or I will be very cross. Then bring your picture to the front and leave it on my desk. Please make sure you bring them to my desk, I can't come and collect them from each of you. [Pause] Oh, that's so sweet, that's so nice of you, darling! It doesn't hurt as much now. No, as long as I sit down and don't walk too much, I'll be fine. That's why you mustn't run in the classroom. I don't want another accident like last time. Yes, it was because they were running. [Pause] I don't want to hear those stories again. There was no gun. Anyone who tells you those boys had a gun is being very silly and I don't want you to listen to them. No one is allowed to bring things like that to school. Now, everyone: start to finish off your picture and when you've finished, take your water and paints to the sink. Don't start walking around and talking, go straight to your desk and wait until the bell goes. Shh! If you're talking, you're not working.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Hazel Tsoi-Wiles.*