

Parenting Tips

Dealing with Misbehaviour

All behaviour is meaningful and goal-oriented, so if your child is misbehaving, he or she is likely to have one of four goals outlined below in mind. Let's briefly examine both the attacking and defending behaviours for each of these goals so that you can better determine what is motivating your child to misbehave.

1. Attention Seeking

Attacking behaviours: the nuisance, the clown, the smartie pants, the mischief-maker, the embarrassment of people, unpredictable actions.

Defending behaviours: shy, fearful, anxious, tearful, wanting help, problems eating, lazy, untidy, self-indulged.

2. Power

Attacking behaviours: rebellious, argumentative, defiant, contradicting, disobedient, temper tantrums, bullying, bossy, bad habits.

Defending behaviours: stubborn, unco-operative, dawdler, forgetful, disobedient (not doing as told).

3. Revenge

Attacking behaviours: stealing, viciousness, destructiveness, cruelty, violent, brutal, delinquent behaviour, bed-wetting.

Defending behaviours: sullen, moody, morose, refuses to participate, passive hatred.

4. Escape by Withdrawal

Defending behaviours: hopelessness, stupidity, idleness, incapability, inferiority complex, babyish, refusal to mix, solitary activities, fantasy activities.

(Note there are no attacking behaviours)

The best way to identify the goals of your child's misbehaviour is to ask yourself how you *feel* about the misbehaviour.

- If you feel slightly annoyed, your child is looking for attention
- If you feel personally challenged, your child is out to get power
- If you feel deeply hurt, your child is looking for revenge
- If you feel like giving up, your child wants to escape by withdrawal

Once you have determined how you feel, it is important to become aware of how your child has *reacted to your correction*.

For information on how to interpret your child's reaction and on "what to do next", please send us an email us at caroline@peoplerich.com if you would like more information.

Author: Caroline Crosbie

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