

The Four Goals of Misbehavior

| Child's Faulty Belief | Child's Goal | Parent's/Teacher's Feeling | Child's Response to Parent's/Teacher's Attempts at Correction | Alternative for Parents/Teachers |
|--|-----------------------------|---|---|--|
| I belong only when I am being noticed or served. | ATTENTION | Feeling: Annoyed. Reaction: Tendency to remind and coax. | Temporarily stops misbehavior. Later resumes same behavior or disturbs in another. | Ignore misbehavior when possible. Give attention for positive behavior when child is not making a bid for it. Avoid undue service. Realize that reminding, punishing, rewarding, coaxing, and service are undue attention. |
| I belong only when I am in control or am boss, or when I am proving no one can boss me. | POWER | Feeling: Angry; provoked; as if one's authority is threatened. Reaction: Tendency to fight or to give in. | Active or passive-aggressive misbehavior is intensified, or child submits with defiant compliance." | Withdraw from conflict. Help child see how to use power constructively by appealing for child's help and enlisting cooperation. Realize that fighting or giving in only increases child's desire for power. |
| I belong only by hurting others as I feel hurt. I cannot be loved. | REVENGE | Feeling: Deeply hurt. Reaction: Tendency to retaliate and get even. | Seeks further revenge by intensifying misbehavior or choosing another weapon. | Avoid feeling hurt. Avoid punishment and retaliation. Build trusting relationship; convince child that she or he is loved. |
| I belong only by convincing others not to expect anything from me. I am unable; I am helpless. | DIPLAY OF INADEQUACY | Feeling: Despair; hopelessness "I give up." Reaction: Tendency to agree with child that nothing can be done. | Passively responds or fails to respond to whatever is done. Shows no improvement. | Stop all criticism. Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small; focus on assets. Above all, don't be hooked into pity, and don't give up. |

*To determine your child's goal you must check your feelings and the child's response to your attempts to correct him or her. Goal identification is simplified by observing:

- a: Your own feelings and reaction to the child's misbehavior.
- b: The child's response to your attempts at correction.

(Dinkmeyer, McKay, and Dinkmeyer, 1997)