

The Goals of Misbehavior

Child's Faulty Belief	Child's Goal	Parent's Feeling and Reaction	Child's Responses to Parent's Attempts at Correction	Alternatives for Parents
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 way	Ignore misbehavior when possible. Give attention for positive behavior when child is not looking 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 I 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 worse	Seeks further revenge by intensifying misbehavior or choosing another weapon.	Avoid feeling hurt: Avoid punishment and retaliation. Build trusting relationship: convince child that she/he is loved.
I belong only by convincing others not to expect anything from me. I am unable; I am helpless	DISPLAY 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 is simplified by observing:

1. Your own feelings and reaction to the child's misbehavior.
2. The child's response to your attempts at correction.

By considering your situation in terms of the chart, you will be able to identify the goal of the misbehavior.

response to your attempts to correct him or her. Goal identification