

The Goals of Misbehavior

Child's Faulty Belief	Child's Goal*	Parent's Feeling and Reaction	Child's Response to Parent's Attempts at Correction	Alternatives for Parents
I belong <i>only</i> 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 making a bid for it. Avoid undue service. Realize that reminding, punishing, rewarding, coaxing, and serving are undue attention.
I belong <i>only</i> 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 <i>only</i> 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 <i>only</i> 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'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.

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

The Goals of Positive Behavior

Child's Belief	Goal	Behavior	How to Encourage Positive Goals
I belong by contributing.	Attention Involvement Contribution	Helps Volunteers	Let child know the contribution counts and that you appreciate it.
I can decide and be responsible for my behavior.	Power Autonomy Responsibility for own behavior	Shows self-discipline. Does own work. Is resourceful.	Encourage child's decision making. Let child experience both positive and negative outcomes. Express confidence in child.
I am interested in cooperating.	Justice Fairness	Returns kindness for hurt. Ignores belittling comments.	Let child know you appreciate her or his interest in cooperating.
I can decide to withdraw from conflict.	Withdrawal from conflict Refusal to fight Acceptance of others' opinions	Ignores provocations. Withdraws from power contest to decide own behavior.	Recognize child's effort to act maturely.

Children Learn What They Live

If a child lives with criticism,
She/He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,
She/He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule,
She/He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame,
She/He learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance,
She/He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement,
She/He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise,
She/He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness,
She/He learns justice.

If a child lives with security,
She/He learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval,
She/He learns to like herself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
She/He learns to find love in the world.