



MANAGE MISBEHAVIOR

Four need-based behaviors

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WHEN YOUR HEART IS HAPPY, THINGS DO NOT BOTHER YOU; you are less likely to take offense, you are cooperative, and the day flows by pleasantly. When your heart is hurting, negative behavior or a short fuse is evident, and the day gets worse as it progresses.

Misbehavior has four main causes, each reflecting a basic human need. If you train yourself to become sensitive to the causes, you will know how to redirect misbehavior and feed legitimate human needs. Learn how to recognize and respond to these four needs:

1. TO BE LOVED

We have a need to be loved; that is, to belong, to receive attention, to contribute. If we do not feel love, or if we feel ignored, we act out. Our goal is to win attention.

You recognize that behavior is attention-oriented if it makes you *feel* annoyed or bothered, or you tend to remind the child about behavior or need to coax cooperative behavior.

2. TO BE IN CONTROL

We have a need to control our own lives — that is, to have power, responsibility, and independence.

If we perceive that we are powerless, we act out. Our goal is to win power.

You recognize that behavior is power-oriented if it makes you *feel* angry or that your authority is threatened, or you tend to fight or give in.

3. TO BE TRUSTED AND TREATED FAIRLY, JUSTLY, AND RESPECTFULLY

We have a need to be trusted and given recognition. If we perceive that we are treated disrespectfully or unfairly, we act out. Our goal is to get revenge for the hurt that we experience.

You recognize that behavior is revenge-oriented if it makes you *feel* deeply hurt, or you tend to retaliate or punish.

Your feelings signal the reason behind the behavior.

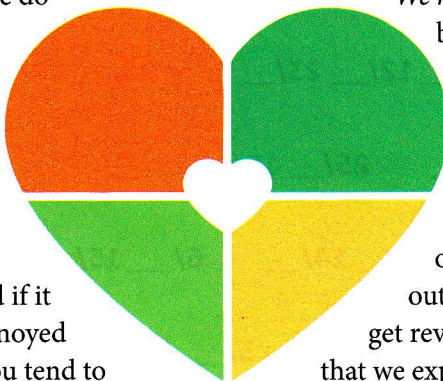
4. TO BE COMPETENT, RELIED UPON, NEEDED

We have a need for accomplishment, capability, and skillfulness. Otherwise we act out. Our goal is to display inadequacy or incompetence so that people will not expect accountability from us.

You recognize that behavior is inferiority-oriented if it makes you *feel* despair and hopelessness. You might say, “I give up!” or agree with the child that nothing can be done.

In each instance of misbehavior, try initially to ignore or downplay it so as not to be “hooked” by it. Later, at a neutral time, address the situation. Your feelings signal the reason behind the behavior. Use that information to lead the child to name and claim the behavior. Going forward, feed the hunger. **■**

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