

Better Parenting: What should I Do When My Child Misbehaves? Part 1--For Attention and for Power

By Sonia Spackman MA, MFT

Everyone needs acceptance, especially kids. Understanding what they will do for acceptance and a sense of belonging will help you be a better parent or a better teacher.

They may seek ATTENTION, POWER, REVENGE or HELPLESSNESS.

Today we will describe how misbehavior gets kids the payoffs when they are seeking ATTENTION and POWER.

Do Parents and teachers cause kids to misbehave?

No, our kids choose their actions. However, we could be supporting their behavior by reacting the way they expected. If we continue to react in the way they expect we are helping the behavior to continue.

What kind of misbehavior should we focus on?

1. Action or words that are disrespectful or ignore the rights of others at home, in the classroom or out in public.
2. Refusal to cooperate when the child knows what is expected.
3. Actions that are dangerous to the child or others.

How do we turn the negative behaviors around?

If we start reacting differently, we can give them entirely different message that we are not going along with their negative behavior any more. The new goal is for them to choose better behavior to get what they want.

Remember, this won't happen overnight. **Where do we start?**

A good place to start is by doing the unexpected. If you do the opposite of what your child or your student expects then he or she will have to find another way to belong or feel accepted.

What are the behaviors and the goals we need to look at?

(*note, charts recognizing the four reasons for misbehavior and things to try for toddlers and preschoolers, grade school age and high school age are still at the library and city hall for you to pick up)

ATTENTION

Marci's dad took Marci and her brother to the park. Shortly after, a friend came to talk to him. Marci told her dad



she wanted him to play tennis with her. He told her he wanted to talk to his friend for a few minutes first. Marci started playing with her brother. She threw her tennis racket and started yelling. Dad says, "Please play quieter." Marci says,

"OK". After a few minutes Marci begins pounding her tennis racket against the fence. Dad sighs, "Marci, I asked you to play quietly." Two minutes later Marci yells, "Dad, Bobby is cheating!"

Clues to Marci's goal:

1. Dad feels *annoyed* with Marci.
2. Dad gives attention: He *nags* and *reminds* Marci to cooperate.
3. Marci stops for a while, and later does something else to get her dad's attention.

Dad knows that Marci wants attention.

What could dad do instead?

1. He could *ignore* the yelling and noise. If he does, *he needs to keep his face, voice, and body calm.*
2. He could *give a choice.* Saying, "Marci I need to finish talking?" *You may play quietly or go sit in the car, you decide*".
3. If she cooperates, dad could play a game with her when he is finished talking.
4. At another time dad could give Marci attention when she is not asking for it.

POWER

Danny said to his mother, "Jeff's dad said I can go freewheeling with them Saturday." "No", mom reminds Danny, "because this is your weekend with your dad." Danny starts demanding that she call his dad and changes the weekend. Mom yells back, saying that he needs to call his dad and explain. Danny starts whining and arguing with his mom to call his dad for him. She shouts, "Alright, I'll call him."

Clues to Danny's goal.

1. Mom feels *angry.*
 2. Mom *argues* with Danny
 3. Danny argues back and *mom gives in.*
- Mom knows that Danny is being bossy and that his goal is power.**



What could mom do instead?

1. Mom could remain silent, turn away slowly and go to another room.
2. Mom could tell Danny, "I love you too much to argue with you Danny." Repeating this statement over and over to Danny each time he tries to argue with her.
3. At another time when they are not in conflict mom could talk to Danny and discuss legalities, options and conditions about changing visits with dad.

OTHER THOUGHTS

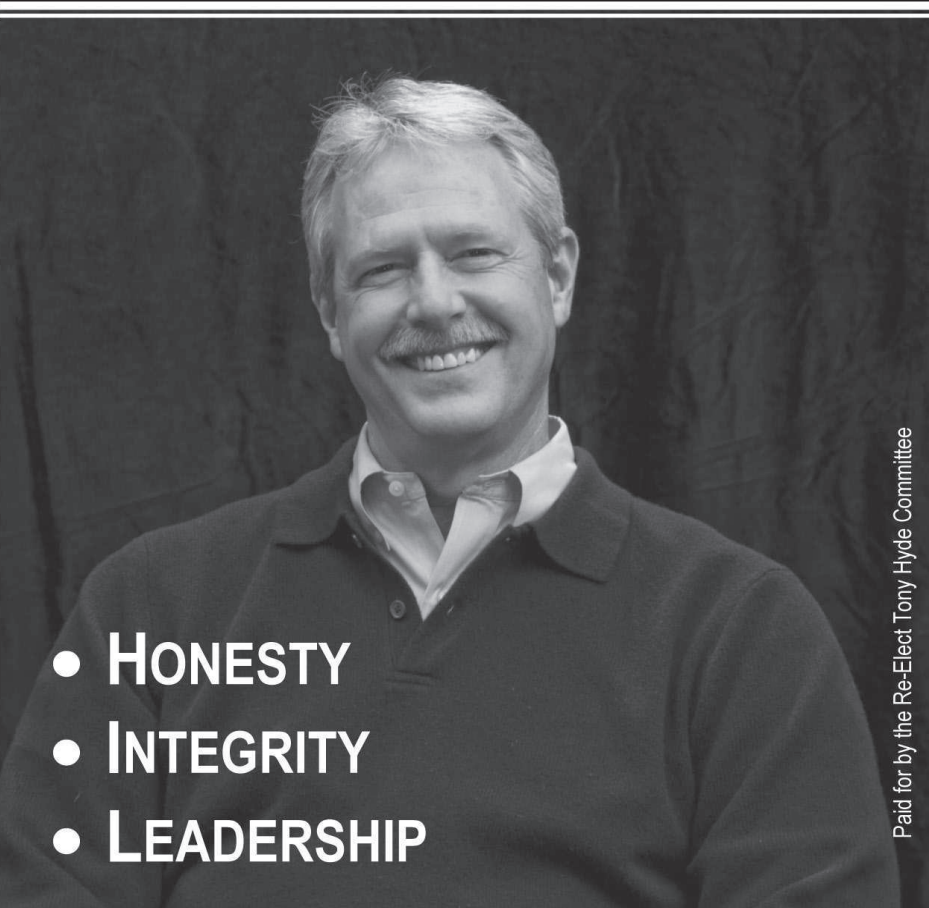
Doing the unexpected is not always easy. We need to look at how we feel. We might need to look at our own attitude and change the way we respond. Making this effort is important. Our reactions effect how our kids grow and learn.

In Part 2 we will be covering revenge and helplessness and things parents could do differently. Remember, parenting is practicing, if we make a mistake, trust me, our kids will give us more opportunities to get it right.

Resources, American Guidance Service, Inc. AGS, STEP, Systematic Training for Effective Parenting.

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Results of Vernonia Marathon and Half Marathon

Vernonia's Fleck finishes 2nd in Half Marathon

On April 15, 2012 over 500 runners left Cedar Ridge Camp and headed through Vernonia and ran down the Banks—Vernonia Linear Trail, taking part in the Vernonia Marathon and Half Marathon.

Organized by the Oregon Road Runners Club, this annual event attracts runners from all over the northwest and beyond. The Half Marathon ended at Stub Stewart State Park; the full Marathon runners finished in Banks.

Vernonian George Nathan Fleck,


a 17 year old junior at Vernonia High School, finished 2nd overall in the Half Marathon, (out of 371 runners) with a time of 1:23:03.

Jennifer Draeger was the only Vernonian to compete in the full Marathon—she finished 37 overall, out of 108 runners with a time of 3:59:29. Draeger was the 10th female to finish the race and took 2nd in the women's 30-34 age category.

There were several other local top ten finishers in the Half Marathon. For the men, Samuel Potter finished 36th and took 4th place in the Men's 45-49 age group with a time of 1:46:59. Vernonia High School Principal Nate Underwood finished 33rd and took 4th in the Men's 40-44 age group with a time of 1:42:14. Amanda Wolf finished 66th in the women's division and 8th in the Women's 30-34 age group with a time of 2:06:3.

Other Vernonia runners who completed the Half marathon were Nicole Miller, Maria Lemay and Erin Peura.

Terry's Gym



JOIN THE TEAM!

503-901-1705
16720 Noakes Rd. Vernonia

Help Get Ready for the Columbia County Fair Workshop & Work Parties Every Saturday Until Fair Meet at 8:30 AM at the Fair Office