

Better Parenting: The Flip Side of our Kid's Faulty Beliefs or Thinking Errors

By Sonia Spackman MA, MFT

Where Do Their Beliefs Come From?

Our kids have their own ideas about how to belong or be accepted. The way our kids think is based on what they believe about themselves and others. Our kid's feelings and thoughts, positive or negative, come from these beliefs.

Who Gets Faulty Beliefs or Thinking Errors?

Children who become discouraged most often misbehave. They form beliefs about how to feel connected or be accepted that often lead to misbehavior.

When Do The Thinking Errors Happen?

When a child wants *attention* a child may think, "I can be accepted and special more when I am noticed- even if that could make a problem for Dad or Mom."

When a child wants *power*, he or she may think, "I am more acceptable by being the boss, or acting powerful. If I get in a fight with Mom or Dad I have more power."

When a child wants *revenge*, he or she may think "I am not that loveable. I can be equal to Mom and Dad by making them feel hurt like I do."

When *acting helpless*, a child may think "I can belong better if I get Dad and Mom to agree that I can't do things. In fact, when I try and fail, I can get them to see I am not good enough so

they don't expect things from me."

What Does The Flip Side Look Like?

Involvement: "I want to be a part of things. Please help me learn to do my part."

Independence: "I want to be myself. Please give me choices so I can learn to do what is right and be responsible."

Fairness: "I want things to be fair. Please help me learn to give and take and cooperate."

Being competent: "I need times to think for myself. Please help me to learn to trust in myself."

liefs by:

Changing from *attention* to involvement

Changing from *power* to independence

Changing from *revenge* to being fair

Changing from *helplessness* to independence

What Is Important For These Changes To Happen?

Our kids need to have a part in family projects. Show them how to cooperate with other people. We want to help them to be a part of things and to be helpful to others too.

We need to give our kids choices and let them live with the choice they make. When it is possible we need to let them do things on their own or alone. They will become more confident and learn to make better choices.

We need to be fair and guide our kids to be fair. It is important to treat kids with respect and kindness so they will learn to trust you. This way they will learn that people can be fair and trustworthy and they will have no need to get

even.

Sometimes you will try to be fair but your child may feel that you are not fair enough. If this happens, check your feelings. Your child may be seek-

ing power or revenge. Don't join in this power struggle but keep trying to be as fair as you can.

What Is Important To Know?

Encourage. It is important to teach your child to try new things and to keep trying.

Listen to your child to talk about his or her worries or to talk about problems. Be sure to listen more than you talk. Try to reflect back what you think your child is feeling.

Notice your child's strengths and point them out to your child without praising him or her.

In closing remember, parenting is practice, if we make a mistake our kids will give us more chances to get it right.

This time we have explored some ways that beliefs and feelings affect how kids decide to act in order to be accepted. And we tried to understand our kids thinking errors and what we can try that might make things better. Next time we will explore how we often buy into their feelings and what we as parents can try when we do.

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

If you have questions or would like suggestions contact me at soniaspackman@msn.com



How Do Kids Change?

As parents, we use this information and additional information to encourage and practice helping our kids develop positive goals and positive be-

Oregon National Guard Youth ChalleNGe *continued from page 13*

As part of their training, all 126 cadets earned their food handler permits, as well as first-aid and CPR certification. In addition, 112 donated blood through the American Red Cross. Cadets set a goal of giving 100 units of blood and gave 122. The class also provided 11,787 hours of community service, averaging more than 94 hours per cadet. Cadets volunteered at numerous Bend civic events and worked for local nonprofits, including Special Olympics Oregon, Habitat for Humanity, March of Dimes, Deschutes County Fairgrounds, Oregon State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service. The estimated total value of their service was \$103,721.

The OYCP program is cost-free to cadets and their families and has successfully graduated 3,625 cadets since its inception in 1994. OYCP is one of 33 nationwide National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Programs and has been recognized as one of the premier programs in the country.

Cadets work through two phases beginning with an intensive 5 1/2-month residential phase during which they cultivate life-coping skills, perform community service work and attend academic classes. While in the program, cadets also develop life plans to outline clear and organized steps for continuing along the path of success after graduation.

This phase of the program is followed by one year of mentoring with an adult who is trained by the program and selected by the cadet. During this time, the cadets receive encouragement and support in implementing their life plans as they re-enter their home environments.

About OYCP

Since 1994, more than 4,800 cadets from urban and rural

areas of Oregon have entered the OYCP. The voluntary 17 1/2-month program provides youth who are at risk of not completing their high school education, both male and female, ages 16 to 18,

with a second chance to succeed. Details about the Oregon National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program are available at www.oypc.com or by phoning (541) 317-9623.



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