

Noted Child Psychologist Lists Seven Reasons Why Children Misbehave

Editor's note: This is the first of three dispatches in which Dr. Fritz Redl, a noted health specialist, offers advice to parents in coping with youthful misbehavior.

By LOUIS CASSELS
United Press Correspondent
Washington — There are seven reasons why children misbehave. If you understand these



reasons, you can head off many disciplinary problems before they arise. And you can cope intelligently with those you cannot prevent.

This advice comes from Dr. Fritz Redl, chief of the Laboratory for Child Research at the National Institute of Mental Health. Redl, one of the world's foremost psychologists, is particularly noted for his research on the behavior problems of normal and disturbed children.

Half Tummy Enough, Specialist Lectures

By DELOS SMITH
New York — The stomach is a key organ for nourishing the body does very well in that endeavor after half of it has been removed, according to a surgeon who specialized in such removals for the purpose of curing ulcers.

But people don't get along very well, nutritionally speaking, on less than half a stomach, continued Dr. Harold D. Harvey, of Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons speaking from his experiences with 1,068 persons who gave up parts of their stomachs.

Tests And Study May Reveal Cause Of Actress's Death

Hollywood — The coronor has ordered toxicological tests and microscopic study on the body of Canadian Actress Victoria Ward in an effort to determine the cause of her death.

An autopsy was performed but the coroner's office said results were withheld pending further investigation. Authorities listed her death as probably due to natural causes pending completion of the coroner's further study.

The 43-year-old stage and screen actress, also known professionally as Joy Le Fleur, was found dead in her apartment on Wednesday, clad in a nightgown.

A coroner's spokesman said that toxicological tests and microscopic study was routine in such cases where death appeared to be from natural causes but had not been definitely pinned down in the regular autopsy.

"Misbehavior is not all alike. It can't be handled in the same way. There are times when a child needs to be punished — and times when punishment does more harm than good.

"When your child acts up, ask yourself, 'Why did he do that? What's behind this misbehavior? What does it mean to him?'"

"Figuring out the meaning of a child's misbehavior doesn't require a degree in psychology. All it requires is a little thought. A little common sense, and a willingness to look a few inches below the surface of a child's annoying conduct to find out what prompted it. Then you will know how to handle it."

Seven Basic Reasons

Here are the seven basic reasons for misbehavior listed by Redl:

1. Some objects and places cast an "almost hypnotic spell" over children. This is true of older children as well as the very young toddler who grabs for the vase left on a low table. To the normal child of 6, 8 or even 10, "a pair of scissors says 'cut with me' and a hammer says 'hit with me.' A big echoing room, like an art museum, whispers 'run and shout in me.'"

2. Children are "extremely susceptible to the influence of other people's behavior." When they are playing in groups, a

kind of "gang intoxication" may set in that will cause all of them to do things which none of them would do on his own. This is particularly true of pre-adolescents. In meting out discipline for group misbehavior it is important to enforce the principle of "collective responsibility."

3. Some conduct that parents find very annoying—for example, the "emancipation acrobatics" of the teen-ager—is a "waste by-product of normal development." The parent must set

limits and enforce them, but he should also remember that "growing up is a process of finding things out the hard way and necessarily involves a lot of foolishness."

4. Any child will misbehave if he is "frustrated too long in any normal need." Moving around, making a little noise and letting off steam is a normal need. That's why a child who is cooped up in a car for a long trip, or who has to mind his manners through a long company dinner, often goes off the gold standard with a vengeance.

5. Misbehavior may be a child's way of communicating normal worries or troubles that he can't put into words. For example, a child who is jealous of a newborn brother often bids for parental attention by acting like a baby himself. Punishing a child for "acting out" his feelings in this way usually worsens the trouble. Instead, "let him know that you are getting his signal and are ready to help him."

6. When a child is under heavy strain, or is confronted with demands that he cannot meet, he may resort to misbehavior as a gesture of "psychological self-preservation." Being

"bad" helps him to live with his own inner tensions. It's a safety-valve for him and a warning to you to ease the pressure on him.

7. Sometimes misbehavior is a symptom of real emotional illness—neurotic fears, anxieties and conflicts that are far below the level of the child's own consciousness. Unlike the other six kinds of "normal" misbehavior, this is potentially serious. It may require professional help.

Tomorrow—How to spot misbehavior that is symptomatic of emotional illness.

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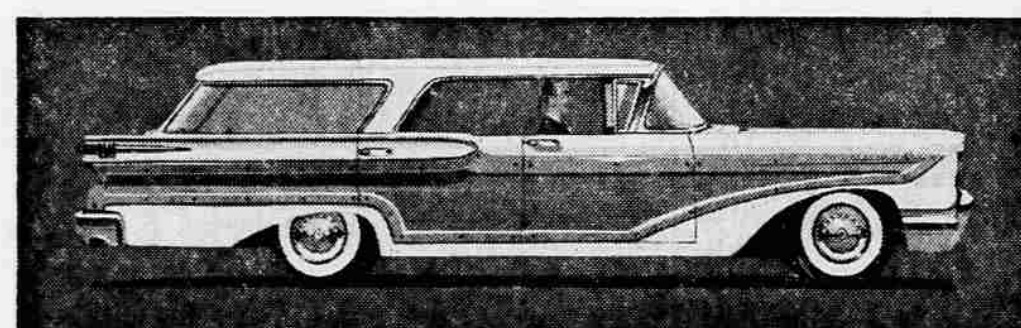


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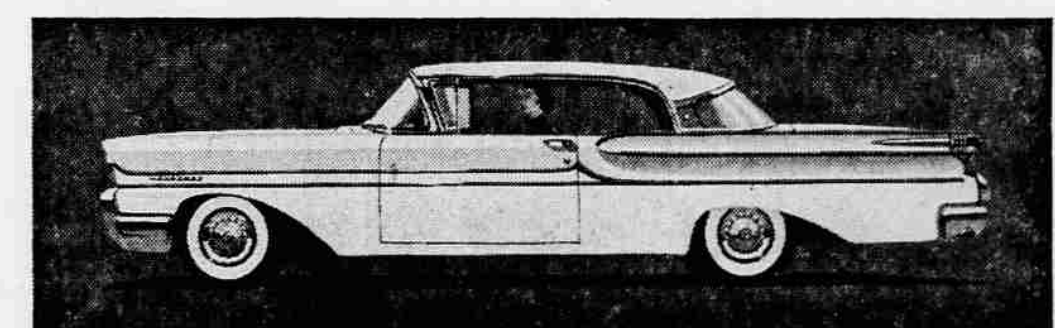
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