

The Family Council

Editor's Note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of an actual case history. The Council reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors.

Henry S. - John should take the trip away from home.
Louise S. - It is too much for the first time.

Henry S. - My wife and I have been having a major argument concerning our 12-year-old son, John. The boy has a slight physical handicap as a result of a childhood illness and, therefore, has been a bit overprotected.

I think it is time for him to get away from us a bit and see that he can make it on his own. My sister, who lives in another state, has invited him to spend two weeks with her family. She has a son a little older than John.

My wife thinks this is too much of an undertaking for John's first trip away from home. He would have to travel by bus for three days. I feel it would do the boy good and he wants so much to go!

Louise S. - Yes, John tells his dad he wants to go because he wants to show him he isn't afraid of anything. But when he is with me, he shows how frightened he is. He keeps asking what would happen if he got car sick and what should he do if his cousin expects him to keep up with his physically.

I agree that it is time for John to start being a little more independent, but why should he have to take such a big step for the first time in his life? He hasn't slept away from home for a single night.

I'm ready to break down and let John go to a nearby camp next summer. But he

should be near enough for us to be able to see him on week ends.

The Council: A long, unaccompanied bus trip does sound like a large order for a boy who has never been away from home and who evidently lacks confidence. But many children of John's age do take longer trips and are much the better for it.

Henry and Louise overlook the most important factor in this situation. The final decision must be up to John.

If John really wants this trip he will be able to strengthen himself psychologically for it. Even if he should get cold feet and change his mind at the last moment something would be gained. He would probably regret his last-minute panic and promise himself that next time he will keep up his courage.

We definitely agree that John should be encouraged to get away from his parents for a short period. Every child has a certain amount of anxiety about whether or not he can do without his parents. The only way he can build up self-confidence is by doing it occasionally. This is particularly important for a boy like John, whose slight handicap may make him feel more helpless and dependent than other children.

As things stand, John is being tossed back and forth on his parents' waves of feeling. He knows his father would like him to be stronger and more manly and his mother fears for his well-being, so he goes from one parent to the other, revealing the feelings each expects of him.

He should be made to feel that both parents have great confidence in him, but that they aren't trying to push him beyond the limits he really wants to go. If he can get this sense of being his own man, he will be on the road toward coping with the bigger problems of adolescence that lie ahead.

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Swindler Must Be Immoral to Be Successful

Washington - (Science Service) - A swindler, no matter how fantastic the personality, wealth, titles and distinctions he has invented for himself, is not mentally deranged, Dr. Edward Podolsky of Brooklyn, N.Y., a psychiatrist, has concluded from a long series of studies.

The swindler, he says, is what a psychiatrist would call a psychopathic personality, or sociopath. He is suffering from a character disorder. He is morally deficient in all social values that make for effective and socially useful living.

As a rule the swindler is successful because he can read the mind of his victim, Dr. Podolsky reported in the Medical Annals of the District of Columbia. The swindler feels confident of his ability to influence his victim's thinking. This is accomplished by dimming the common sense and judgment of the victim.

Arouses Greed
The swindler arouses and stimulates the greed of his dupe with such consummate skill that the victim's conscience, logic, common sense and judgment are completely overwhelmed.

Thus the swindler is able to gain control of the conscience of the victim. He takes advantage of the fact that there is a little bit of greed in everyone's character and almost everyone is on the lookout for a big financial scoop, a quick and easy profit.

After a swindle it is the victim, not the swindler, who is likely to have a feeling of guilt. This realization that they themselves are not free from guilt keeps many victims from complaining to the authorities. The swindler can then pursue his career with very little interference.

Elements Listed
A long series of studies of the behavior of swindlers have revealed to psychiatrists some of the elements that are part of the psychic constitution of the swindler:

1. Inability to postpone. When the swindler wants something, he wants it without delay. He does not stop to consider consequences and so is not deterred by what might deter the normal person.

2. Ineffective consideration of consequences.

3. Insufficient learning from experience.

4. Disproportionate responsiveness.

5. Emotions very often dominate intellect. In this way, as in others, he is immature.

6. Devaluation of reality.

7. Disregard for truth.

8. Insufficient social valuation.

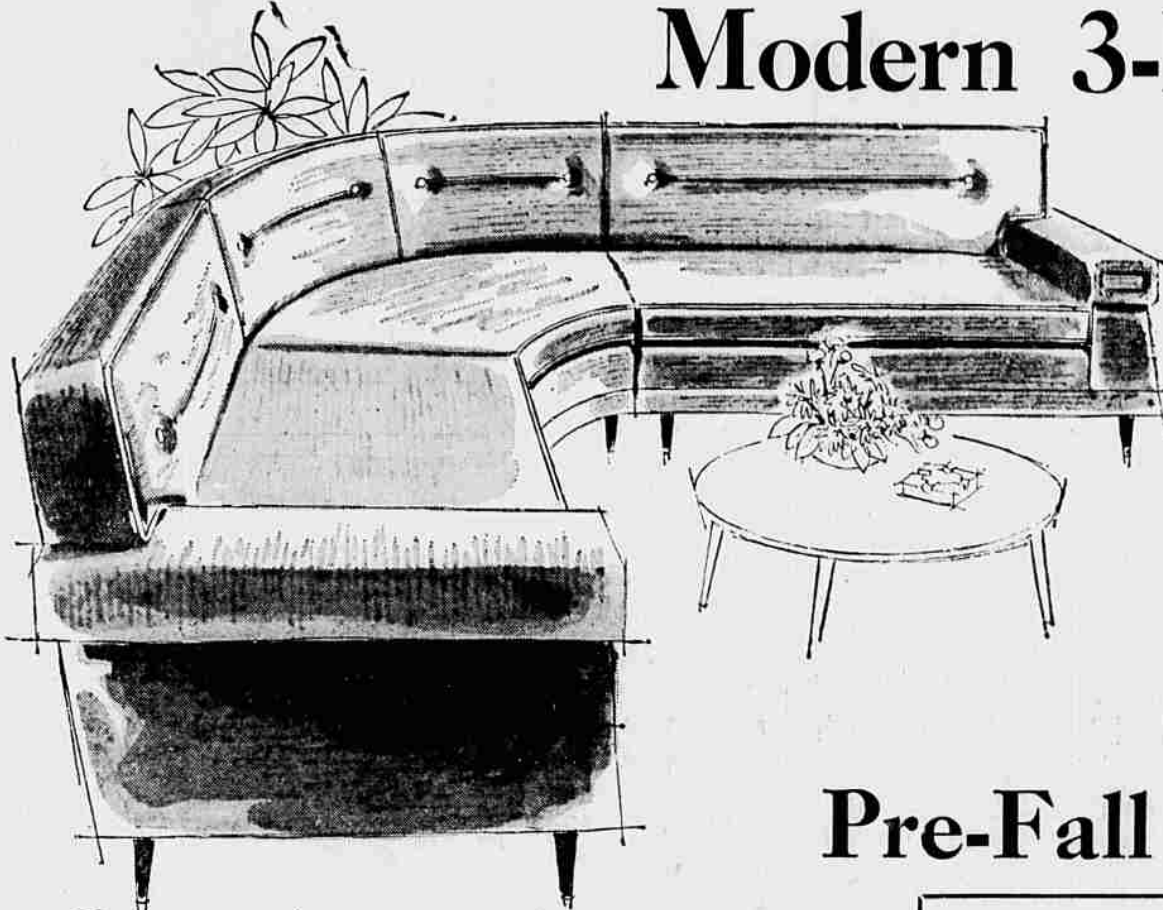
The swindler is more self-centered than the normal individual. His mental processes appear to behave in a less mature fashion than others. He has a total disregard for others. The swindler is completely absorbed in the immediacy of his activities.



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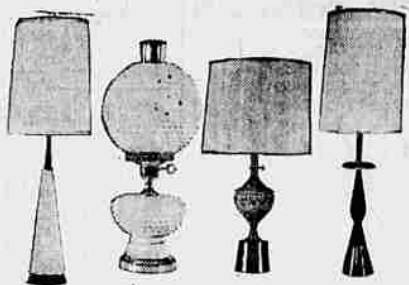
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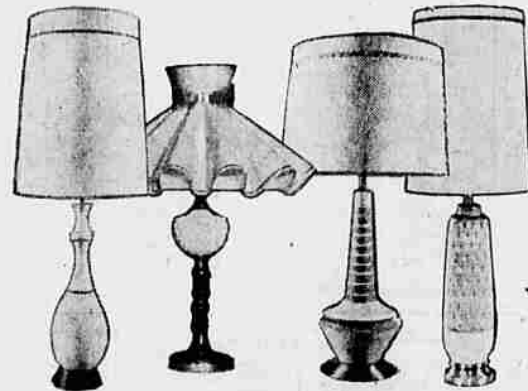
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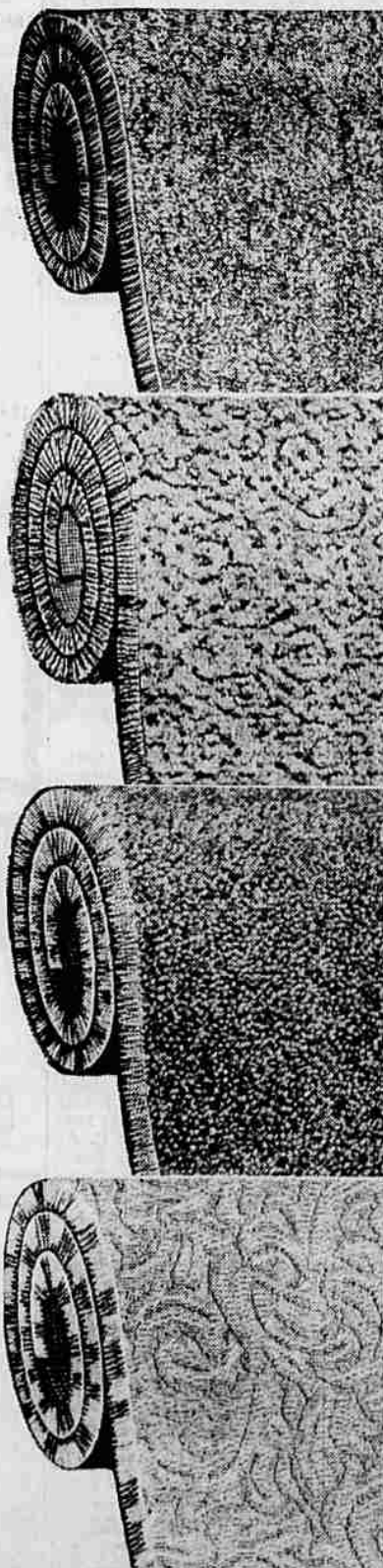
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