

The Four Mistaken Goals of Children’s Misbehaviour – Diagnosis and Remediation

(Based on R. Dreikurs book Children the Challenge)

Diagnosis

Remediation

GOAL	WHAT BEHAVIOUR IS SAYING 1	PARENTS’ EMOTIONAL RESPONSE 2	REACTION TO PARENT’S MISTAKEN RESPONSES & MEASURES 3	EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE 5	REMEDIATING MEASURES 6
Seeking undue ATTENTION	I only count in this world when I keep you busy with me	Annoyed “Pain in the neck”	Increased frequency	Ignoring the behaviour	Giving them due attention (i.e. encouragement) when it is not being sought
Seeking undue POWER	Active power: I only count in this world when I show you I am boss or when I make you . . . Passive power: I only count in this world when I show you, you can’t make me . . .	Angry Challenged Frustrated Defeated Retaliatory	Increased intensity	“Take your sail out of their wind”	1. Listen first 2. Always offer a choice 3. Negotiate reasonable limits of time and action

FOR GOALS BELOW THIS LINE, PROFESSIONAL HELP IS REQUIRED

Seeking REVENGE	“Two eyes for an eye”	Hurt (emotionally and/or physically)	Bigger and better pain or destruction	Don’t show the pain	Approximations towards the goal of encouragement
Seeking to display INADEQUACY	Leave me alone	Feel like throwing up your hands and saying “there is nothing to be done”	“Turtling” i.e. becoming more withdrawn	Don’t give up and show them you won’t give up	Gentle approximations towards the goal of encouragement

DIAGNOSIS & REMEDIATION:

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY WHAT BEHAVIOUR IS SAYING
STEP 2 – IDENTIFY EMOTIONAL RESPONSE
STEP 3 – REACTION TO MISTAKEN MEASURE
Identification of diagnosed goal is based on having met criteria for two out of three steps listed above.

STEP 4 – AVOID FIRST IMPULSE
STEP 5 – USE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE
STEP 6 – APPLY REMEDIATING MEASURES