



Why Good Kids Can Behave Badly!

Often children have very good reasons for doing the wrong thing. As adults we must understand those drivers and accept responsibility for our role in them.

10 reasons:

- 1. They think it's what you *really* want.** If all they hear about are good grades – or being tough – they might take actions to meet those overarching goals to make you happy by compromising some other important values.
- 2. There were more rewards for behaving badly.** It is amazing how often we reward the nagging child by giving them what they want or by giving more attention to the child who acts up.
- 3. They thought they were doing it well.** It's amazing how often we can misunderstand each other – even as adults. Telling Grandma about your earlier dinner conversation about Grandma might not be what you meant by honesty.
- 4. Their values are different.** Sometimes a child may be operating from a different set of values. If they feel directness is more important than polite small talk, their behavior might be seen as rude.
- 5. They don't know how to express themselves.** If a value is actually important to them, but they aren't capable of communicating about it, you may not see evidence of that value. For example, a child who values learning and is an avid reader may be reluctant or too shy to raise their hand in class.
- 6. They had to prioritize among competing values.** Who knows what you would have done in the same situation where there wasn't a clear solution?
- 7. They didn't get all the information they needed.** Sometimes the behavior you see is because they didn't get the whole story. They may have received inaccurate or second-hand information.
- 8. They have tried doing it the "right way"** – and faced daunting consequences when they did. Maybe they lost a friend. Maybe they stumbled and felt embarrassed
- 9. They were trying – but got lost along the way.** When children are trying out new behaviors, they can lose their bearings and end up somewhere else. They'll need the encouragement and support to try again.
- 10. Someone else is asking them to do it differently.** Children frequently feel they must live up to different codes of conduct. For example, a divorced family where each parent has different rules or perhaps a teacher they admire has inspired a change in a value.