

PSYCHIATRY

Subconscious Sabotage

Hidden Hates Cost Fortunes in Business, Cause Accidents And Sickness; Set Business and Government at Loggerheads

By MARJORIE VAN DE WATER

ANY BOSS knows what to do with the impudent boy who flies off the handle and calls him a fat-headed fool.

But what can he do with the employee whose antagonism is hidden behind a respectful front? How is he to handle the office boy who habitually oversleeps and comes to work late? Or the plant worker who faints at her machine? How can he dispose of the machinist who cripples the shop with a well-timed accident? What can he do with the typist who inadvertently sends the check to the delinquent customer and the dun to the promising prospect? And the clerks who sit half the day nursing slights from fellow workers?

These psychopathic sit-downs occur where the workers hate the boss. Students of the human mind recognize them as symptoms of unrecognized antagonisms, eating the souls of persons who are much too well-behaved to "cuss" the boss or throw a brick at him, but who manage despite their best intentions to show their resentment just the same.

The annual expense to business of such repressed hates is staggering. Like a hidden abrasive in the machinery of industry, they wear down the expensive and delicate human element, taking their toll in personal friction, lost time, illness, inefficiency and waste.

Most extravagant of all the "hate losses" is that due to the repressed antagonisms of the boss himself. These lead to errors of judgment, repelling of important contacts, destruction of morale of workers, and the generation of thousands of answering hatreds in the breasts of those with whom he has dealings. Such a situation is quick to put any business on the rocks.

Start in Childhood

It is back in childhood that such unreasoning and unrecognized hates get their start. How they originate is told by Dr. Ernest E. Hadley of the Washington School of Psychiatry, and editor of the *Journal, Psychiatry*.

Lives of all children necessarily hold a certain amount of disappointment, thwarting, and frustration. Parents rea-

lize that the child's future depends upon his learning to follow the prohibitions required by the community of which he is a part.

"Go see what Johnny is doing and tell him to stop it!" a mother told her older daughter, and this is a picture of much of the usual child training. "No" is often the first word learned by the baby.

The way in which the disappointments and thwartings are thrust on the child and the way in which he receives them may modify his whole later personality, Dr. Hadley has found.

He tells the story this way:

Suppose little Willie comes in from play to find his mother arranging a dish of fruit. He wants an orange. Mother refuses.

Two courses are now open for Willie, and his choice may depend upon the manner used by mother in her refusal. He may set up a lusty howl of disappointment and grief and then, with the cry over, start after something else which may this time be permitted.

May Be Worried

If Willie is less fortunate, his disappointment may change to apprehension. He is worried. Mother doesn't love him any more. Maybe she wants to starve him. He is frightened and then enraged.

He throws himself on the floor and screams. Little Willie is having a tantrum. Mother is upset. She may relent and offer the orange to him with a "Here, take it if you are going to act that way!" Little Willie, however, now refuses the orange and denies that he wanted one in the first place. He angrily strikes the orange from her hand.

Despite all this, little Willie cannot long continue in his tantrum without developing a sense of insecurity. Even though Mother may increase his hostile reactions with a hair-brush. In the end his need for security and approval force him into being "good." He stops his outward hostility although inside he may still be sore. He may be restless or whiny. He may be ill.

But he feels no desire for an orange. Not only does he not want an orange but also it makes him sick. Perhaps ul-

timately little Willie becomes a person whom the thought of any fruit makes "deathly sick."

Thus, says Dr. Hadley, are formed the hidden hates which so interfere with business life as well as the neurotic dislikes and peculiarities of the finicky faddist.

In childhood also are built the business failures—the lazy, the ne'er-do-wells, the chronic recruits for the unemployment army.

Success Succeeds

Nothing succeeds like success in child life, as well as in business. If a boy is permitted to go after what he wants, work for it, and get it, he builds confidence. But when little Bobby is told he cannot do this and must not nose into that, curiosity is dulled, enterprise quenched, and courage deadened. Bobby becomes a good little boy or "mama's precious lamb"—with every prospect of being a complete failure in business.

The good little boy makes little trouble in the home and so is an ideal child from the point of view of a busy mother. But among other children he has rough going. His cruel treatment at the hands of the unsuppressed neighborhood brats may add bitterness to his own frustration and write the role of agitator into his future destiny.

Later Bobby may find that what he cannot get by the direct methods of aggression, he may obtain by a shrewd wit, by shading the rules of the game, and by cheating and deception. Then is born the crooked business man, the shyster, the quack, the swindler.

Do you know a man who would walk a mile to return a dollar taken by mistake in making change, but who consistently cheats on his income tax return and pads his firm expense account? Such a man with come-and-go honesty is described by Dr. Hadley.

Mr. B. remembers parents who were so wrapped up in each other and their own selfish interests that they paid no attention to him. They seemed to lavish attention and affection on each other while he, as a child, remained starved outside the circle of their love.

Mr. B. does not realize that he now sees in the "parent organization," "vested interests," "big business," and "the government" a parallel to his own parents. Yet, unconsciously, in defrauding

the government or cheating the street-car company, Mr. B. gains his revenge and salvages something of his boyhood's "rightful due." He early learned to make his own way, and so as an adult is independent but honest in personal dealings.

The unwanted child is headed for almost certain trouble in the years ahead. Prisons and reform schools are filled with boys and men who look back on the cruelty of a resentful father and the impatience of an unwilling mother.

In the case of Mr. C, however, related by Dr. Hadley, incompetence rather than crime was the form of revenge adopted by the rejected child.

The parents of Mr. C. had attempted to salve their conscience by being spuriously over-affectionate. The falseness of this was sensed intuitively by their "spoiled child." He got his revenge by excessive demands and controlled the parents by tantrums and bad behavior. Later, he, too, pretended affection and became more subtle in his revenge.

He was unfortunate. He failed in college. When he abandoned a trusting girl, the parents believed he had been victimized by an adventuress. They started him in business. He failed. The experiment was repeated. Again he failed. In the end, he involved a score of associates in his "losses." The family fortune was dissipated. And when at last the old folks died, Mr. C. became a burden on the state.

Love Helps

A little love becomes a saving grace in such situations. Dr. Hadley tells of another man born as the third child into an impoverished family where his earliest memories were of hunger and parental discord. Peace came only after a full meal and that was seldom. Yet amid all his recollections of unhappiness, poverty, insecurity and bickering, he remembers that his parents would many times go hungry themselves to provide him with some scavenged bit of food.

This boy resolved that some day his parents would have all they wished to eat. He worked hard and prospered. He had no hate for the rich; they provided the odd jobs that were his stepping stones. He became successful and happy and never failed to provide food and comfort for the parents and all those who appealed to him for aid.

Business men are all too familiar with the grown-up spoiled child who must have what he wants when he wants it and who has gone all through life crushing anyone and everyone who has stood as an obstacle in his path, without the



NOT SO NEW, AFTER ALL

The highway center-line seems to be something new, invented especially for the benefit of this automotive age. But wait—here is a centuries-old highway between Mexico City and Cuernavaca, with a line of light-colored stones laid accurately along its middle, to divide it into two even halves. Were there traffic disputes in those old days, too?

slightest appreciation of the havoc he has wrought—the tyrannical tycoon.

Dr. Hadley tells of another type of aggressive person who has so long sat on the lid of his own boiling hates that he has made himself see the antagonism only in others. He feels that he is discriminated against; that he is persecuted. He carries a chip on his shoulder. He may picture himself as a martyr and suffer long. Or he may be goaded into quarrels, the breaking of valuable business contacts, or even to expensive litigation.

It is the unrecognized antagonisms in business men that boil to the surface in a battle against government intervention in business. They hate paternalism in government for a very good psychological reason. Vigorous attempts to defeat taxes and promote laissez-faire are their expression of a deeply seated grouch, dating back to the days when their own parents "dictated" to them.

Business hates government because its ranks contain many a son of a stern father who once disciplined him without mercy.

Political reformers in the government may rage at "economic royalists," "Wall Street," "international bankers," and the "pirates of industry," because they nurse in their souls a need for revenge against early thwartings at the hands of a repulsing mother. They still long for Utopia where maternal affection would be abundant.

Agitators revile both government and business because in youth they suffered at the hands of both parents and early learned the technique of playing off one against the other for their own personal advantage. Such a personality exploits the weaknesses of either side, in league with the opposition.

The economic welfare of the nation totters under the buffeting from all these hidden hates.

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Science News Letter, May 13, 1939

● Earth Trembles

Information collected by Science Service from seismological observatories and relayed to the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Jesuit Seismological Association resulted in the location of the following four preliminary epicenters:

Monday, May 1, 9:58.5 a. m., Japan time

Off the west coast of Japan, in Japan Sea. Latitude approximately 40 degrees north, longitude 139 degrees east.

Tuesday, May 2, 5:14.8 a. m., PST

In Gulf of California, near Lower California coast. Latitude 29.5 degrees north, longitude 113.8 degrees west.

Saturday, May 6, 1:00 a. m., EST

In Pacific ocean, about 340 miles southwest of Panama City. Latitude 5.5 degrees north, longitude 84 degrees west.

Sunday, May 7, 10:47 p. m., EST

Eastern side of Azores islands, on Atlantic ridge. Latitude 37 degrees north, longitude 20 degrees west.

For stations cooperating with Science Service in reporting earthquakes recorded on their seismographs see SNL August 13, 1938.