

But in an adult, such unrealistic dreaming is usually a retreat from reality rather than a feeling out toward it. It is a way of saying to oneself, "Never mind if I can't do this stupid job, I am going to do much greater things later on."

"A child or an adolescent may have, to us, a seemingly very expansive ambition," Dr. Robbins explained, "without being motivated by anxiety. An adult cannot."

"To a child, it may well serve a healthy function of expanding assertiveness . . . To an adult it increases his anxiety, furthers his inter-personal remoteness and enhances his destructiveness both to himself and others."

Distinguished from Ambition

It is difficult, sometimes, to distinguish between laudable ambition and the grandiose aims of the neurotic.

An example of the distinction is given by Dr. Robbins. When a young woman with a flair for imaginative writing dreams of becoming another Keats or Byron, it is a legitimate ambition. But if she has reached the age of 55 and has never done any writing and still dreams of being another Shakespeare, that is an extravagant idea.

The neurotic seldom does anything about his grand ideas. When the time comes for action, a new plan is developed and the old one abandoned.

"A typical feature of the extravagant aspiration is the implicit compulsion in the neurotic to be not only good or among the best in a chosen field, but to be supreme, unique, occupying a singularly untouchable position," Dr. Robbins pointed out.

"The goal is exclusive possession of the pinnacle, above reproach or criticism, the subject of universal admiration.

Must Be First

"The need for originality is an obsession—an originality difficult to obtain for many reasons, but especially because it hopes to deny the work of all others. An idea dare not be built upon the accumulative knowledge of centuries, but must be entirely novel, resting on no base but its own.

"Each bit of achievement must be revolutionary and contain within it no reference to the past, or gap to be filled in by the future. It must come into being as perfect—and furthermore without the expenditure of too great an effort."

"The neurotic wastes much of himself and his life, nevertheless the secret hope

is that each ambition will be fulfilled immediately.

"The disturbed aim has an indescribable urgency about it that recognizes no limitations and brooks no obstructions. The writer must complete his play overnight, produce it on the second, be acclaimed as the outstanding playwright of the age on the third."

It is a mistake to take too lightly the absurd ideas of neurotics. Such persons are ill just as are patients with pneumonia or heart disease. They are pathetically dependent upon their fantastic notions to bolster weakened personalities and cloak the worries they dare not face.

Dr. Robbins tells of a young woman who built up a fiction of illness and injury to hide from herself the fact that she had become mentally incapable of the work required of her in her office. When the edifice of her fabrications was toppled over and she had to face the fact of her mental disability she rushed in front of a truck and was immediately killed.

Exalted ambitions, combined with the powerful inertia of the work phobic, more commonly lead to such substitutes for labor as cheating, stealing, bluffing and sponging.

Check-Casher

The work phobic is often a ready check-casher and until-payday-borrower. When checks are returned for "insufficient funds," a good bluff backed by more fortune-making plans serves as security for another loan to cover the defaulting.

"That such substitutive activities are profoundly destructive to others is all too obvious," Dr. Robbins comments. "That they do something to the self other than arouse misgivings of integrity is equally true but not so obvious.

"Whereas, genuine resources and fertility demonstrated by actual productivity may have originally been present, where these secondary trends become prominent, even if quite unconscious, sterility results. The bluff becomes little more than an empty shell, although he may have had at first a great deal upon which to base his assumptions.

"The cheat or plagiarist is caught up in a dizzy whirl necessitating increased dishonesties in order to maintain a position becoming increasingly precarious.

"The sponger finally loses all need to develop independence. Energies are directed towards keeping up the pretense and the very insecurity and flimsiness of the whole structure gives the facades their value, gives the pretenses their



GENUINE ANTIQUE

Beads a third of a billion years old make up this necklace, pictured by George A. Smith, supervising principal of the Quarryville, Pa., schools. They are joints of sea lily (crinoid) stems, left as fossils in the limestone strata laid down by the Devonian sea that covered much of Pennsylvania. Picked up and strung just as they weathered out, they make nice beads.

preciousness instead of the more genuine attitudes.

"There is no sincere effort then to develop the self or the self's interest which makes for positive productivity and creativeness, but only interest in maintaining the front.

"What actual potentiality may have been present originally is dried up. The person may become much like a polished apple with a rotten core. The appearance is the most valued asset, and great anxiety occurs whenever a threat to the facade or a 'seeing through' is imminent."

This article was edited from manuscript prepared by Science Service for use in illustrated newspaper magazines. Copyright, 1939, by Every Week Magazine and Science Service.

Science News Letter, December 9, 1939

LANGUAGES & LINGUAPHONE

Thousands of men and women, in spare moments at home, have found the quick, easy way to master a foreign language—by the world-famous LINGUAPHONE METHOD. Amazingly simple and thorough. Do you wish to speak French, Spanish, German, Italian or any of 27 languages?

SEND FOR FREE BOOK

LINGUAPHONE INSTITUTE

31 R.C.A. Building New York