

Accidents

Frank L. Reed

Psychological perspective: “There are no accidents”—Freud

Biblical perspective – There are no accidents—there are *Divine appointments*

The study of accidents

There are two types of accidents

1. *Real accidents* over which the person has no control or could not foresee

Real accidents are not accidents to God – they are his appointments

God does not cause accidents but in a fallen world He allows them to happen as a part of His plan in the lives of His children

2. *Accident habits* which occur over and over again

Accident habits can be a result of emotional or spiritual struggle within the person

Some facts about accidents

A comparatively small number of people have most of the accidents

The 80/20 rule seems to apply relative to accidents

The more accidents a person has the more he is likely to have

Accidents are caused by factors

Some people seem to have a subconscious desire to have accidents

In most people this desire is controlled by consequences

In some people the desire surfaces frequently and they have accidents

Causes are, stress, unresolved issues, guilt (real or false) need for attention, hostility, anger, etc.

Accidents are irrational attempts to deal with those factors

Accidents produce pain and suffering

The pain and suffering are self-imposed punishment that expiates guilt feelings

Accidents may also be:

- a desire to escape responsibility or other unpleasant situation and produce secondary benefits
- repressed anger or hostility against someone
- desire for monetary gain
- desire to be noticed or “babied” or dependent
- desire for affection, love sympathy (children who do not get attention – this may be carried over from childhood)

Accident habits are difficult to break

- ask, why did this happen
- how could it have been prevented

- how can it be prevented in the future

Susceptibility to accidents may depend on –

- how long the habit has been in place
- level of stress just prior to the accident
- emotional or physical abuse
- feelings of being unjustly treated
- always feeling “put down”
- sibling or coworker getting more attention
- accident traps
 - unsafe practices – speeding, unsafe ladders, taking chances, risky behaviors
 - some occupations are “accident traps”- mining, logging, farming, flying, etc

Can accidents be controlled?

- develop safe practices and attitudes and habits
- penalize accidents – “three accidents and you lose your license”
- remove persons with accident habits from the situation

Can accident proneness be created?

- rewarding accidents with over much attention
- creating anger in children which is then repressed

Can accident proneness be prevented?

- accident proneness usually begins in childhood
- reinforcing accidents causes accident proneness
 - excessive pity and attention to a minor childhood accident
 - appropriate attention must be given to child’s health and protection
 - attention to child only when an accident or illness occurs
- children must feel secure in love and protection
- discover unresolved or repressed feelings of guilt, anger, hostility, inferiority, etc.
- reward obedience, do not reward accidents or illness
- avoid “accident traps”

Accident proneness is an unhealthy habit learned in some persons

Real accidents are God’s appointments in which He is teaching His children to trust Him.

In spite of an almost “idiot proof” working environment accidents are a growing problem. What could be some reasons for this?

Resource – *A Psychological approach to Accidents*. Norman Roberts Lykes

Vantage Press, New York. 1954