

HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

feelings behind the learned emotional expressions. However, after day-to-day interaction over a long period of time, one learns to tell the difference between true feelings and those shown. This is useful to the foreman and the safety man in his dealings with individuals in the shop. As they go about the plant carrying out their normal duties, they may discover those individuals having difficulties and take some extra precautions to avoid accidents.

Maladjustive results of emotion

Most people have at some time seen someone break down emotionally under great stress. Strong emotion in some cases leads to either maladjustive behavior or complete immobility. For example, an individual under stress might react in such a way as not to care what kind of behavior he exhibits and give no consideration to it. This individual might lose his job, his friends, and even the love of his family under certain circumstances. Certainly this is maladjustive, but the individual under emotional stress cannot evaluate his own behavior and often cares less.

Sometimes, little things can lead to a "blow-up." A man working on his machine finds that his safety device constantly sticks at one point. As this occurs again and again, it makes him more and more irritated. To this the individual may respond with emotion rather than in a normal way by having it repaired. He may give it a shove regardless of the consequences and

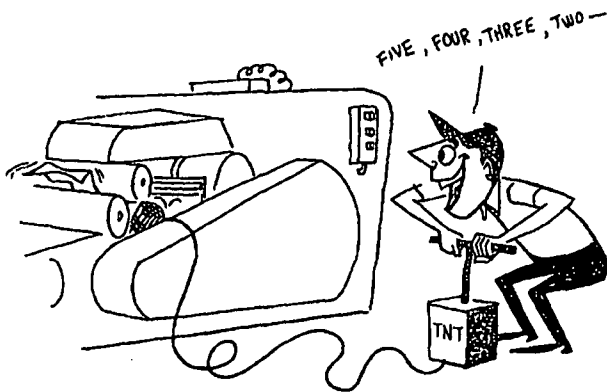
end up with his hand in the machine. This type of accident is due to an individual's emotional response to the cumulative effects of minor irritations. In emotion, the adequate solution is lost and—perhaps at the same time—several fingers

Emotion thus can block out what would be everyday common sense solutions or well trained patterns of work in a given situation. It might cause the individual to forget for a moment what he should do and cause an accident. This is the individual who in reply to the question, "Why did this happen?" would say, "I just didn't think." Emotional blocking is not an uncommon phenomenon. "Forgotten" names, addresses, telephone numbers, and tasks to be done can be emotional reactions in everyday situations. The basis may be dislike of the individuals involved or the feeling of being forced to do something distasteful.

The entire emotional pattern can be re-instituted within the individual just by his remembering an emotion-producing incident and thinking about it. Unlike the dog that becomes emotional at the sight of a cat and a minute later is no longer concerned, humans can have an emotional response without the initiating cause being present. A worker being reprimanded by his foreman may react emotionally for the moment, then seem to forget it, but several hours later become angry or fearful about the whole matter again in recalling it. An accident occurring at this time, long after the incident seems closed,

may seem to have no immediate cause at all. This is one reason for thorough investigation at the time of the accident.

Extreme emotional reactions can lead to total immobilization, somewhat akin to emotional blocking. In some cases, this immobilization may actually work to prevent accidents, but it is more likely to cause them. Proper or normal reactions, of course, require some ability to control emotional impulses and to



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