

Differences Between Praise and Encouragement

Research by Carol Dweck, Ph.D., a professor at Columbia University, has proven what Alfred Adler taught years ago. **Praise is not good for children.** Praise can create “approval junkies” instead of children with a healthy sense of personal significance. Dweck also found that praise may hamper risk-taking. Children who are “praised” when they accomplish a task may choose easier tasks in the future in order to avoid making mistakes. Children who are “encouraged” for their efforts are more willing to choose challenging tasks when given a choice.

The following is an excerpt from *Positive Discipline* by Jane Nelson and Lynn Lott.

	PRAISE	ENCOURAGEMENT
Dictionary Definition	To express favorable judgement of, To glorify - especially by attribution of perfection, An expression of approval	To inspire with courage To spur on: stimulate
Addresses	The doer: <i>“Good girl.”</i>	The deed: <i>“Good job.”</i>
Recognizes	The complete, perfect product: <i>“You did it right.”</i>	Effort and Improvement: <i>“You gave it your best,”</i> or <i>“how do you feel about what you’ve accomplished?”</i>
Attitude	Patronizing & Manipulative: <i>“I like the way Suzie is sitting.”</i>	Respectful & Appreciative: <i>“Who can show me how we should be sitting now?”</i>
“I” Message	Judgemental: <i>“I like the way you did that.”</i>	Self-Directed: <i>“I appreciate your cooperation.”</i>
Used with	Children: <i>“You’re such a good girl.”</i>	Adults: <i>“Thanks for helping.”</i>
Examples	<i>“I’m proud of you for getting an A”</i> Takes away ownership	<i>“That A reflects your hard work.”</i> Recognizes ownership
Invites	Children change for others “Approval junkies”	Children change for themselves “Inner direction”
Locus of Control	External: <i>“What do others think?”</i>	Internal: <i>“What do I think?”</i>
Teaches	What to think. Dependence on approval of others.	How to think. Self-evaluation
Goal	Conformity: <i>“You did it right.”</i>	Understanding: <i>“What do you feel - think - learn?”</i>
Self Worth	Feel worthwhile / significant when others approve	Feel worthwhile / significant without the approval of others
Long Term	Dependency on others	Self Confidence / Self Reliance