

Differences between Praise and Encouragement

Many parents may think they are encouraging their child when they are actually praising them. The differences between praise and encouragement are stark. Given with the best of intentions, praise can actually lead to more challenging behaviour and undermine the life goals we have for our children. Being able to recognize praise vs. encouragement is key.

Praise is an external reward based on <i>achievement</i>.	Encouragement focuses on <i>effort and improvement</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise communicates: "If you do something I value, I will recognize and value you." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouragement communicates: "I know you can do it, try again."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the doer: "Good girl." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the deed: "That's helpful, thanks."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus is on external control to get others to do one's will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus is on internal motivation. Helps the person develop self-acceptance and a feeling of being worthy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reward only for well-done, completed tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes the individual's resources and assets, and effort.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person receiving praise feels evaluated and judged: "You are the best student I ever had." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person receiving encouragement feels little or no evaluation of themselves or what they've done. Instead, they feel accepted and valued: "You are a fine student. I have enjoyed having you in my class."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulates rivalry and competition: "You're the best helper I ever had." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulates co-operation and contribution for the good of all: "The room looks neat since you straightened the bookshelves."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fosters selfishness at the expense of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fosters self-interest, which does not hurt others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influences a sense of self-worth that is based on others' opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influences a sense of self-worth that is not questioned or measured.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patronizing and manipulative attitude: "I like the way Suzie gets ready for school on time." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful and appreciative attitude: "Who has some ideas for how we can get out to school on time?"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent's judgment: "I like the way you did that." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-directing message: "I appreciate your cooperation."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invites child to change for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invites child to change for themselves: "inner direction"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches what to think and creates dependence on the evaluation of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches child how to think and dependence on self-evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal is conformity: "You did it right." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal is child's understanding of self. Parent asks, "what do you think/learn/feel?"
Effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates dependency on the opinions of others: "approval junkies" Stimulates a fixation on trying to meet others' standards, and maintain praise Fosters a fear of failure 	Effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fosters self-sufficiency and independence Creates 'triers' who are internally motivated Fosters acceptance of being imperfect

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