

Differences between Praise and Encouragement

PRAISE

ENCOURAGEMENT

Underlying Characteristics	Message Sent to Child	Possible Results	Underlying Characteristics	Message Sent to Child	Possible Results
1. Focus is on external control.	"You are worthwhile only when you do what I want." "You cannot and should not be trusted."	Child learns to measure worth by ability to conform; or, child rebels (views any form of cooperation as giving in).	Focus is on child's ability to manage life constructively	"I trust you to become responsible and independent"	Child learns courage to be imperfect and willingness to try. Child gains self-confidence and comes to feel responsible for own behavior.
2. Focus is on external evaluation.	"To be worthwhile you must please me." "Please or Perish."	Child learns to measure worth on how well he/she pleases others. Child learns to fear disapproval.	Focus is on internal evaluation	"How you feel about yourself and your own efforts is most important."	Child learns to evaluate own progress and to make own decisions.
3. Is rewarded only for well-done, completed tasks.	"To be worthwhile you must meet my standards."	Child develops unrealistic standards and learns to measure worth by how closely she/he reaches perfection. Child learns to dread failure.	Recognizes effort and improvement	"You don't have to be perfect. Effort and improvement are important."	Child learns to accept efforts of self and others. Child develops desire to stay with tasks. (persistence)
4. Focuses on self-evaluation and personal gain.	"You're the best. You must remain superior to others to be worthwhile."	Child learns to be over-competitive, to get ahead at the expense of others. Feels worthwhile only when "on top".	Focuses on assets, contributions, and appreciation.	"Your contribution counts. We function better with you. We appreciate what you have done."	Child learns to use talents and efforts for good of all, not only for personal gain. Child learns to feel glad for successes of others as well as for own successes.