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## Leadership Training How To Give Meaningful Praise

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## Leadership Training: How To Give Meaningful Praise

Praise can be either empowering or destructive depending on how it is given (or even not given).

Lack of praise leaves people feeling unappreciated and over-praise encourages people to believe that they are better than they are.

Praise is an important aspect of leadership and the following four considerations will help you to give meaningful praise:

1. Praise approximately right behaviour
2. Be specific
3. Make it about them, not you
4. Be honest

### 1: Praise approximately right behaviour

If someone completes nine out of ten tasks correctly, praise them for it. Too often leaders just focus on the tasks that have not been done - tasks that are either incorrect or incomplete. Praise and encouragement can be far more empowering than criticism; you should therefore always look for behaviour to praise.

For example:

“That’s great, you have finished most of the work, and to a high standard. Well done. Now let’s have a look at how we will get the rest finished” is more productive than “You haven’t finished everything!”

Making the praise relative to past performance is also a useful trick if they have shown progression. If a person’s performance still has room for improvement, but shows progress and development all the same, be sure to acknowledge their progress.

### 2: Be specific

“That’s the most incredible display I’ve ever seen!” might boost their ego, but it doesn’t let them know specifically what they have done well.

“The level of detail, accuracy and colour co-ordination in your display is very impressive – well done” is more specific and more relevant.

This lets the person know what they did right, and encourages them to maintain or even improve on these standards.

### 3: Make it about them, not you

“You did well” is about them... “I’m pleased with you” is about you.

“Your work is impressive” is about them... “I am impressed with your work” is about you.

Directing your praise to be about them adds more meaning for them. For all you know, they may not care if you are impressed or proud – but they will care if they have done a good job!

### 4: Be honest

The above points also allow you to be honest with people in a way that doesn’t crush their resolve.

Having praised approximately right behaviour and been specific about what has been done well allows you to then constructively point out areas for improvement if needed.

“The level of detail, accuracy and colour co-ordination in your display is very impressive – well done. Don’t forget to add the pricing signage as well” is more productive than “You haven’t put the pricing signage up!”

**Learning how to give meaningful praise and identifying aspects of people's behaviour to praise should become your leadership habit.**

**Leadership Quote:**

**"A leader's role is to raise people's aspirations for what they can become and to release their energies so they will try to get there."**

**... David R. Gergen**