

How to Use Praise Effectively

Goal

To give participants a greater awareness of the power of praise.

Directions

Lead a short discussion on the power of praise. Share stories of the impact of written thank you notes.

According to Ken Blanchard, author of the One Minute Manager, effective praise should be:

- Timely
- Specific
- Sincere
- Proportional
- Positive

Timely – Do not wait. Give praise as soon as possible after a good performance takes place. Praise tends to lose its effectiveness with the passing of time.

Specific – Tell the person exactly what they did that was good. Avoid generalities like a simple – “good job.” Being specific lets the person know what they have done that is appreciated. It encourages them to continue with such behaviors.

Sincere – Insincere or manipulative praise is worse than none at all. Be honest and open. Tell the person what their performance means to you personally.

Proportional – Match the amount and intensity of the recognition to the achievement. Going overboard for small stuff will make people question your motives.

Positive – Do not spoil praise by following it with a “but...” People will not even hear the praise if it is followed by a “but” – they will think that you had to think something up to make an opening for the criticism.

Give each person in the room a box of cards and ask them to write two notes thanking someone they appreciate. The two notes should be in line with the above criteria. Have them write one of the notes to someone they report to and the other one to someone they supervise.

References:

Kouzes and Posner's, Encourage the Heart
Kenneth Blanchard, The One-Minute Manager