Strengthening Families Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer

Skills to Praise & Not Criticize

HOW TO GIVE REINFORCING COMPLIMENTS

1. Give your compliment immediately.
2. Be enthusiastic and sincere.
3. Describe behavior specifically. Tell exactly what you liked
4. Explain a benefit for doing the behavior that your child will appreciate.
5. Add a gentle touch.

HOW TO PRAISE THE POSITIVE OPPOSITE

1. Identify one negative behavior you'd like your child to change.
2. Decide what the opposite of that behavior is.
3. Every time you see your child doing the good behavior (the oppostive of the bad behavior), praise him or her using Reinforcing Compliments.

HOW TO STOP CRITICIZING

1. Recognize that criticism harms family relationships. It doesn't encourage people to change, and it creates negative brain wiring in the person who is criticizing.
2. Make a firm commitment to yourself and family to stop being critical. Put up reminders.
3. Ask the family to remind you to not criticize, and thank them when they do. Replace your criticisms with a positive phrase.
4. Look for the good in others.
5. Each time you notice a fault or think a judgmental thought about someone, add the words, ". . . and me too," to the thought.
6. Use the skill of positive criticism.

HOW TO IGNORE ANNOYING BEHAVIOR

1. Show no emotion.
2. Turn your attention immediately away; act interested in something else.
3. Don't look at the person.
4. Have no physical contact until the misbehavior stops.
5. Warmly give your child positive attention the moment the misbehavior stops.
6. Praise the positive opposite.

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Positive Criticism

BEFORE YOU BEGIN ask yourself these five questions:
(If the answer is yes to all of them, then proceed in a kindly manner.)

1. Is it my responsibility to give this person feedback?
2. Is the criticism true?
3. Is the criticism necessary?
4. Have I thought of several positive things about the person that I can first share with him or her?
5. Did I ask for and receive permission to criticize? (Ex: "I noticed some things that seem to be causing you trouble. May I talk to you about it?")

HOW TO GIVE POSITIVE CRITICISM

PREPARE:

1) Feel genuine respect and concern for the person.
2) Pick a good time. (Don't criticize when someone is angry or upset.)
3) Pick a good place. (Usually quiet, and away from other people.)
4) Have a pleasant face and calm voice.

DELIVER:

1) Say what you like about the person first.
2) Ask if the person has noticed the problem.
3) Describe how the problem affects others or is negatively affecting the person's life. (I noticed . . .)
4) Ask what he/she thinks the solution might be. Offer your own solution if needed.
5) Ask if he/she will make the change; and offer to help write up a "Contract for Change."
6) Thank the person for listening; express love.

TIPS FOR DELIVERING DIFFICULT FEEDBACK

PREPARE:

1) Remember to protect the relationship.
2) Sit side by side (like partners, on same team).
3) Look AT THE PERSON while giving all positive comments.
4) Look STRAIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU when describing the problem or giving negative comments.

DELIVER:

1) Begin by saying what you like about the person.
2) Describe the problem as you see it.
3) Ask what happened.
4) Ask what the person will do to behave differently (next time).
5) End by saying something positive about the person.

HELPFUL TIP

Consider the "problem" you want to discuss as an imaginary object in front of you; point at it several times to focus negative energy there as you talk. Or look at and point to a notebook in your lap on which you have written a couple of words describing the problem.

Motivational Interviewing

1. Express empathy for the person's problem, concern, or point of view.
2. Point out inconsistencies between the person's values and their behavior.
3. Validate the reluctance to change as natural; but not beneficial to him/her.
4. Express confidence in the person's ability to change.
5. Ask what he or she is willing to do differently.
6. Ask for a commitment to do it.
7. If willing, help the person fill out a "Contract for Change."
8. Help the person with the items in the "Tips to Achieve Success" column.

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