

Giving Praise Improves Performance

Family Concern recently completed a study involving three groups of young people. One group was consistently praised for previous performance, another group was criticized, and the third group was ignored. Those who were praised improved dramatically, those who were criticized also improved (but not as much), and the group that was ignored barely improved at all. Charles Schwab said, "I have yet to find the person - however exalted his or her station - who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval than under a spirit of criticism." By the same token young people who are raised in a spirit of praise and approval are going to be happier, more productive, and more obedient than those who are constantly criticized. We become, in large part, what we think about. Therefore, the input into a teenager's mind is very important.

Here is a great tip: The two most powerful times for this input is early in the morning and late at night. Some psychologists have estimated that the first encounter of a significant nature that you have each day has more impact than the next five encounters as far as your thinking and your attitude are concerned. With this in mind, it is extremely important that these first and last encounters of the day with your kids be positive. These are great times for specific, well-earned praise.

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