

# GIVING PRAISE

## THIS IS A PORTION OF THE TRANSCRIPT FROM MODULE 2 COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATION AT WORK

But there's something else I would like you to consider and that is that praise is a form of judgment, too.

We're not going to get into this too deeply, but I think it's worth exploring because human nature, or perhaps a better term would be human culture, instilled in us the belief that praising someone is good — being critical of them is not good.

Yet research has shown that praising someone can have a negative impact on the recipient long term.

Think about it. When someone criticizes you, it can feel demeaning. When someone praises you, it can feel uplifting. Yet in both situations, the person giving the praise or criticism is putting themselves in the position of authority or power.

I'm not saying that's what someone's intention is or that that happens in every case. And I'm not saying you shouldn't give praise! But if you really want to lift someone up and show that you support them, there are a few better ways to do that — and we're going to look at some examples here because I think, I hope, you'll find these are very effective in nurturing relationships.

**Ask the person how they feel they did rather than you judging how you think they performed.**

That might sound like:

“Did you enjoy giving your presentation?”  
Rather than “That was a great presentation.”

“How did you feel after your first week in the new job?” Instead of “You did well in your first week.”

“Are you satisfied with your article?”  
Rather than “Your article was brilliant.”

Asking questions rather than stating your opinion conveys the message that the other person's authority in themselves is what counts. Even if it's your job to give them feedback — that's okay — but asking them how they felt about their performance is what will truly empower them to succeed going forward.



# PRAISE CONTINUED...

There are certainly times when it's appropriate to compliment someone for their personal successes! But oftentimes, we do it from that position of absolute authority such as saying: You're so gifted or your presentation was the best!

Those are what we call **Absolute Judgements**. What can be more effective is to give a **Personal Compliment**.

Here's the difference between the two:

You are so smart! That is a statement declaring that your opinion is absolute about the person's intelligence.

What you could say is: "*I'm really impressed by what you said.*"

This still compliments the person's intelligence, but changes the authoritative to interpersonal.

**Here are two more examples:**

You're the funniest storyteller versus  
*Your stories always make me laugh.*

And here's an example I used to say to my husband: "You're the best cook I've ever known."

Sure that's a nice compliment and it's even a bit personal, but what really made him feel appreciated is when I started to say: "*Your cooking makes me happy. I can taste the love you put into it.*"

Okay, that might be a bit too corny to say to one of your colleagues, but you get the picture.

The third way you can alter your praise into a truly personal compliment is by offering a **3-part statement of appreciation**.

It goes like this:

When I ...

I feel / felt...

Because...

If we go back to my husband's cooking, as an example, instead of saying:

You're the best cook I've ever known or  
Your cooking makes me happy, I can taste the love you put into it, I could say:

When I taste your perogies, it reminds me of my grandma. Not because of the recipe, but because I tasted the love in them, too. And I really appreciate that.

Isn't that a way better compliment than saying "You're the best cook I've ever known?"



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Praise comes in many forms. Often, we give absolute praise (ie. You're the best...) which is actually a judgment and can have a negative affect on someone's self-worth and confidence.

Instead, try giving personal compliments, sharing WHY the person affected you in such a positive way (ie. Your stories always make me laugh).

Convert these statements of absolute praise into personal compliments. Remember, you can use the formula: When I/you... I feel... Because...



**Example: You have the best reading voice.**

Your reading voice is steady and warm . Exactly what we want for our audio books!

**Your sales strategies are brilliant.**

**You have impeccable organizational skills.**

**Your presentation is truly the best I've ever seen.**

**You are the best worker we've ever had.**

**There aren't enough words to describe how amazing you are.**

**I can't say enough good things about having you as a teammate.**