

How to do a Better Job Praising, Critiquing and Thanking People

How do you know you are doing a good job praising, critiquing and thanking people? Do you have a model or do you just wing it?

Below are some models that will help you do a good job because they focus on giving people you encounter more of what they want (respect). In return, you receive more of what you want (more of a specific behavior).

Models

Praising - Praise the behavior, not the person. This avoids embarrassment of the person being praised, avoids confusion over why specifically the person is being praised and the praise sounds more sincere. It also avoids the appearance of favoritism and encourages more of the same behavior you want (from everyone) which is the whole reason to praise in the first place.

Critiquing - Critique in private, focus on the behavior (not the person) and use the sandwich approach. The sandwich approach works like this: first, say something good about the person's behavior - this is the first slice of bread. Next, use the word "and" (not "but") and deliver the critique - this is the meat of the sandwich. Lastly, use the word "and" again, then say something else good about the person's overall behavior - this is the second slice of bread. After you've used the sandwich approach, supply the answer as to how you would like the person to behave in regards to the critique, ask for change and avoid demanding it.

Thanking - Say "thank you" as if you are glad you are saying it. Point out why you are thanking them in as much detail as appropriate and use the person's name.

What does this look like in practice?

Praising - Mary, you did an excellent job managing the owner's expectations during the negotiation.

Critiquing - John, you are a good team player (helping out where needed) and the organization needs you to spend more time on your primary responsibilities. You have shown you are very good at it. Block-out time to take care of your job first and if there is time left, you can help others out as much as you are able. We have been working together for several years now and hope you could help by coming over to my side on this one.

Thanking - Jan, thank you for taking the initiative to figure out a solution to the client's last-minute request. Initiative is valued here and you cannot be thanked enough for your leadership.

Creating your own models will increase your chance of doing a good job praising, critiquing and thanking. Doing so benefits everyone.



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