**Use Acknowledgments More Than Praise**

**http://www.marvinmarshall.com/use-acknowledgments-more-than-praise/**

Acknowledgments and praise are not the same. *Praise is judgmental*and infers parental approval. In contrast, *acknowledgments simply recognize.*

You may ask, “What’s wrong with praise?” Although intended to be a positive reinforcement, praise creates certain pitfalls that acknowledgments do not. For example, praise is conditional upon the judgment of the person giving the praise. It is usually given because the adult feels a desire to approve some behaviour. However, *what is truly important is for children to receive self-satisfaction without the need for adult approval.*

Acknowledgments accomplish the intent of praise but *without*praise’s disadvantages. Acknowledgments foster feelings of being worthwhile without relying on the approval of others. The long range effect of acknowledgments is to engender self-confidence and self-reliance, rather than dependence on others for feelings of self-worth.

Understanding the difference between praise and acknowledgment is critical for promoting responsible behaviour. Notice the difference in these sets of examples:

A. “*I am*so pleased with the way you treated your brother.” (praise)

B. “You treated your brother with real consideration.” (acknowledgment)

A. “*I like*the way you did that.” (praise)

B. “How did you do that?” (acknowledgment while reinforcing)

A. “*I’m so pleased that you*washed the dishes.” (praise)

B. “Thanks for washing the dishes.” (acknowledgment)

Using a phrase that starts with “I like” or “I’m so proud of” encourages the child to behave in order *to please the adult,*but lacks the self-satisfaction that acknowledgments promote. Praise encourages dependence. By contrast, acknowledgments empower.