

Mrs News's letter to the parents

'Praise and Criticism' and 'The Power of Praise'

Dear Parents/Carers,

Hello everyone! How are you all over these long weeks? We continue to face challenges in our homes and our daily lives. I wish you all well, you and all your families.

Did any of you manage to make and use a kindness chart? Life is so busy but focusing on kindness and the positive approach can really raise the emotional temperature in any environment to one of warmth, happiness and nurturing.

Your children may be able to tell you about Warm Fuzzies and Cold Pricklies. Warm Fuzzies are kindnesses that make us feel cared for and happy. (My letter to the children had a story about this in May.) Cold Pricklies are cold, mean and hurtful words and actions that actually hurt us and have a negative effect on us. Everyone wants to feel happy, safe and contented. We don't like feeling down or sad. The children can understand the term warm and fuzzy as a good feeling. (Like a soft fluffy toy.) They can also understand the term cold and prickly as an uncomfortable feeling. (Like thorns from a tree.)

If we remember to reward each other for any kindness, however small, it gets the attention it deserves and we are likely to get more of it. When the kindness chart starts to look full of kindnesses, (see Letter week 5) the whole family can be rewarded together and can celebrate their success together with a treat. There are no individual names on the chart, no winners, it is a family effort.



Today, related to this, I am going to talk about 'Praise and Criticism'. Praise, in this case, means to express warm approval, to show kindness, to admire and to show thankfulness and gratitude. So, for example, if someone tidies something up, we could say; 'Brilliant, you've tidied up, well done. Thank you so much.' Praise consists of warm and kind words. We can include actions too that are kind, good, thoughtful and have a good effect on others. These are Warm Fuzzies to the children.

Criticism, on the other hand, means the opposite. Criticism is not kind. (Criticism can be used in its meaning of judging constructively in order for us to improve something.) Criticism, in this case, is mean, maybe moaning or showing disapproval but not for the better. This form of criticism is not helpful and can affect us badly. The negative criticism can have a negative effect on the person receiving it. These are Cold Pricklies.

Now we can see how these two approaches can affect us. Let's see what effects praise and criticism can have on our feelings. I am applying all this to myself.

**When I am praised I feel:**

proud

glad

loved



great

confident

like I can do more things

capable

valued

shy

glad

Now let's look at the feelings that we can feel when we are criticised:

**When I am criticised I feel:**

angry

stupid

weak

no good

fed up

a failure

small

resentful

discouraged

like I want to give up



These feelings show the impact that words and attitudes can have on us. Whilst we can think about our own reactions to criticism, we can realise too that children can be affected even more by them as they do believe what adults or other children say.

### The Power of Praise

Praise is very powerful and can be described as magic! Kind uplifting words and comments can have a nurturing effect and can build up our confidence, especially our children.

Sometimes, a more 'low key' approach to praise can be just as effective. This may be more effective with teenagers or older children. Some of us can be a little shy by open, more obvious praise.

None of us are ever too old for praise, we all need it and thrive on it. We need encouragement, especially when times are hard as they are at the moment.

So, here are some encouraging words that can help us. They are from Family Links 'Misery-making beliefs' that I mentioned to you in a previous letter:

#### Misery-making belief

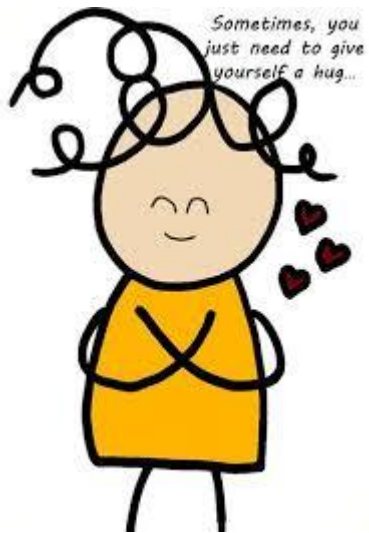
My child is already so bad that there is nothing that I can do to make anything better in the family.

I must solve any problem I have at once, or it will prove that nothing will ever make any difference – that the situation is hopeless.

#### Better choice

The way my child behaves always has a reason, and I can influence it by trying to understand and changing the way I handle him/her and myself.

I will make one small change at a time, and will try to remember that it usually takes a while before any change can be noticed.



Lastly, I am attaching a story that could be helpful for some children who are worried about the virus.

I send you my kindest regards, until next time,

Mrs New