

Meditation Master JinBodhi's Short Dharma Teachings

Praise Generates Great Energy

Your results have improved. Frequent praise generates motivation. Praise generates great energy.

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Parents in the East tend to command their children. They prefer not to praise. They always notice the areas that need to be improved; but forget the hard work their children put in. A child scored 4 "A" and 1 "B". There was no praise for scoring A's, but he was told the "B" was not good enough. This is a habit of the parents in the East.

The hope behind this habit is that you would score well in all subjects. But you did not hear the praises said behind your back. So the hope is that the child will understand parents are like that. Because we are from the East. Parents from the East are like that. They hide their love and refuse to express it in words.

Actually, I also don't quite know how to praise. Try to say nice things. Some examples: "Your results have improved." "You are more hardworking now." "I saw you washed the socks." "That's really great." "I did not know that when I was your age." When the child hears praise, he will be delighted. "Mom, where are your socks? I will wash them for you."

Usually, a child gets motivated when he is praised. Praise generates immeasurable motivation. I heard a few children sing. Their tones were unbearable. I had a cold that day and it is gone after I listened to them. It was so agitating that I felt heartbroken after hearing them. I was not moved but agitated. It was horrible singing.

But I bore with it, endured with a pain in my heart. I told a child, "You have a special voice. It cured my cold." After hearing that, he told me he

would sing more. Oh my gosh. Why did I praise him? I gritted my teeth, pinched and bit my fingers. I endured till the songs ended and continued to praise him. "That was great. Your voice is so unique."

From then on, he asked his parents to get him a coach to teach him singing. Recently, he returned to China to compete in a singing competition; he was a runner-up. Unbelievable, right? He was motivated after hearing my praise. He learned without his parents urging him.

Many things are acquired through learning. Not many are born with talent. Greed and lechery are not taught, but knowledge needs to be acquired. Much knowledge is acquired through learning. But what's the motivation behind the urge to learn? A little more praise generates a bit more motivation. The more you criticize someone, the more likely that he will give up. He will rebel. Not only children react this way; adults react in the same manner.

But be mindful of the degree of praise. Too much praise can be manipulative. It can be harmful. Too much praise can cause your child's grades to drop. Because he won't know right from wrong. Sometimes a child's intelligence can be likened to a puppy. They take things as real based on their feelings. It is good to praise, but in moderation.

Some ask me questions about ethics. "Master, are you telling me not to be truthful?" This is different from cheating. Praise is simply praise. There is nothing more to it. No money or lechery involved. I did not say all these things in order to get your money or wealth. It is simply a manner or just to serve as a motivation, especially for children.

A parent praising his young child. A boss praising his subordinate, his staff. Giving praise yields results that far surpass the results yielded by criticism. I do not need to teach the method. You need to understand that giving praise generates great energy.