

Introduction

The subject would like to be more positive. A positive attitude affects your entire outlook on life and how others think of you and interact with you. It is one of the few really important things in our life we can change.

In an effort to have a more positive attitude the subject will focus on giving praise. The behavioral Definition of Praise used:

To give positive comments to others regarding their actions, thoughts, ideas or appearance; to give compliments; to express approval of others.

The goal is to use every opportunity available to give others praise. By doing this the subject will focus more on others instead of on herself. Sometimes she find herself thinking of what she is going to say next rather than listening to what someone else is saying. The subject would like to increase her giving praise to three or four times a day.

In thinking about praise and how it relates to a more positive attitude, she would like to share an excerpt from Charles Swindoll.

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company.. a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it."

Method

Subject

The subject is happily married, and enjoys being back in school after a very long break. She is finding the college experience to be a refreshing change from the working world. The subject has wanted to finish her education for a long time so she is finding it a rewarding feeling to be accomplishing that goal. She hopes to graduate at the end of this summer with a bachelors degree in Social Sciences with Psychology as her major. She has a wonderful supportive husband who makes this all much easier. They enjoy being outdoors and keeping physically active.

Measurement System

To actually record when she gave praise, the subject carried a 3 x 5 index card with her every day for 19 days. She made a notation on it each time she made a statement to someone that she had defined as praise. The subject did this daily from September 24th through October 12th. She made a note of what she said and to whom. This is the behavioral definition of praise that was used:

To give positive comments to others regarding actions, thoughts, ideas or appearance. To give compliments. To express approval of others.

Summary of Baseline

Number of compliments given	Number of Days
None	8
One	7
Two	3
Three	1

Total 16
mean .84

Analysis of Baseline

In analyzing the baseline data it is clear that the subject did not give out many words of praise. One correlation the subject did notice is that she gave more compliments when she was around more people. All of her classes are on Tuesday and Thursday, so on those days she is around more people and has the opportunity to give out more compliments. Of the three days that she had given two compliments, two of those days were either a Tuesday or Thursday. Also out of the days she gave no compliments, only one of those days was a class day.

Also, the subject noticed, many of her compliments dealt with appearance. She would like to focus more on the other aspects she had mentioned in her behavioral definition like: actions, thoughts, and ideas.

Thinking about why it is that she does not give more compliments, the subject could not help but to think back to her childhood. She was not in an environment where praise was freely given. This is a discussion she has often had with her brother. Neither of them remember receiving many words of praise or compliments. They do, of course, remember being told when they were doing something wrong. A certain amount of these feelings are probably typical and she is not trying to blame her upbringing for her lack of giving praise as an adult, but the subject believes it may have contributed.

Proposed Intervention

Use every opportunity available to give praise

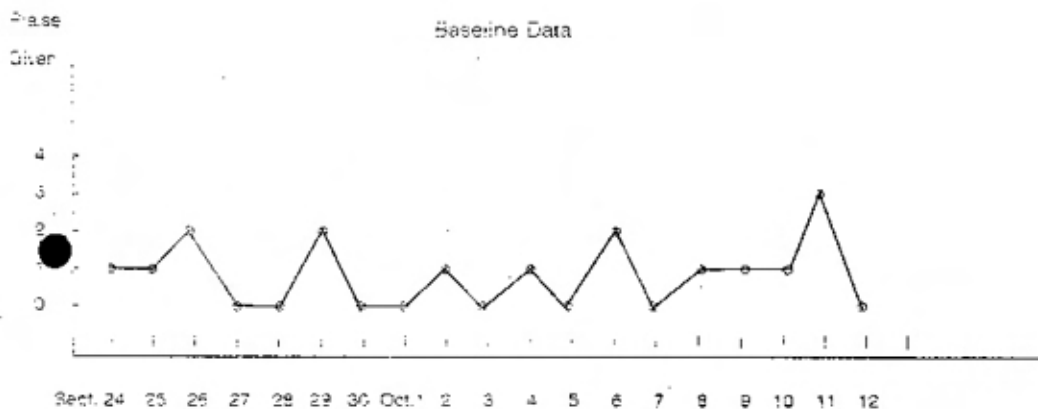
Look for good qualities and actions in others

Use praise from others as a cue to return a compliment, but always be sincere

Put the statement by Charles Swindoll in a place where the subject will see it every morning

This was a area she wanted to focus on. The baseline data shows compliments on appearance occurred seven out of the total sixteen compliments, or 44% of the time. In comparison, in the treatment data she only complimented appearance nine out of the thirty seven total compliments, or 24% of the time.

Graph of Baseline and Treatment Data



Treatment Data



Set a goal each day of giving three compliments today

Use a cue card as a reminder of goal placed where subject will see each morning

Use another cue card with the statement " Find something to praise today - Ideas Actions" placed at her study desk

Use another cue card - subject carried with her in purse

Told Dan, subjects husband and Sue, friend in class of project and goal

Results

The treatment data was collected using the same measurement system as in the baseline data. The subject collected the treatment data from November 17th to December 3rd.

The intervention proved to be an effective treatment in two ways: The treatment data shows a significant increase in the number of times the subject complimented or praised others, and the subject gave more compliments that focused on actions and ideas, instead of on appearance.

The treatment data shows more than twice as many compliments given out than during the baseline date. The subject gave out a total of 37 compliments during treatment as compared with 16 during baseline. (the baseline was two days longer)

I had the baseline as 14 days

The baseline data shows eight, out of the total of 16 days, where no compliments or praise was given. In the treatment data, the subject gave at least one word of praise each day. In the baseline data, the subject never gave out four compliments on any day. In the treatment data she gave out four compliments on two different days.

In the treatment data, the subject gave more compliments regarding accomplishments, talents or actions of others rather than compliments on appearance.

Discussion

The subjects' response of praising others significantly increased because of the following interventions:

- Using cue cards as prompts
- Telling others: Dan and Sue
- Posting statement by Swindoll where she could see it every morning
- Using compliments from others as a cue
- Being more aware of the reinforcing effect of praise through lectures, reading and research. (the subject is writing a paper on the motivation of employees)

Good
The subject was pleased to notice the positive reactions of others as she gave them words of praise. Possibly because of this, she found that it became much easier to give praise as time went on. As she gave praise more often it became reinforcing to her to observe the positive reactions of others. Because of this study, the subject will probably always be more aware of giving praise.

Praise is a positive reinforcer that is readily available to us. It is simple, inexpensive and inexhaustible. Yet it is surprisingly seldom used. In the business world, managers who use it will testify to its effectiveness. When praise is used correctly it not only provides a reward for the person who is receiving it, praise also lets the entire staff know that good work will be recognized and rewarded. Rewarded behavior is likely to be repeated.

According to Mark H. McCormack, author of What they still Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School, praise and recognition occur in two situations: when the employee is present and when he or she is absent. Effective managers realize that both are essential. A good manager does not take credit for the success of his group, not does he credit the entire group if the praise should go to one individual. An effective manager also lets his employees know that he is saying good things about them out in public. The latter, which is often neglected is very important to employees.

Managers ^{at} a leadership workshop were given a task: to go back to their company and find an employee doing something right. Stop the employee and praise the action. The managers were told the action did not have to be extraordinary. When the managers

reported back, they were surprised at how grateful the employees had been for the attention. Several managers told how the employees had thanked them for their positive reinforcement.

Like the managers in the workshop, most do not use praise often, and they are surprised when it works. There are a number of reasons why managers do not use praise.

Many managers do not believe it works. They cannot believe that employees would be happy with some well chosen words of praise. They do not see the value of praise itself, and tend to believe money is the only motivator

Some managers believe using praise makes them vulnerable, by implying or reinforcing their dependency on the employees. They still believe that manager or boss must mean power over their subordinates.

Many managers have the feeling that they do not need to praise something that is supposed to be done will anyway. As Dr. T. A. Brigham has pointed out, our problem with giving praise is that we expect people to behave well, therefore when they behave appropriately we do not reinforce or reward the behavior. We do not reward people for behaving the way they ought to behave. The consequence of this is that good behavior does not get reinforced and can extinguish.

Praise is a powerful tool in business, in education, in the home and in our personal relationships. The more we can learn to use praise to encourage, teach and build relationships the better our lives will be and the lives of those around us.

McCormack, Mark H. 1989. What they Still Don't Teach You
At Harvard Business School. New York: Bantam

Quick, Thomas L. 1985. The Manager's Motivation Desk Book.
New York: Ronald Press

Excellent project
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