

Welcome to another deep dive. Today we're tackling a topic that uh often sparks pretty passionate debate in parenting circles. Praise.

Do we shower our kids with it or do we hold back? Maybe fearing unintended consequences. It's well, it's surprisingly complex.

It really is.

And our source material today offers a truly fascinating and maybe for many an unexpected perspective. We're diving into excerpts from why we should praise our kids stories of unschooling family. It's written by Australian unschooling author and blogger Sue Elvis.

Right

now, for those familiar with the unschooling philosophy, there's often this strong emphasis on, you know, intrinsic motivation,

avoiding external control. Yeah.

Exactly. Avoiding manipulation. And this has historically led many within the unschooling community and actually a lot of parenting experts too, to view praise with well, a fair bit of skepticism.

Definitely. They worry it might create dependency, maybe a need for constant external validation, that sort of thing.

But Sue Elvis, she directly challenges this prevailing wisdom. She draws on her own rich family experiences.

And what's truly compelling here, I think, is how she takes this common dilemma and offers a deeply personal experience-based counterargument. So, our mission in this deep dive is to unpack her reasoning, understand why she believes praise is not just beneficial, but uh essential, and explore the nuance behind this often debated topic.

Yeah, nuance is the word.

We'll look at how her real world observations led to a conclusion that might make well many of us rethink our own approaches.

Okay, let's unpack this central conflict. Then the author immediately highlights the prevailing view. Many unschoolers, many experts, they caution against praise and the concerns are certainly valid, right? The big worry that praise might be manipulative, you know, a tool to control a child's behavior.

Or maybe that it could make kids think they're better than everyone else, fostering an unhealthy sense of superiority. Yeah, indeed. And this raises a crucial question.

wisdom often frames it as a way to encourage specific behaviors which like you said can definitely feel like manipulation.

It can.

But beyond just control, some argue that praise might inadvertently foster a dependence on external validation. It could potentially stifle a child's intrinsic motivation, make them feel their worth is conditional on achievement maybe.

Or that their efforts only matter if they get approval.

Exactly. And our source acknowledges these widespread valid concerns. She recognizes the very real nuance in this debate.

That's a valid set of concerns. Absolutely. And ones many parents wrestle with. But here's where the author introduces a truly compelling turn in her thinking. She shares her own personal journey, admitting she initially wondered if she should stop praising, you know, to be a proper unschooler.

Ah, right. Trying to follow the rules.

Yeah. She read all the expert opinions. She considered if maybe she should praise, but not tell anyone so no one would think I was a bad parent.

Wow. That shows the pressure, doesn't it?

It does. She was genuinely trying to align with what she thought was the right way, but her experiences with her own children just didn't line up with those expert opinions.

Right. Reality kicked in.

In fact, she found quite the opposite.

That's fascinating. Her lived experience directly contradicted the theory. So instead of suppressing or hiding her approach,

what did she do?

She decided to do something completely different. She started talking openly about her reasons. for praising. She found that her expressions of praise actually brought a lot of joy to both child and parent. It fostered connection, not manipulation.

Connection. Okay.

And this decision to speak out against prevailing wisdom based on her own observed reality is really compelling. I think it moves the conversation beyond just theoretical debates and into the practical joyful reality she experienced within her family.

the face of those fears that it would be manipulative.

So, okay, if it's not about manipulating behavior, what is this kind of praise? According to her, our source suggests a powerful reframing. Instead of pushing kids to be who others think they should be, what if praise actually reassures us that we're okay as we are?

That really flips the script entirely, doesn't it?

It does.

This is a truly key insight. The author proposes that praise can tell a child that what we want to do is important. and that we should continue doing the things that matter to us.

So, it's validating their interests.

Exactly. So, essentially, this author is breaking down praise into these powerful components.

It's like a mirror reflecting a child's inherent worth.

Mhm.

It's a foundation of unconditional love. And it serves as a catalyst for a child's own dreams to take flight.

Okay.

It communicates belief, acceptance, and trust. It's about affirming their being, not just their doing.

Being, not doing. That's a big distinction.

It says you are seen. You are valued just as you are. That's a profound difference from being praised only for achieving something specific or performing a task,

right? It's about accepting their natural inclinations and passions. I find that concept so striking. This idea that praise isn't about changing to please anyone, but about confirming that people believe in us, accept us, and trust us. The author even says, "Praise gives my dreams wings." I mean, you can imagine how empowering that would feel as a child or even as an adult. Frankly,

absolutely.

It's not about earning love. It's about experiencing it as a given, a constant, feeling truly seen for your unique self.

Exactly. It moves from external validation based on performance to an internal validation that springs from genuine acceptance. And this becomes a foundational building block for

which lets them pursue their own interests,

right? Without that underlying fear of disapproval or the constant need to prove something.

That makes sense.

This is what it means to truly live uh a radical life of unconditional love as the source describes it. It's about fostering that deep sense of security.

Security to explore, experiment, even stumble.

Knowing their core value isn't tied to their successes or failures.

Yes, that's a powerful distinction. Affirming being, not just doing. But I can imagine some listeners might wonder, isn't there still a fine line

that was so

between affirming who they are and accidentally praising everything they do, regardless of its impact? How does the author address that potential pitfall?

That's a fair question. The author emphasizes that this kind of praise isn't about mindlessly applauding every single action. Instead, she argues that true, sincere praise comes from truly knowing our kids,

knowing them deeply.

Yes. It requires us to pay attention, look at them carefully, listen, accept them. It's an active, engaged process far removed from just a casual generic compliment.

So, it's specific,

very specific. When you truly know a child's efforts, their intentions, their unique way of approaching the world, your praise becomes authentic and deeply meaningful,

not just good job.

Exactly. It's not about the quantity of praise, but it's quality and authenticity. It stems from deep observation, not just a surface level acknowledgement.

That transformation of praise from a superficial comment into a genuine act of connection that feels powerful. When someone sees us, truly listens, accepts us, we feel profoundly loved. And as the author states, I also feel I can do anything.

It connects directly to a child's deepest sense of selfworth and capability because it arises from an authentic understanding of who they are and what they're doing.

It's not just the words, but the profound observation and appreciation behind them,

And then there's the joy. The author described these moments when joy washes over us unexpectedly as parents. We look at our children with full hearts and find ourselves asking, "Are we really the parents of these beautiful people."

Oh, I know that.

It's a spontaneous, overwhelming feeling of love and pride that just bubbles up, totally unbidden.

It's hard, she says, not to let that joy spill over and become, "I'm so proud of you."

It really is.

She gives an example of her daughter, Gemma Rose, meticulously wrapping fairy lights around a branch for their Christmas tree. It's a simple everyday act, right?

Yeah.

Yet, for the parent who is truly observing, it can spark this immense feeling of a season for praise and joy.

That resonates so much with me. I've definitely had those moments where the words I'm so proud just naturally came out even when I was trying to be careful about praise.

It sounds incredibly natural and heartfelt in her description. The author seems to be saying, "Don't put a lid on that feeling."

Exactly. And if we connect this to the bigger picture, it suggests that withholding such natural authentic expressions of pride and love might actually be detrimental.

Detrimental? How so?

Well, detrimental to both parent and child. As the source powerfully states, Why hold those words back? We have to say them because our children need to hear them.

Wow.

It's about authentic parental emotion, a natural outpouring of affection and recognition, not some calculated strategic parenting technique.

So, denying that natural parental instinct

might be denying something vital to the emotional connection and well-being of both parent and child. It implies that

that makes sense.

It's about recognizing the inherent goodness and effort in a child, not just their

What a thought-provoking deep dive this has been into the simple yet really complex act of praising our children.

Our source offers a truly compelling case for embracing praise, not as a manipulative tool, but as this heartfelt expression of reassurance, acceptance, and unconditional love.

Yeah.

It's about seeing our children for who they are, understanding the unique efforts and their being, and celebrating the profound joy they bring into our liv. lives.

It really does make you reconsider the very purpose and impact of our words. And this deep dive really makes us reconsider what praise truly means, doesn't it? If sincere praise isn't about shaping behavior, but about validating a child's inherent self, acknowledging their efforts, and celebrating the sheer joy they bring. Well, this raises an important question for you, our listener. How might this perspective shift the way you think about encouragement and connection in your own relationships?

Not just with kids, maybe.

Exactly. Whether with children, friends, friends or even colleagues what would look like to truly affirm someone's being, not just their doing.

Something to really think about. Keep exploring, keep questioning, and thank you for joining us on this deep dive into what it truly means to uplift the people we love.