

## Thanks for that steak, well done!

By Laird Darren Gallagher

**Come take a walk with me down memory lane. Most of us, at some point in time, would have had some kind of verbal approval for something we have done from someone we care about.**

Like your father saying 'That's a great drawing of a boat, and I'd know because I know boats' or your favourite aunt who used to only visit once a year and would always marvel at how good you were at cricket ... even though you really weren't that good.

Yep, what I'm talking about here is that old favourite 'Positive Reinforcement'.

What I'd like you to do now, is think about whether you actually have anyone in your life right now whom you draw positive reinforcement from, or provide it to, and what difference that makes to the outcomes of that person's day, week, year, or overall life experience.

Once they leave home for the first time (or second, third or fourth for that matter), many people lose that valuable piece of their lives. Without it, whilst they don't necessarily go backwards, tend not to have as much momentum as a person who has someone (directly involved) in their life who will say, 'Yeah, that's great, you should do that', or 'Hey nice. Can't wait to see what you come up with next.'

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After I met my wife it became significantly apparent to me just how much more I could achieve with her standing beside me – not necessarily pushing or holding me back, but just being there as a sounding board so that I could hear just how clever (or, more frequently, how stupid) some of my harebrained schemes were.

I'm certainly not suggesting that you invite your mum to come and live with you, nor am I suggesting that you need a partner to benefit from positive reinforcement. However, it does highlight the value in communicating your ideas to someone who will give you some positive feedback, and more importantly, someone whose advice you will listen to.

There are those of us, (and I am very much in this category), who really don't benefit from encouragement which comes from people outside my circle of trust. I know I shouldn't write this, but I dislike the whole show that is 'Come on! You can do it!', when it comes from people who are just saying it so that they can look like they are being part of the team; rather than when it comes from people who are part of the team and know you well enough to know you hate it.

Worse than this is the individual who is even too lazy to target someone for their token encouragement, and does the random yelling of, 'Come on team, we can do it!' – but lacks so much conviction that any court in the world would just dismiss the case.

The balance we need when working in any team is that element of respect for each other that lets you know just where you are. The biggest trap people fall into when trying to build a team is to think that everyone needs to be friends in order for them to effectively work as a team. That is absolute rubbish. Be you in Defence or playing Tuesday night netball, the only thing you need in order to tackle a task head on is competence, confidence and respect.

There is an exception to the compliment outside the circle of trust however. How great is it when you do something and someone you know really doesn't like you says, 'Nice work'? There is no bigger compliment than those compliments which come from the people who don't want to give them to you. Your friends will compliment you all day long, whilst everyone else will make you work hard for them. But we all benefit from it. If you start showing up the members of your team that don't really like you, they will most likely try harder too – meaning, the team can essentially benefit from a little 'bitter sweet' rivalry.

A little positive reinforcement, laced with a genuine amount of conviction, even if given begrudgingly, can generate some terrific results. So, if you see someone around you whom you think actually does do a good job, take the time, because like smiles and this magazine, compliments are free. 🍀