

Different Styles of Encouragement

Having been raised by Japanese parents and having lived in the United States, I couldn't help noticing the difference in how American and Japanese parents praise or encourage their children. I felt like all my American friends were always showered with

(1. 巧みな [e-]) (2. 褒め言葉 [c-]) and encouragement every day for minor (3. 達成 [a-]), while I got little or no praise even for significant academic success.

For example, every time my friends and I took home our report cards, my best friend would get a big hug and encouraging comments from her parents, such as, "That's great!" or "I'm so proud of you." So I had (4. 想定 [a-]) she was getting straight A's on her report

card, but it turned out her grades were only B's. But because her parents (5. しばしば [f-]) recognized and praised her efforts, she always felt confident about herself. Even today, as an adult, she is (6. 意欲的 [a-]) and never afraid to try new things.

In contrast, my parents would always say, "You should have studied harder," or "You have to do better next time," (7. 関係なく [r-]) what grades I got. Even if I got

A's, they would always (8. 非難する [c-]) me for the B's. Why couldn't they give me guidance or show me (9. 愛情 [a-]) instead? Didn't they love me? I

always felt like I had to work harder (7. 関係なく [r-]) what level I was at. I still feel that way today. And while this (10. 教育 [u-]) has enabled me to

become a (11. 勤勉な [d-]), hard-working adult, I'm always

(12. 自信がない [r-]) to try new things because I (13. なかった [l-])

(14. 自尊心 [s-]).

I'm not saying that children should (15. 常に [c-]) be

(16. 褒める [c-]). Nobody is perfect and everyone can learn from

(17. 建設的な批判 [c-]). But again, I noticed distinct differences in how Americans and Japanese people encourage others to try harder.

My Japanese parents would (18. 頼る [r-]) to (19. 脅す [t-]), such as, "If you don't study hard, you'll end up jobless and homeless." (20. 一方で [M-]), my best friend's mother would say, "If you spent 30 minutes a night solving math problems, you could get an A in math.' In other words, she would recommend a

(21. 到達可能な [r-]) goal in a positive light as something to look forward to.

So my friend would become (22. ～したがる [e-]) to study harder, feeling excited about her next exam. (20. 一方で [M-]), I would study to fulfill a sense of

(23. 義務 [o-]) to succeed.

As you can see, there is a major difference between the American and Japanese styles of communication. The American way is to first praise the child's strengths, and then suggest ways to improve the child's (24. 弱み [w-]). For Americans, praise is like a

greeting, and a way of ensuring smooth communication. The Japanese way is to

(8. 非難する [c-]) or scold a child to make them work harder. The Japanese tend not to praise their children, because they worry that too much praise may make a child

(25. うぬぼれる [c-]). It's not a matter of which style is right or wrong. The two styles are simply different.

These different communication styles are used for adults, too. When I was working as a volunteer administrator in New York City, I attended a workshop on volunteer

(26. 管理 [a-]). The instructor said to me, "Always give a volunteer

four positive comments before you give one (31. 批判 [c-])." For example, "I

(30. 評価する [a-]) your (27. 参加 [c-]),

(28. 協力 [c-]), hard work, and leadership, but we need you to be more

(29. 時間を厳守する [p-])." The instructor said that people will accept (31.

批判 [c-]) a lot more easily if they feel that their efforts are (32. 認めてい

る [a-]) and (30. 評価する [a-])d. They won't feel completely rejected. I tried

this technique on the 200 volunteers I was managing, and it was (33. 効果的

[e-]). They felt (30. 評価する [a-])d, and their work quality

(34. 最終的に改善した [e-]). It also enabled us to

communicate smoothly.

In fact, my American boss communicated with me in a

(35. 微妙な(ポジティブ) [s-]) way. She once told me that I would be perfect at my

job if I learned how to write (36. 譲渡証書 [g-]), pointing out the one skill I

(37. 不足 [l-]). Her comment made me feel that she valued me as a person and

recognized my strengths in other areas, It also made me want to meet her

(38. 期待 [e-]). That one comment (39. 強まる

[s-]) our bond. If she had said, "You're never going to be a good employee unless you learn to do this," I would have felt rejected.

On the other hand, whenever I worked at Japanese companies, my Japanese bosses would generally focus on pointing out my (24. 弱み [w-]). They would rarely mention my strengths. This communication style was difficult for me (40. 感情的に [e-]), but it pushed me to work hard all the time and (41. 最終的に [u-]) helped me achieve my goals.

These two styles of communication both have their advantages and disadvantages. During my 10 years as a teacher, I have learned that each person responds differently to different styles of encouragement. Some people may need encouragement to give them motivation and confidence because they feel (42. 劣っている [i-]). Other people may get (43. 過度に [o-]) confident from too much encouragement, and may stop trying.

I suggest that an (44. 適切な [a-]) style be adopted for each individual with (45. 考慮 [c-]) to cultural differences, because there is no (46. 決まり文句 [f-]) that fits everyone. And I think it's essential that parents and bosses know the personality of the person they are criticizing, and choose the right method to help the individual's personal and professional growth.

1. elaborate :	巧みな
2. compliments :	褒め言葉
3. achievements :	達成
4. assumed :	想定
5. frequently :	しばしば
6. ambitious :	意欲的
7. regardless of :	関係なく
8. criticize :	非難する
9. affection :	愛情
10. upbringing :	教育
11. diligent :	勤勉な
12. reluctant :	自信がない
13. lack :	なかった
14. self-esteem :	自尊心
15. constantly :	常に
16. complimented :	褒める
17. constructive criticism :	建設的な批判
18. resort :	頼る
19. threats :	脅す
20. Meanwhile :	一方で
21. reachable :	到達可能な
22. eager :	～したがる
23. obligation :	義務
24. weaknesses :	弱み

25. conceited :	うぬぼれる
26. administration :	管理
27. commitment :	参加
28. cooperation :	協力
29. punctual :	時間を厳守する
30. appreciate :	評価する
31. criticism :	批判
32. acknowledged :	認めている
33. effective :	効果的
34. eventually improved :	最終的に改善した
35. subtle :	微妙な(ポジティブ)
36. grants :	譲渡証書
37. lacked :	不足
38. expectations :	期待
39. strengthened :	強まる
40. emotionally :	感情的に
41. ultimately :	最終的に
42. inferior :	劣っている
43. overly :	過度に
44. appropriate :	適切な
45. consideration :	考慮
46. formula :	決まり文句
47. essential :	必須