

Volume 6, Issue 2

# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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There are days when my to-do lists, overflowing inboxes, and burdens of the world can weigh heavy on my shoulders. It's in those moments, when the demands of life can seem overwhelming, that I secretly wish for some encouragement.

What a difference it makes then, when unexpected, I receive a quick email from a friend who is thinking of me, or I find a sweetly handwritten card in my mailbox.

There is power in encouragement. There is power in a positive word, a kind gesture, or a small gift. It can change someone's day. A word or quiet act of kindness may just be what's needed to heal a heart or lift someone's spirit. Those small little moments are enough to take us out of the urgency of our day-to-day life, and give us space to breathe and believe in ourselves again.

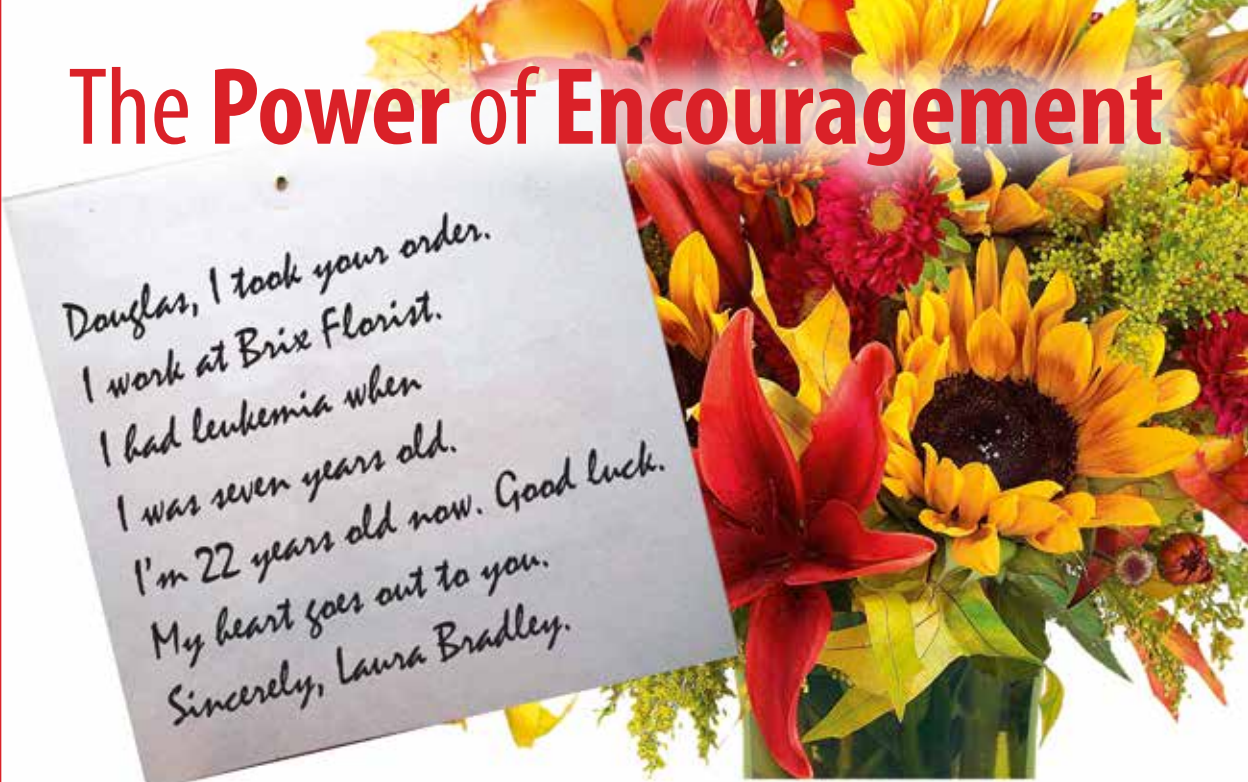
In a world that often tells us we should be thinking more about "what's in it for me" than "what can I do for others," it is more needed than ever that we offer friendship, community, and kindness. Everyone needs it, even those whose job involves encouraging others, as they can feel empty and in need of a lift, too.

The articles and stories in this issue of *Motivated* show how powerful kind words and deeds are, and how they can change lives, including our own.

Let's encourage each other today!

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

# The Power of Encouragement



Douglas, I took your order.  
I work at Brix Florist.  
I had leukemia when  
I was seven years old.  
I'm 22 years old now. Good luck.  
My heart goes out to you.  
Sincerely, Laura Bradley.

Author Unknown

**D**ouglas Maurer of Creve Coeur, Missouri, was 15 when he felt bad for several days. His mother took him to the hospital in St. Louis where he was diagnosed as having leukemia.

The doctors told him in frank terms about his disease. They said that for the next three years he would have to undergo chemotherapy. They didn't sugarcoat the side effects. They told Douglas he would go bald and that his body would most likely bloat. Upon hearing this, he went into a deep depression.


His aunt called a floral shop to send Douglas an arrangement of flowers. She told the clerk that it was for her teenage nephew who had leukemia. When the flowers arrived at the hospital, they were beautiful. Douglas read the card from his aunt without emotion.

Then he noticed a second card. It

said, "Douglas, I took your order. I work at Brix Florist. I had leukemia when I was seven years old. I'm 22 years old now. Good luck. My heart goes out to you. Sincerely, Laura Bradley."

His face lit up. "Oh wow!" he said.

Douglas Maurer was in a hospital filled with millions of dollars of the most sophisticated technological equipment. He was being treated by expert doctors and nurses with competent medical training. But it was a sales clerk in a flower shop, a young woman making about \$200 a week, who, by taking the time to care, invested part of her life in Doug's life, and did what her heart told her to do, who gave Douglas hope.

And Douglas carried on. 

*Will you reach out and invest your life  
in the lives of others?*



# Encourager or Discourager

## What will you be?



By Howard Baston, adapted excerpts

**W**hen two people interact with each other, they are both changed forever. I have a lasting influence on you, you will have a lasting influence on me, and whether our influence is helpful or hurtful, positive or negative, depends on whether we give each other the gift of encouragement.

Encouragers are special people in each of our lives. Encouragers are pleasant to be around because they are optimistic and enthusiastic. They have a quiet self-confidence about themselves, which enables them to focus on others, rather than demanding constant attention to fulfill their own emotional needs.

Encouragers, by nature, are other-focused and not self-focused.

Discouragers, on the other hand, play a destructive role in our lives. They go through life like a cloud, raining on everybody else's parade. I bet you can tell me about a time when someone discouraged you. Duane Brooks told me his story.

It was a tough time in the Brooks family. His dad was working a couple of jobs, trying to make money to support his family of four sons.

When Duane was in fourth grade, he told his father he wanted to play baseball. "No, you don't want to play baseball," his father barked. "Yes I do. I'd really like to sign up for a baseball team." "No, you don't want to play baseball," his father retorted. "Now, Dad, I really do. I want to play baseball."

"Okay," his dad said abruptly. He took Duane out to the field and threw the ball as hard as he could at Duane's chest. Duane dodged the ball, and his father looked at him and said, "I told you you're not a baseball player." And his father turned and walked away, leaving his son—Duane—standing alone in the field. Duane's father discouraged the dreams and the hopes of his son.

Think about it, teacher. A word of encouragement from you can change a child's life forever. Think about it, coach. A word of encouragement from you can change how a young man feels about himself for an entire season, maybe a lifetime. Think about it, employer. A word of encouragement can make a good employee a great employee.

If you ever wonder whether someone needs encouragement, I'll give you a foolproof test. If they are breathing, they need encouragement.


What are you going to be? An encourager or a discourager? You're going to leave your mark.

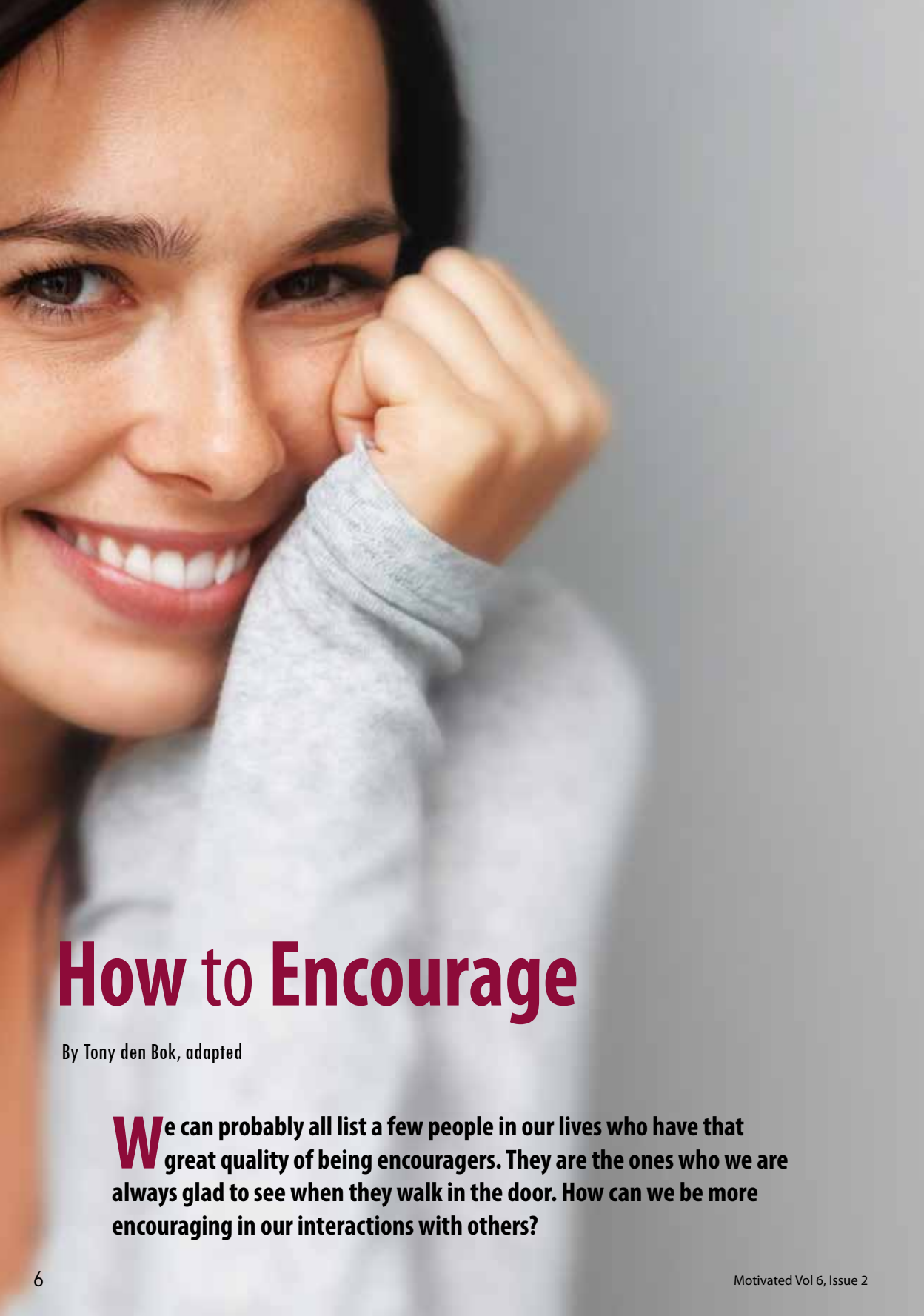
I started by telling you about Duane Brooks, about his father who threw the baseball at his chest and belittled his desire to be on a baseball team. Fast-forward 30 years. Duane had his own sons. One son is Chase. He's in the fourth grade, just like his daddy had been. And guess what he wants to play? He wants to play baseball. In fact, he was on a baseball team.

Duane, remembering how his father had treated him when he wanted to play baseball, tried to be an encourager to his son in his athletic endeavors. Oddly enough, Duane's father came to visit. Duane asks his father—a father who had probably long forgotten hurling the ball at his son's chest in a moment of anger, in a moment of discouragement—"Do you want to go watch Chase and I pitch?" "Sure, I'd like that," his father said.

They went out to the park, and Duane pitched to his son. Duane's father, who had abruptly hurled the baseball at him and left him standing alone on the field, said, "Hey, can I do that? I'd like to pitch the ball to my grandson."

For two hours Duane watched his father gently toss the ball back and forth with Chase—and his wound was healed.

His father, who had once been a discourager, became an encourager to the sons in his family. 



# How to Encourage

By Tony den Bok, adapted

**W**e can probably all list a few people in our lives who have that great quality of being encouragers. They are the ones who we are always glad to see when they walk in the door. How can we be more encouraging in our interactions with others?

## Start with a positive attitude.

Attitude is a choice. You can be a glass half-full or a glass half-empty kind of person. It's up to you. You may have been raised in a negative environment, but you can learn how to look at the world differently.

## Control your thought life.

Our minds are very much like computers, what goes in is what comes out. Read positive books, listen to uplifting music, and as much as possible, be around positive people. You will gradually find that your attitude towards life will take a turn for the better.

## Practice good will.

Good will is really a commitment to giving other people the benefit of the doubt. We can tend to look at people in one of two ways: they are either friends or enemies. Generally, we also find what we're looking for. If you approach someone assuming that their motives are wrong, it is highly unlikely that we will find a friend. On the other hand, if we assume the best about people until proven otherwise, we're likely to be rewarded with good will in return.

## Look for the good in people.

Everyone has good qualities, even if they are harder to find in some people than in others. Choose to look for the good in people—and mention it. How do you feel when others speak well of you? Doesn't it make you want to do even better? We all like to get a pat on the back, and we all tend to flourish

in a positive environment. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be."


## Practice doing the little things.

It doesn't take much to make a big difference. So often, when we think about making changes in our lives, we make it a huge daunting challenge. Start small. Smile at people you meet. You'll find that it's contagious. More often than not, your smile will be returned. Make a commitment to say something positive to those you meet. Find something that is deserving of a comment—and say it. Tell the person serving you coffee that they're doing a good job. Write one encouraging note to someone. Finding a note like this can make all the difference in the world, and may turn someone's day around.

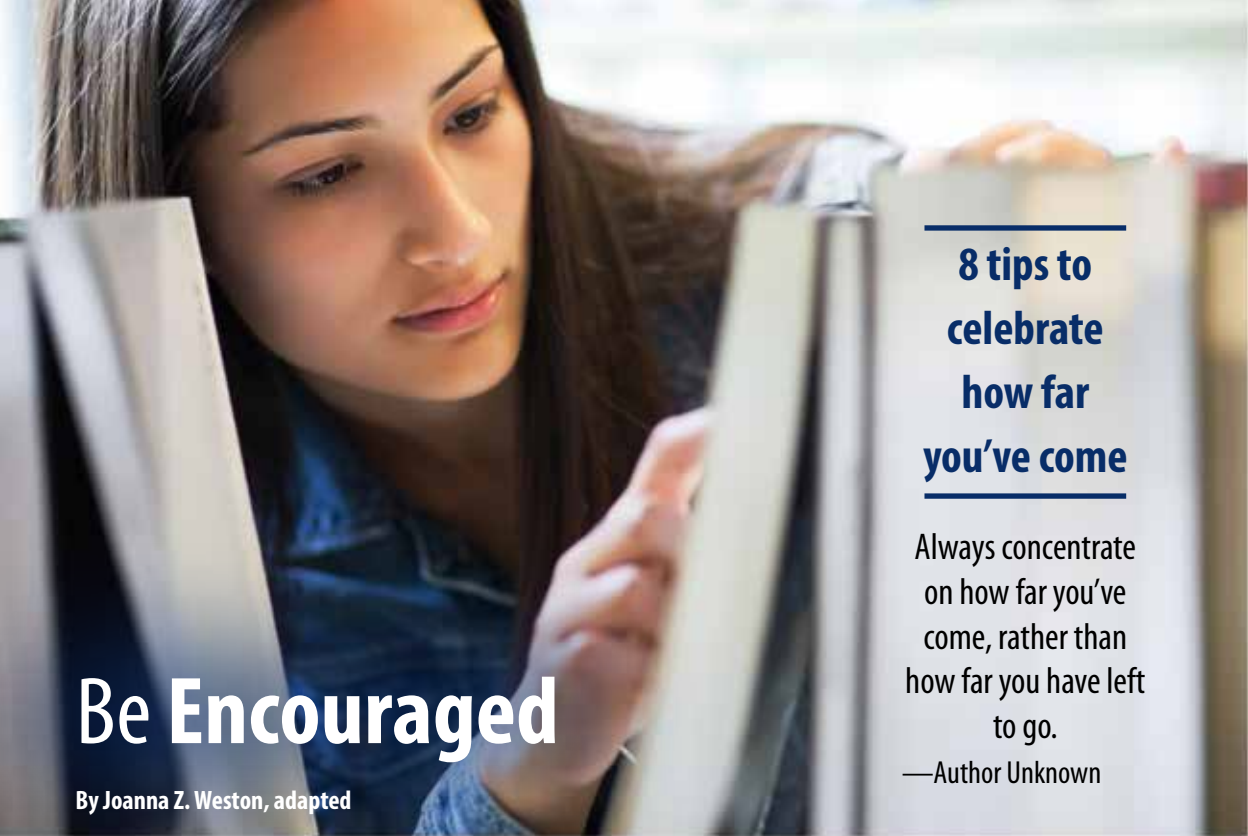
## Be others centered.

If you want to be an encourager, spend some time investing in another person. Ask them about their day, their life, and their family. Focusing on them will help them to feel important, and everyone needs that. One of the best things we can do for ourselves when we're feeling down is to care for someone else.

## Look for good examples.

Who are the people who have encouraged you? What is it about them that stands out? Emulate those qualities. You can become a person that people want to be around. We may not be able to change the world, but we can change ourselves and our corner of it. 





# Be Encouraged

By Joanna Z. Weston, adapted

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## 8 tips to celebrate how far you've come

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Always concentrate on how far you've come, rather than how far you have left to go.

—Author Unknown

It is laughably easy to forget to stop and take stock of how far we have come in our lives. Our world focuses so much on what we lack—be it money, beauty, prestige, or romantic success—that it is far too common for us to get trapped in the loop of needing to have, be, or do “more” before thinking that we might be good enough. I, for one, do it all the time.

A year and a half ago I was unemployed with no idea what to do next. I'd spent my life until that point ignoring the conviction that there was something I was meant to do. Since I didn't know what that calling might be, I played it safe by getting a library degree.

I was pretty good at library work, but I was never passionate about it, which made me an average candidate for the few remaining library positions after the economy crashed—and I didn't get the job.

All of this left me sitting at home, miserable. Unemployment, combined with a particularly nasty winter, led to a terrible flare-up of my lifelong nemesis, depression. To say that I was despondent that winter would be a gross understatement!

Of course, I can now see that this was a blessing. That terrible winter pushed me to realize that something had to change, and fast. I was finished playing it safe and ready to figure out my dream!

Since then, I've identified my true calling (to become a life coach), sought training, and now I stand on the cusp of living my ideal life. But is that always how I see the situation? Sadly not.

On many days, I find myself focusing on how far I still have to go. I see the programs I haven't implemented yet and the website that isn't quite perfect, rather than taking the time to marvel over the



fact that I have so many ideas and a website at all.

And you know what? Failing to acknowledge how far I've come robs me of a lot of joy and a lot of pride. I may not have everything figured out in my new business, but I've come a long way from where I was a year ago.

I would be willing to bet that you've made huge progress in the last year, as well, but are too focused on what remains to be done to see it. I invite you to start giving yourself credit for a lot of hard work and achievement.

Some tips to help you see how far you've come:

### **1. Sit down and breathe.**

It's hard to hear the truth when a thousand voices and worries are circling through your mind. Taking just five minutes to sit down and let the voices become quiet can make a huge difference.

### **2. Ask yourself, "Where was I this time last year? Five years ago? Ten?"**

I can guarantee that you will be surprised by your answers. Change comes slowly, so it can be hard to see, but it's always happening, whether we see it or not.

### **3. Review your notes.**

If you keep a journal or blog, reread some of your old entries. You'll find written evidence (in your own hand!) of just how far you've come when you see what was upsetting you back then.

### **4. Make a list of your accomplishments from the last year or the last five years.**

I don't care how small or insignificant it seems, write them down! Then look at that list and reflect on just how much you've done.

### **5. Ask a friend or loved one.**

We can be our own worst critics, so sometimes those close to us have a clearer view of how much we've grown than we have of ourselves. If it feels awkward to ask someone to tell you nice things about yourself, offer to return the favor.

### **6. Track the personal, not just the professional.**

Remember that not all progress is related to your career. How have your relationships, your spirituality, or your self-knowledge improved?


### **7. Celebrate the little things.**

As you go about your day, try to notice when you take even the smallest step toward your goals, and be sure to honor that in some way. Even just writing it down in your journal will give you that moment of recognition.

### **8. Realize that it's never done.**

We all want to reach the top of the mountain and feel that we have achieved something. We want to be finished, but that's never going to happen; our lives are a constant work in progress, which is the way it ought to be. Trust me, you'd be bored if you weren't constantly changing and growing.

Whatever you are working towards, and however far you still have to go, I encourage you to take the time to truly bask in everything you have achieved thus far.

It doesn't matter if you are moving fast or slow, only that you keep moving! And the best way to ensure that you continue to do that is to cherish each step along the way. 



# The words that could unlock your child

By Matthew Syed, adapted

Take a glance at these expressions of encouragement:

“You learned that so quickly, you’re so smart!”

“Look at that drawing. Are you the next Picasso or what?”

“You’re so brilliant—you passed that exam without really studying!”

They come across as precisely the kind of confidence-boosting statements that should be given to children or, indeed, anyone else. Such phrases are used in homes and classrooms every day, particularly with exams looming.

But are they benign? Or could they unlock the reason why so many children are failing at school and elsewhere?

To find out we need to take a quick detour into the science of expertise, and ask a question. Where does excellence come from? For a long time, it was thought the answer to this hinged, to

a large degree, on genetic inheritance. Or, to put it another way, it is all about talent.

It turns out that this is mistaken. Dozens of studies have found that top performers—whether in math, music, or whatever—learn no faster than those who reach lower levels of attainment—hour after hour, they improve at almost identical rates. The difference is simply that high achievers practice for more hours.

The question of talent versus effort would not matter terribly much if it was merely theoretical. But it is so much more than that. It influences the way we think, feel, and the way we engage with our world.

To see how, consider a youngster who believes excellence is all about talent—labeled the “fixed mindset.” Why would she bother to work hard?

If she has the right genes, won't she just cruise to the top? And if she lacks talent, well, why bother at all? And who can blame a youngster for this kind of attitude, given the underlying premise?

If, on the other hand, she really believes that effort trumps talent—labeled the “growth mindset”—she will persevere. She will not see failure as an indictment, but as an opportunity to adapt and grow. And, if she is right, she will eventually excel.

What a young person decides about the nature of talent, then, could scarcely be more important.

So, how do we orient our children to the growth mindset? A few years ago, Carol Dweck, a leading psychologist, took 400 students and gave them a simple puzzle.

Afterwards, each of the students were given six words of praise. Half were praised for intelligence: “Wow, you must be really smart!” The other half were praised for effort: “Wow, you must be hard working!”

Dweck was seeking to test whether these simple words, with their subtly different emphases, could make a difference to the student's mindsets. The results were remarkable.

After the first test, the students were given a choice of whether to take a hard or an easy test.

A full two-thirds of the students praised for intelligence chose the easy task—they did not want to risk losing their “smart” label. But 90% of the effort-praised group chose the tough test—they wanted to prove just how hard working they were.

Then, the experiment came full circle,

giving the students a chance to take a test of equal difficulty to the first test.

The group praised for intelligence showed a 20% decline in performance compared with the first test, even though it was no harder. But the effort-praised group increased their score by 30%. Failure had actually spurred them on and made them want to do better.

And all these differences turned on the difference in six simple words spoken after the very first test.

“These were some of the clearest findings I've seen,” Dweck said. “Praising children's intelligence harms motivation and it harms performance.”


This takes us right back to those expressions of praise we started out with. They all sounded like confidence-boosting statements. But now listen to the subliminal messages in the background:

“If I don't learn something quickly, I'm not smart.”

“I shouldn't try drawing anything hard or they'll see I'm no Picasso.”

“I'd better quit studying or they won't think I'm brilliant.”

This reveals a radical new approach to the way we engage with children—that we should praise effort, never talent; that we should teach kids to see challenges as learning opportunities rather than threats; and that we should emphasize how abilities can be transformed.

Experiments from around the world have shown that when parents and teachers adopt this approach, and stick to it, the results are remarkable. 

*Matthew Syed is the author of Bounce:*

*The Myth of Talent and the Power of Practice.*



# Encouragement

NOTABLE  
QUOTES



Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.—Mother Teresa

Correction does much, but encouragement does more.  
—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

There are high spots in all of our lives and most of them have come about through encouragement from someone else. I don't care how great, how famous or successful a man or woman may be, each hungers for applause.  
—George Matthew Adams

There are two ways of exerting one's strength: one is pushing down, the other is pulling up.—Booker T. Washington

There is nothing better than the encouragement of a good friend.  
—Katharine Butler Hathaway

A word of encouragement from a teacher to a child can change a life. A word of encouragement from a spouse can save a marriage. A word of encouragement from a leader can inspire a person to reach her potential.—John C. Maxwell

When you encourage others, you in the process are encouraged because you're making a commitment and difference in that person's life. Encouragement really does make a difference.—Zig Ziglar

In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.—Albert Schweitzer

The really great person is the person who makes every person feel great.  
—G.K. Chesterton

