

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RIDICULE IN THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF CHILDREN

An important part of the art of encouragement is the elimination of discouragement. A major discouragement of children is ridicule. We live in a society where ridicule is everyday business, a way of maintaining the status quo. Parents, however, cannot afford to ridicule their children for it takes a toll on self-esteem.

There are three kinds of ridicule:

1. Intellectual (Effects how the child thinks.)
Expressed through jokes.
90% of all jokes are put-downs of someone.
2. Emotional (Effects how one feels.)
Expressed through teasing.
Can sometimes be healthy if the child gives permission.
Most often involves an imbalance of power which makes it negative--a manipulation of emotions without permission.
3. Physical
Expressed through tickling.
Can be positive with permission and if the child is in charge of when it stops.
Is an infringement on another's space without permission.

ELEMENTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

S5P15-2

1. Stop, look and listen.
2. Clarify, paraphrase others' messages, guess at feelings.
3. Same or interested postures.
4. Self-disclosure (open, authentic) of feelings and mistakes.
5. Basic feedback--give and ask for.
Specify behavior--feelings about
Non-judgmental of person
Close in time
Behavior over which the individual has control
Asked for feedback
Given so other understands
Freedom of choices
6. Find something good about everyone in the group.
7. Tell how the other person has helped you.
8. How the group and others have helped me....
9. How the group could help me more....
10. How I have helped the group....
11. Look for similarities
12. Advanced feedback....

	Useful	1	2 Useless	3	4
Creative (Arranging Meaning)	Cooperation- as-equals	AGM Attention Special Service Excitement	Power Struggles (who is stronger) competition	Revenge	Display of Disability Hyperdependence
Cooperative (Rewarding reaction)	Social Approval	Annoyance	Provoked ("You can't)	Deeply Hurt	Hopelessness

13. Sense of Humor--sense of play
Doesn't demand---pleasures indirect (friendship, sleep, etc.)
LIFE TOO IMPORTANT TO BE TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY.

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1. Use "I" to begin the statement. "I like you" rather than "You are likeable."
2. Use "you" or person's favorite name. "Sally, I really like your taste in selecting clothes" rather than "That's not a bad looking suit."
3. Stay with simple statements. "I like your bright smile" rather than "Your current visage is rather pleasant to look upon."
4. Stroking statements should be given slowly and clearly while looking directly at the person.
5. Strokes should be constructed with transitive verbs. "I experience you as an exciting person" rather than "I felt that you were an exciting person."
6. Strokes are most potent when in the present tense. "I like your smile" rather than "I liked your smile."
7. Use strokes that describe specific attributes.
8. Avoid conditional modifiers as much as possible.

excerpt taken from Transactional Analysis After Eric Berne: Teachings and Practices of Three TA Schools, Graham Barnes (ed.), Harper's College Press, 1977, pgs. 412-3.

An encouraged person feels:

1. I'm OK. I have worth. I belong.
2. I can cope. I am capable. I can handle situations.
3. Things will turn out OK.

To encourage means to add to someone's courage to live, to take risks.

To discourage means to take away from someone's courage to live, to take risks.

SIX HELPFUL ATTITUDES

1. I know it is difficult, but I feel you can do it. - This shows faith in the person, an optimism.
2. It is all right to try and then fail. Everyone fails sometime. - This is the courage to be imperfect, to admit your own failures. The successful person is the one who got up the last time he or she was down.
3. Provide plenty of opportunities for successful achievement. - Don't set too high standards, but don't have no standards at all.
4. Be pleased with a reasonably good attempt. Show confidence in their ability to become competent.
5. Accept children as they are. Like him/her as he/she is. Many of us feel "if they knew what I was really like, they wouldn't like me."
6. Guarantee certain rights and privileges for just belonging to the group.*

OTHER ENCOURAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

1. Do not do for a child what he/she can do for him or herself. It promotes a feeling of helplessness. You teach responsibility by giving it.
2. Don't feel sorry for children. It is disrespectful and discouraging. It robs them of their ability to cope. Empathize; not sympathize.
3. Allow children to participate in decision-making. Give choices. Have a class or family council.
4. Use logical consequences rather than punishment.
5. Listen to children. It is one of the finest encouragement techniques. This shows you value them. Use active listening rather than silent listening. Active listening involves giving verbal feedback and invites a response. Give each child a special time sometime, if only for 5 to 10 minutes.

6. In discipline, be firm (without dominating), but kind. Patience is not a virtue and is not necessarily encouraging. Don't wait until you are ready to blow your stack, and then act. Act, don't talk. Children learn to be mother deaf and wait until she yells to respond.
7. Value helpfulness and cooperation rather than competitiveness.
8. Do not bribe to get good behavior. This is discouraging. It fosters the idea "I will cooperate only for a price." The price goes up. Expect and value cooperative behavior and use logical consequences.
9. When a child shows you a painting (etc.) and asks "Is it good?", respond with words that describe what you see and what you feel, i.e. "I see a purple house, a red sun, a striped sky, and lots of flowers. It makes me feel as though I were in the country." Words that evaluate, hinder a child.**
10. Become aware of how frequently you discount others. A discount is either the lack of attention or negative attention that hurts emotionally or physically.
11. Help a child to change by changing the way you see him or her or expect him or her to be.
12. Don't try to be perfect at encouraging. You will fail and become discouraged and discouraging in the process. Remember, it is all right to fail.

*Adapted from Encouraging Children to Learn by Dinkmeyer

**Liberated Parents; Liberated Children by Adele Farber and Elaine Hamlish, Avon books

EDUCATIONAL AFFIRMATIONS From *HELP!* for Parents

Book *Self-esteem-A Family Affair*
by Jean Illsley Clarke

Being
I'm glad
you are
alive.
Birth-6 mos.

Being, Stage I, 0 to 6 months

- I'm glad you are alive.
- You belong here.
- What you need is important to me.
- I'm glad you are you.
- You can grow at your own pace.
- You can feel all of your feelings.
- ♥ I love you and I care for you willingly.

Doing, Stage II, 6 to 18 months

- You can explore and experiment and I will support and protect you.
- You can use all of your senses when you explore.
- You can do things as many times as you need to.
- You can know what you know.
- You can be interested in everything.
- I like to watch you initiate and grow and learn.
- ♥ I love you when you are active and when you are quiet.

Thinking, Stage III, 18 months to 3 years

- I'm glad you are starting to think for yourself.
- It's OK for you to be angry and I won't let you hurt yourself or others.
- You can say no and push and test limits as much as you need to.
- You can learn to think for yourself and I will think for myself.
- You can think and feel at the same time.
- You can know what you need and ask for help.
- ♥ You can become separate from me and I will continue to love you.

Identity and Power, Stage IV, 3 to 6 years

- You can explore who you are and find out who other people are.
- You can be powerful and ask for help at the same time.
- You can try out different roles and ways of being powerful.
- You can find out the results of your behavior.
- All of your feelings are OK with me.
- You can learn what is pretend and what is real.
- ♥ I love who you are.

Structure, Stage V, 6 to 12 years

- You can think before you say yes or no and learn from your mistakes.
- You can trust your intuition to help you decide what to do.
- You can find a way of doing things that works for you.
- You can learn the rules that help you live with others.
- You can learn when and how to disagree.
- You can think for yourself and get help instead of staying in distress.
- ♥ I love you even when we differ; I love growing with you.

Identity, Sexuality and Separation, Stage VI, adolescence

- You can know who you are and learn and practice skills for independence.
- You can learn the difference between sex and nurturing and be responsible for your needs and behavior.
- You can develop your own interests, relationships and causes.
- You can learn to use old skills in new ways.
- You can grow in your maleness or femaleness and still be dependent at times.
- I look forward to knowing you as an adult.
- ♥ My love is always with you. I trust you to ask for my support.

Interdependence, Stage VII, adult years

- Your needs are important.
- You can be uniquely yourself and honor the uniqueness of others.
- You can be independent and interdependent.
- Through the years you can expand your commitments to your own growth, to your family, your friends, your community and to all humankind.
- You can build and examine your commitments to your values and causes, your roles and your tasks.
- You can be responsible for your contributions to each of your commitments.
- You can be creative, competent, productive and joyful.
- You can trust your inner wisdom.
- You can say your hellos and good-byes to people, roles, dreams, and decisions.
- You can finish each part of your journey and look forward to the next.
- Your love matures and expands.
- ♥ You are lovable at every age.

From the six books *HELP!* for Parents of Children of Different Ages, by Jean Illsley Clarke, et al, Harper & Row, 1986, \$3.95.

These Educational Affirmations are featured in the game, *Ups & Downs with Feelings*, and they are available as complete sets in oval stickers, and oval laminated discs. They are color coded to indicate the age at which each starts. The "love affirmations," also available as a separate package, plain or gift boxed.

For information about ordering the game or the affirmations, contact Carole Gesme, 4036 Kerry Ct., Minnetonka, MN 55345.

Being
I love you
and I care
for you
willingly.
Birth-6 mos.

Doing
I love you
when you are
active and
when you
are quiet.
6-18 mos.

Thinking
You can
become
separate from
me and I will
continue to
love you.
18 mos.-3 yrs

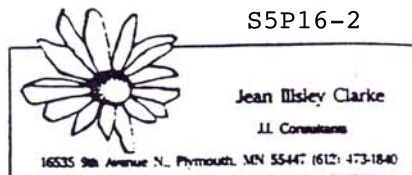
Identity and Power
I love
who you
are.
3-6 yrs.

Structure
I love you
even when
we differ;
I love growing
with you.
6-12 yrs.

Identity,
Sexuality,
My love is
always with
you. I trust
you to ask for
my support
13-19 yrs.

Interdependence
You are
loveable at
every age.
Adult

Interdependence
Your love
matures
and expands.
Adult



ABOUT THE AFFIRMATIONS

1. What are affirmations?

They are life supporting messages — anything we do or say that lets others know that we believe they are lovable and capable. These messages affirm people's need and ability to grow and to do their developmental tasks.

2. What do the ages on them mean?

The ages written on them indicate the ages at which each message first gets strong focus as a developmental task. After that we refocus on each task many times according to our rhythms of growth or in response to our life experiences. Each time we have the chance to learn to apply the skills in more sophisticated ways.

3. What do you do with the colored ovals?

Look at them and read them. Post them on the refrigerator, bathroom mirror, bulletin board, dashboard. Stick them on a book, gift, yourself. Put them in a lunch box, letter, greeting card, birthday present. Carry them in your pocket, billfold, purse. Keep a set by the telephone. Play with them with another person — read the ones they want to hear. Spread them face down on a table. Pick up three and read them to yourself. Choose four or five to focus on for a week. Read them aloud five times morning and night.

4. Are there other ways to give the messages?

Yes, lots. You give them by the way you touch, look and respond to, spend time with and pay attention to people.

5. Why is it worthwhile to use these affirmations?

We can use affirmations to help us remember that we are capable people. They help us love and care for others. They remind us that we are always growing and that there is hope.

6. How can affirmations help us?

We can use affirmations to help us raise our self-esteem so that we have healthier bodies and healthier minds. Our posture improves, we are more attractive, productive, loving and joyful.

7. What are the "Love Affirmations?"

The "love affirmations" are marked with hearts. They are the affirmations that say "I love you unconditionally for yourself and for doing your developmental tasks." While all of them are appropriate at every age, the colors and ages printed on them indicate the times at which each is a major focus of growth.

8. Are there any rules?

Yes. Don't give an affirmation to someone else at a moment when you don't feel and believe it. If you do, they may pick up the conflict in it and feel confused instead of affirmed. If you can't give some of these messages to your child, do what you need to do for yourself (get help, rest, education, therapy, whatever) so that you can believe the messages and give them.

Do give yourself affirmations even when you think you don't believe them. You will be tapping into the healthy, loving part of yourself.

Questions and answers by Jean Illsley Clarke & Carole Gesme

The affirmations are taken from the *Help! for Parents* series of books by Clarke et. al., published by Harper & Row, San Francisco, CA. To order affirmations printed on laminated large or small ovals write to: Carole Gesme, 4036 Kerry Court, Minnetonka, MN 55345, (612) 938-9163.