



Human Optimization

Pod Club Discussion Questions



E27 Compliment People: The How and Why of Giving Praise to Others

Guest: Natalie Caine, Chief Administrative Officer, Mayo Clinic in Rochester

The three big questions explored in the podcast:

Question 1

What is high-quality praise, and how does it impact others?

Question 2

Why do so many of us hesitate—or misfire—when giving praise, and how does that shortfall impact us?

Question 3

What steps can we take to be more effective of praising others in our lives?

Discussion Questions:

1. Natalie Caine distinguishes high-quality praise from generic positive feedback; high-quality praise is specific and personalized. Think about a time when you received specific praise that truly resonated with you. Discuss with your group: How did it make you feel compared to generic feedback (e.g. - “nice job!”).
2. As they discussed in this episode, giving praise benefits both the receiver (increased joy, productivity, connection) and the giver (gratitude, self-reflection). Have you noticed these benefits in your past? Which of these benefits do you find motivates you the most to increase praise-giving, and why?
3. Natalie suggests that praise should be specific, timely, relatable, and sincere. Recall a recent interaction when you provided positive feedback. How could you have incorporated these elements to make your positive feedback more meaningful?
4. In this episode, they discuss the "five to one ratio" in relationships (five positive comments needed to outweigh one negative). How aware are you of the balance of positive versus negative interactions in your important relationships? Think of one or two people in your work or personal life who you will plan to provide more positive, specific comments to over the next month.
5. Common barriers to giving praise include busyness, fear of awkwardness, or a negativity bias. Which of these barriers do you most often experience? Discuss one or two small steps to overcome it with your pod club.
6. The episode describes how to receive praise gracefully, including accepting it on behalf of a team rather than deflecting or self-deprecating. How do you typically react when receiving praise? What might you do differently to receive it in a healthy way?

7. Natalie encourages making praise a "habit" by intentionally looking for opportunities to celebrate small positive moments. What is one specific daily routine or interaction where you could intentionally integrate a moment of praise?
8. The challenge in this episode is to praise three different people for three different things within 24 hours. Identify three people you could praise today. Write down one or two specific, small things you will acknowledge for each. Now go do it!
9. Based on this episode, what is one small change you are going to make to help improve in this area. How are you going to keep yourself accountable to that and measure your success? (Be sure to keep it simple, start small, and make it very clear).