

## An Exercise for Grown-ups: Changing Your View

Here's an exercise anyone can try.

During the day, make a point of noticing something someone else is doing that you like. Someone at work, someone at home, some stranger even. It need not be something unusual. It could be something you already expect the person to do.

At the end of the day, find time to tell the person he or she did that thing right. Avoid the word *I*. "I liked the way you . . ." is all about you, not about the behavior. Just name the behavior. "It's good that you finished your homework." "You handled that phone call well." "The client report is done; that's great!" "The kitchen's all cleaned up, that's so nice." Then do it again the next day, for a different behavior.

With kids, try to find one or more things that were good during the day. Don't turn it into a big deal, just identify what the child did right. "Hey, you got down to dinner on time." "You fed the dog on your own." "You read to your sister, that was a good thing." Don't make things up at bedtime; really watch. What you are trying to train here is not the kids but your own observant eye.

This may feel weird. You may feel self-conscious. This tells you that you need practice at noticing and discussing things you like. (Do you have more experience at noticing and discussing things you don't like? That's true for most of us.)

Don't expect any particular response; this may be new for the other person, too, and may take some getting used to. Just keep it up. The change in the recipients of these observations will be rapid and obvious. The change in your own Snell's window on the universe will be more subtle and more profound.