

THOSE BEAUTIFUL WORDS, “WELL DONE!”

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Positive communication takes effort. It is something we do to make someone else feel valued. Research shows that over 70% of communication in the average home (whether verbal or through body language) is of a negative nature. I wondered how this could be. Can you hear it? “Get up NOW!” “I don’t know how many times I’ve told you to make your bed!” “Hurry up and finish your breakfast!” “Get a move on or you will miss the bus!” “I’ve told you a million times to do your homework before you play!” “Stop fighting with your sister!” “Go outside while the sun is shining and stop yelling at each other!” “How many times have I told you to take off your muddy shoes before you come in the house?” “Turn off the TV!” “Go and wash your hands before supper!” “You don’t look as if you have cleaned your teeth and it’s bed time now!” “Get into bed NOW and turn off the light!” On and on it goes.

While we think we are training our kids, I don’t think we realize just how the constant tirade of instructions and commands we give our children can sound to them like never ending nagging. Without an equal amount of recognition and praise when our kids are doing what is expected or excelling in some skill, then kids can get the feeling that they are merely being tolerated and not valued for the contributions they do make and the achievements they do attain. Sometimes kids just long to hear those beautiful words, “Well done!”

We have a 50-year-old friend Spence who yearned to hear his father say, “Well done son.” Spence did everything he could think of to hear those words from his father. He became a very successful all round athlete. He even made the Olympic trials in track and the nationals in soccer, yet his father gave him no credit. Spence took drastic measures. He thought that if he couldn’t get recognition by doing good things then maybe shock tactics would work, so Spence became the enforcer in a biker gang. There was still no response from his father. Spence realized that gang life was not a good thing for him so he became an academic. Though covered in tattoos and sporting a Harley-Davidson-type beard and ponytail, he went through teacher training college and attained a Master’s degree. Still there was no recognition from his father. A few years ago Spence said, “I have finally come to realize that I am never going to hear, “Well done, son!” from my Dad, but I know for sure that my Heavenly Father loves me. He knows my heart and is proud of me, so that is good enough for me. Two years ago Spence’s father died under tragic circumstances. He had robbed his son of a few simple words that would have made all the difference to Spence’s life.

We need to protect our home environment from negative conversations and color it with positive communication. We need to recognize one another’s

needs for reassurance and encouragement, and we need to hear AND to say those words often... “Well done!” “Good job!” “I’m proud of you!”

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.